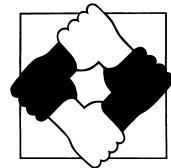


OPSEU

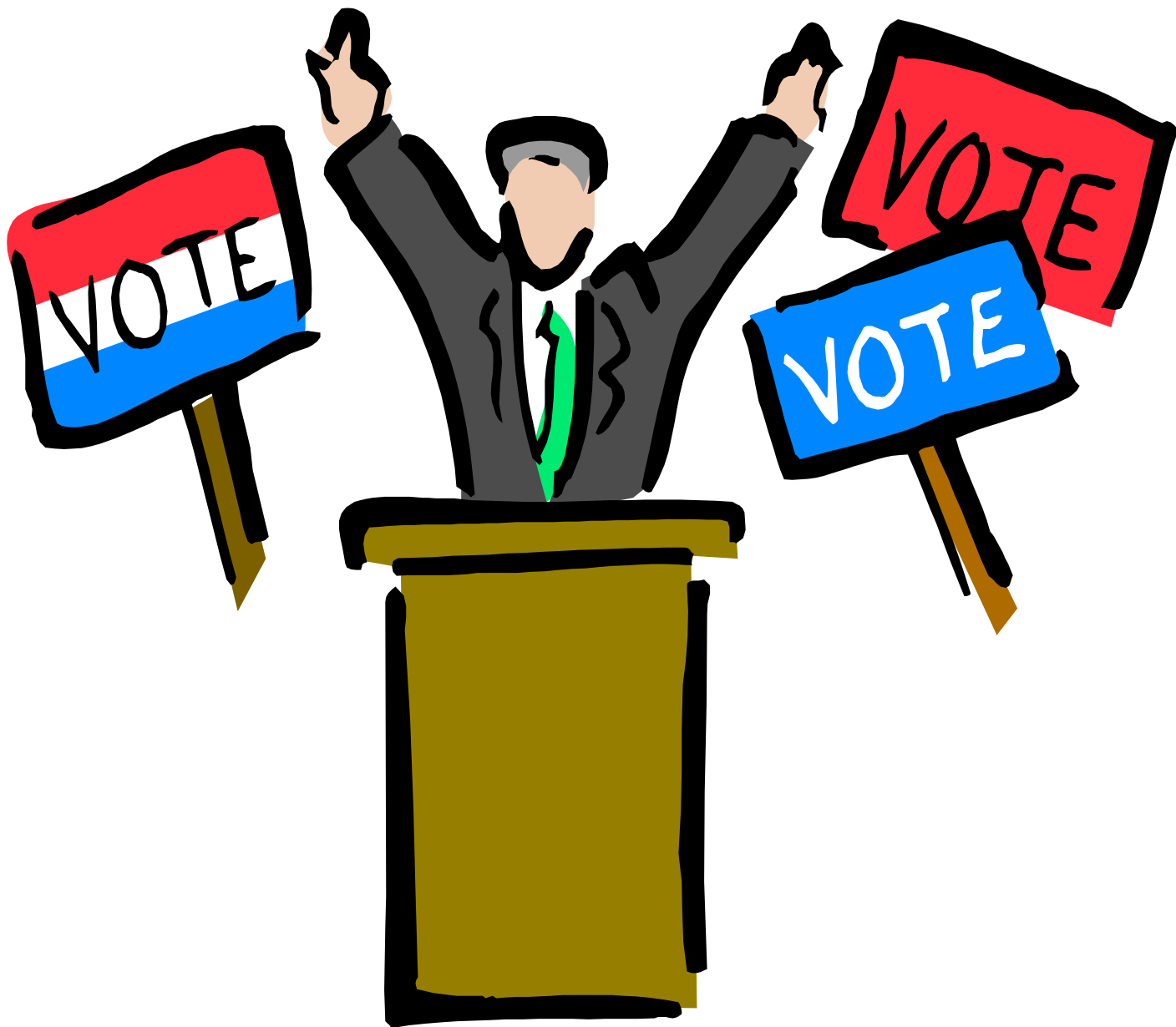


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# IN SOLIDARITY



The newsletter for OPSEU Stewards and Activists



## Election 2001 Edition

# EDITORIAL POLICY

The content and editing of this newsletter is determined by rank and file activists. We want members to feel ownership of *In Solidarity*, and view it as independent of any particular segment of the union.

