



A PUBLICATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF OPSEU  
www.opseu.org

# our ontario

FALL 2007 | NUMBER 17



## **New Leadership** **— *New Vision***

**Huge victory for  
Developmental  
Services**

**Vote for MMP**

**OPSECAAT van  
hits the road**

**Fighting Racism**

# OPSEU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

**REGION 1**  
Southwestern  
Ontario



**Gino Franche, 4th V.P.**  
gino@ciaccess.com  
800/265-2705 x234 (w)  
519/352-9241 (fax)  
519/359-9197 (cell)

**REGION 2**  
Southern  
Ontario



**Jay Jackson, 5th V.P.**  
union@castle.on.ca  
905/845-9430 x2320 (w)  
905/877-9050 (h)  
905/815-4076 (fax)  
905/536-6476 (cell)

**REGION 3**  
Central  
Ontario



**Patty Rout**  
**1st V.P., Treasurer**  
prout@opseu.org  
416/443-8888 x8303 (w)  
  
416/443-0017 (fax)  
905-439-8044 (cell)

**REGION 4**  
Eastern  
Ontario



**Smokey Thomas**  
**President**  
wthomas@opseu.org  
416/443-8888 x8300 (w)  
416/443-8713 (fax)  
866/264-4982 (cell)

**REGION 5**  
Greater  
Toronto Area



**David Rapaport, 2nd V.P.**  
drapaport@opseu.org  
416-325-2282 (w)  
416-651-1659 (h)

**REGION 6**  
Northern  
Ontario



**Sue Brown, 7th V.P.**  
brownsue@sympatico.ca  
705/474-1200 (w)  
705/729-1442 (h)  
705/729-1507 (fax)  
705/499-5129 (cell)

**REGION 7**  
Northwestern  
Ontario



**James Tocker, 8th V.P.**  
tockerja@baytel.net  
807/473-2054 (w)  
807/767-3888 (fax)  
807/627-0625 (cell)



**Ron Elliot**  
relliot@sympatico.ca  
519/646-3252 (w)  
519/438-4117 (h)



**Eduardo (Eddy) Almeida**  
eddiea@sympatico.ca  
905/523-8800 x369 (w)  
905/574-5943 (h)  
905/574-5704 (fax)  
289/439-2135 (cell)



**Doris Middleton, 6th V.P.**  
doris.middleton@sympatico.ca  
705/325-7408 x4426 (w)  
705/325-3420 (fax)  
705/238-8003 (cell)



**Bob Eaton, 3rd V.P.**  
bobeaton@digitalnetworks.ca  
613/345-1200 (w)  
613/925-5334 (fax)  
613/340-2521 (cell)



**Nancy Pridham**  
nancypridham@sympatico.ca  
416/532-3354 (fax)  
416/407-4594 (cell)



**Amanda (Mandy) Dumais**  
mandydumais@sympatico.ca  
705-564-4364 (w)  
705-897-3948 (h)  
705/929-4364 (cell)



**Brenda Clapp**  
clappb@shaw.ca  
807/343-2725 (w)  
807/345-2971 (h)  
807/345-1034 (fax)  
807/624-8952 (cell)



**Laurie Brown**  
lbrownebm@hotmail.com  
519/282-1709 (cell)



**Michael Grimaldi**  
chegrimesympatico.ca  
905/704-3037 (w)  
905/701-8007 (h)  
905/701-8303 (fax)  
289-213-3088 (cell)



**Claire Rowett**  
claireEBMR3@sympatico.ca  
705/755-2459 (w)  
905/797-3173 (h)  
905-375-7368 (cell)



**David Lundy**  
davidlundy@sympatico.ca  
613/269-2584 (fax)  
613/213-1953 (cell)



**Ted Montgomery**  
ted@opseu560.org  
416/495-1399 (w)  
416/492-9717 (h)



**Peter Wall**  
peterw@ntl.sympatico.ca  
705/372-2212 (w)  
705/362-0282 (h)  
705/372-2245 (fax)  
705/372-3310 (cell)



**Sandra Snider**  
opseusandra@shaw.ca  
807/343-7462 (w)  
807/345-7904 (h)  
807/344-6725 (fax)  
807/626-0740 (cell)



# OPSEU direct

1-800-268-7376

opseu@opseu.org  
www.opseu.org



## Provincial Vote Oct. 10: Make your ballot a vote for OPSEU

Ontario will soon be going to the polls in a provincial election. Every election is vital to the democratic health of our province and the Oct. 10 election is no exception.

For OPSEU members, however, the outcome of this election is especially important. I urge you to closely study the positions taken by each of the parties and their leaders on the issues that matter most to our membership.

OPSEU has made its priorities clear. Full funding must be restored to ministries which have experienced cuts over the past decade. Staff shortages and inadequate funding in the broader public service must be addressed. The minimum wage must be increased to \$10 per hour now, not in 2010. The government must keep its promise to change the law to allow college part-timers to bargain collectively.

We also support the recommendation of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. On Oct. 10 vote 'Yes' to Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) representation at Queen's Park. By doing so, you will be saying yes to a more democratic method of electing our MPPs.

Make your ballot an 'OPSEU vote.' Vote for the candidate in your riding who pledges to move our priorities forward. In doing so, you can help build a stronger union and a stronger Ontario.

In solidarity,

Warren (Smokey) Thomas, *President, OPSEU*



### Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed forests, controlled sources and recycled wood or fiber

www.fsc.org Cert no. SW-COC-2113  
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council



## In this issue

- 4 Leadership profiles
- 6 Convention 2007
- 8 OPSEU rebranded
- 10 Solidarity in action
- 11 BPS Conference
- 12 Vote for MMP
- 14 Mental health forums
- 15 On the line with  
Developmental Services
- 16 OPSECAAT college  
campaign
- 17 Save Ontario Parks!
- 18 Correctional services
- 18 York Region CAS  
on strike
- 19 Agency stores update
- 20 Workers Action Centre

Publication Mail Agreement No. 40062655

Our Ontario, the official publication of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, is published for OPSEU members.

Editor: David Cox  
Translator: Paul Lau  
Designer: Emily Visser

#### Contributors to this issue:

David Cox, Don Ford, Bebe De Freitas, Greg Hamara, Sarah Jordison, Tim Little, Archana Mathew, Luisa Quarta, Randy Robinson, Barbara Thomas, Emily Visser, Lisa Walter

All photographs including cover image by Brian Willer unless otherwise specified.



## *New president Thomas: Fair, firm and friendly*

**By Greg Hamara**

It may be the most common question OPSEU's president hears on meeting a new acquaintance: Where did the nickname "Smokey" come from?

"There's no great mystery about it," laughs Warren (Smokey) Thomas, the 55-year old native of Kingston who was elected OPSEU's sixth president at this year's Convention.

"Family legend has it that when I was about two years old, my dad simply said, 'The boy looks a lot like Smokey the Bear.' Believe it or not, the nickname has been with me ever since."

The nickname seems to fit the hard-nosed but folksy leadership style Thomas brings to his position as president of OPSEU. He likes to sum up his approach as "fair, firm and friendly."

"I think that's what most of us look for in a leader," he says. "A person who is accessible but someone who also knows when to draw a line in the sand, especially when it comes to sitting down with the employer.

"I campaigned on putting the needs of our membership first, and I won't back down from that one bit at all."

It's an approach he's used to his advantage for more than 25 years as a public service labour activist. Trained and certified in the mid-1970s as a Registered Practical Nurse at the former Ontario Hospital in Kingston, Thomas became president of Local 431 in 1983.

In 1993 he was elected to OPSEU's Executive Board, and, after three