Content comes from our own huge base of activists, staff and other labour sources.

Where an article has a by-line, the views are those of the author and not necessarily the views of OPSEU.

If no author is identified, the article represents OPSEU policy.

While we welcome your contributions (on disk or by e-mail if possible), we ask that these be constructive. All articles should be signed and include local number, and should contribute positively to the welfare of this union and its members.

It is not our intention to become involved in staff-bashing or member-bashing. If a person or office is named in an article, we will give that person or office the opportunity to respond in the same issue as the article appears.

We encourage thoughtful discussion of all related issues and reserve the right to edit for libel, length and clarity, and to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies. ☺



## Who we are

The elected members of the editorial committee for *In Solidarity* are:

**Laurie Chapman** - Editor, Local 323

**Len Mason** - Designer, Local 737

**Gavin Anderson** - Local 460

**Larry Farr** - Local 559

**Vern Silver** - Local 670

Ex-officio members are:

**David Calvert** - Executive Board Liaison

**Katie FitzRandolph** - OPSEU Public Affairs

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\* If you require any support, advice or start-up  
information concerning newsletters please  
contact one of the executive members. ☺

### Authorized for distribution:

*Leah Casselman, President*

*In Solidarity* is produced for all OPSEU stewards,  
newsletter editors of INFO/BIS and certified Health  
& Safety Representatives.

**Ontario Public Service Employees Union**

# Leah Casselman

## **What is OPSEU's greatest strength and how would you enhance it?**

As I have stated on many occasions and still fervently believe, OPSEU's greatest strength is our members. What I have learned from meeting with and talking to, but most importantly listening to our members continues to excite and impress me. I want to continue to build on the strengths of our members and the interactions they have with others in the community that will make us the "union of choice" for the province.

## **What is OPSEU's greatest weakness and how would you overcome it?**

OPSEU is an organization made up of approximately 100,000 members. Our greatest weakness is the perception of isolation of our members as a result of their diversity. Many of the issues we face as members are shared. It is my goal to continue to work on building opportunities for shared problem solving towards a common goal. We must find those common threads and connect them to weave the fabric of our union even stronger. When we all work together, we win.



## **Why do you want to be the President?**

This question is more about what kinds of people our members want as their union leaders. I don't believe they want leaders who engage in divisive internal union politics. That holds the union back from the real work of service and representation for members.

Leading a large and diverse union in tough times requires the ability to see the larger picture and make decisions that move us forward.

I believe I have a proven ability to listen to members and learn from them. It takes an ability to effectively direct and work with a large staff. I have that experience.

## **What are your visions for OPSEU in the next two years and how will you get us there?**

For OPSEU to remain a dynamic, growing organization, we must continue to move forward together. My commitment to you is to do whatever it takes to get OPSEU there. I believe the Network for Better Contracts is not only an unequalled opportunity to do this, but also the right way to go. The Network will bring the union right into the hands of the member leadership. By creating opportunities for members to communicate and build on each other's advances, by working towards common goals, producing and enforcing good collective agreements or speaking out on public policy, we become stronger. ☺

# Will Presley

## **What is OPSEU's greatest strength and how would you enhance it?**

Our greatest strength is our membership. Whether we want to make good things happen or stop bad things from happening - and that's a practical definition of power - we rely on our members.

To enhance that power, I will dedicate our Union to organizing our members for action. We'll work together through an effective steward organization. Recruiting, educating, nurturing and supporting our stewards and activists will be the first priority.

The central Union will welcome and talk to its members, and the members will know the Union is listening to them.

## **What is OPSEU's greatest weakness and how would you overcome it?**

What ever happened to "*mighty, mighty OPSEU?*" Too many local leaders are asking that question. When the Union has no profile with it's members, we are becoming powerless.

OPSEU is drifting because the current leadership forgot where our Union is anchored. Our greatest weakness is that we don't rely on our greatest strength - our members.



My commitment is to renew the central Union's focus on the membership. I will demand the same from the leadership team. Involving our members in their Union and bringing them back home to OPSEU will be the priority for our campaigns, bargaining and education.

## **Why do you want to be President?**

Through twenty years in OPSEU, I've demonstrated that I can inspire the teamwork and build the leadership that makes good things happen - and that brings members into the Union circle.

This is a decisive moment for OPSEU. The Harris government

is vulnerable. As the economy weakens, the "tax cuts" are turning to dust in people's hands. Everybody but the rich is asking, "Where's the payoff?" - and realizing there isn't one.

It is time for OPSEU to reclaim its place as Ontario's leading public sector union. We can reconnect with our members, build solutions and action together, and move forward.

## **What are your visions of OPSEU in the next two years and how will you get us there?**

I see a Union that public sector workers across Canada look to as the model of how a Union does good things for its members.

It's a Union where the membership trusts the leadership, where members feel they belong with the Union, where stewards and activists experience satisfaction and empowerment. It's a union that bargains good collective agreements built on strong member support.

Setting a personal example of dedication and trustworthiness, I will achieve my vision by ensuring the leadership - both staff and members - is committed to making OPSEU a union that members are proud to call "home." ☺

# Bob Eaton

## **What is OPSEU's greatest strength and how would you enhance it?**

OPSEU's greatest strength rests with the approximately 90,000 women and men who provide professional public services to the people of Ontario. Through our members' work, Ontarians enjoy healthy, safe and progressive communities. Within this important resource rests the future of this union, that is, if one accepts the notion of evolutionary succession. We must embrace and encourage all of our members in order to ensure our future vitality and prominence. I would enhance this asset by breaking down the barriers of exclusion that permeate OPSEU's political culture.

## **What is OPSEU's greatest weakness and how would you overcome it?**

OPSEU's greatest weakness is membership apathy. Low attendance at local and demand setting meetings are indicative of this statement. To many front-line workers, the union has become inconsequential. While bullhorn unionism may feel good, it has proven to be ineffective and in fact, alienates many who may



otherwise become involved. In order for new, effective ideas to flourish, leaders must be willing and able to make wholesale change without fear of reprisal from perceived power brokers. I am the leader to do that.

## **Why do you want to be the President?**

The future of this organization is much more important than any individual within it. My commitment to this organization is demonstrated by my years dedicated to membership advocacy, committee work, local leadership building, and public education through extensive media exposure.

I have the ability to work with the press, liaise with members, and lobby the politicians, while clearly articulating the message that OPSEU members are an integral and value-added commodity in the province of Ontario. Courage, loyalty, and vision are the assets I bring to this position.

## **What are your visions of OPSEU in the next two years and how will you get us there?**

My vision is predicated on giving the members what they asked for. Workers want strong collective agreements with language that is readily enforced by the organization. Workers want respect from their employers and job security benefiting their professional status. My vision includes a strategy to combat the current government's attack on professional public services. I intend to lead a cohesive, educated, involved membership into the next phase of unionism focusing on the positive attributes and contributions of our members to Ontario's communities. ☺

# John O'Brien

## **What is OPSEU's greatest strength and how would you enhance it?**

OPSEU's greatest strength is its members.

OPSEU has adopted a policy paper at Convention 2000 entitled "Building a Strong Network For Better Contracts" (NBC). The direction of NBC was to have an ongoing union-wide program of leadership training and development for membership and staff, support for member communications and research, and the best possible coordination of our collective efforts. One of my goals will be to find better ways of communicating and getting members excited and mobilized around the NBC to enhance our greatest strength - the members of OPSEU. I will continue to support and promote the NBC.

## **What is OPSEU's greatest weakness and how would you overcome it?**

Getting our members involved and active in our union activities at the local level.

As your Vice-President/Treasurer I will take a more proactive roll in eliminating the stigma of being a union activist and supporting activists in their work within their locals. I will



make myself available to all locals in the province. I will have an accounting of our financial situation produced every 3 months in easy to read and understandable language for the average member and mailed/e-mailed to every steward in the province. I believe with concise and open communication, activism and participation will increase.

## **Why do you want to be the Vice-President/Treasurer?**

With my involvement in our Union for the last 21 years! I have served this Union as a Steward, Chief Steward, Vice-President, President, Executive Board Member, and Regional Vice-President and spent many

years on Ontario Public Service (OPS) bargaining teams as a member, vice-chair, chair and chair of chairs during the 1996 strike of the OPS.

I have worked with members and staff of this union in every sector and department. This has given me a very good working knowledge of our Union's structure and operation.

I would be an asset to the continued growth of OPSEU as the Vice-President/Treasurer.

## **What is the key financial challenge facing the union and how do you plan to address it?**

Building our strike fund, maintaining and improving our service to members and organizing new members.

Cap strike fund at 50 million.

We need to support a temporary dues increase of .20% to build our strike fund and continue to provide service to the members. That's how we build the strike fund in a very efficient way. This would eliminate the overdraft to our cash flow of over 5 million a month at a cost of almost \$30,000 per month in interest payments and we would see a balanced or surplus budget position every year. ☺

# Pauline Tapping

## **What is OPSEU's greatest strength and how would you enhance it?**

Our strength is in our members and staff.

There needs to be more funding for training and educationals whether that training is done in our Regions or from an affiliate like the CLC. It doesn't matter if it's OPS, BPS or CAAT - it is the same faces and active members doing the work.

We need returned phone calls from Head Office. We need to build our resources in our locals. Education and funding will do that.

We need to fill our vacant staff positions as quickly and efficiently as possible either through competition or MDT/SDT.

## **What is OPSEU's greatest weakness and how would you overcome it?**

I have a problem with the words 'greatest weakness.' The Board, in my opinion is a weakness. The Board should act as a rudder between conventions. If the rudder is pulled too far one way or another we are off course and unable to obtain a level keel.



Between Conventions there can only be one captain. The ongoing tussles to be captain is not good for our great union nor are the mixed messages we send our members.

The 'captain syndrome' impacts all of our leadership!

## **Why do you want to be the Vice-President/Treasurer?**

Number 1 - there is a vacancy. I have been 2nd Vice-President of OPSEU and have had the honour of being the highest-ranking female, so it's time to raise the bar.

We need to look at the cumulative deficit. We need to have ongoing discussions at the Board on how to pay this deficit down. I don't mean all twenty-one board members, I mean a sincere 'think tank' of a few Board members and senior staff.

This group can then return to the Board with a strong foundation of ideas on how to get this cumulative deficit down or lowered.

## **What is the key financial challenge facing the union and how do you plan to address it?**

Organizing is the key to survival of the Union. We need to re-evaluate where we spend our time and money. We should seek different avenues and different groups to recruit and organize. It shouldn't matter who they are or where they are from. What should matter are our dues, and the survival of our great union.

Again, we return to the very first question I was asked. The strength is in our members.

Strength and Honour! ☺

# 2001 OPSEU Regional Results

## Region 1

### **Executive Board Members**

Ron Elliot - RVP

Bob Reid

Marie Thompson

### **Provincial Women's Committee**

Paddy Musson

### **Provincial Human Rights Committee**

Peter Thompson

## Region 5

### **Executive Board Members**

Terry Downey - RVP

Marilou Martin

Nancy Pridham

### **Provincial Women's Committee**

Yvonne Bobb

### **Provincial Human Rights Committee**

John Rae

## Region 2

### **Executive Board Members**

Leah Casselman

Chris Madill - RVP

Jay Jackson

### **Provincial Women's Committee**

Libby Walters

### **Provincial Human Rights Committee**

Mohar Budhram

## Region 6

### **Executive Board Members**

Will Presley - RVP

Bill Kuehbaum

Sue Brown

### **Provincial Women's Committee**

Helen Riehl

### **Provincial Human Rights Committee**

Aarne Hannikainen

## Region 3

### **Executive Board Members**

Pauline Tapping - RVP

Doris Middleton

David Chew

### **Provincial Women's Committee**

Elaine Bagnall

### **Provincial Human Rights Committee**

Suresh Paul

## Region 7

### **Executive Board Members**

John O'Brien - RVP

James Tocker

Terry Connolly

### **Provincial Women's Committee**

Doris Rossi

### **Provincial Human Rights Committee**

David Ramsay

## Region 4

Warren (Smokey) Thomas - RVP

Gavin Anderson

Bob Eaton

### **Provincial Women's Committee**

Kathy Smith

### **Provincial Human Rights Committee**

Marlene Ricksneuwöchner

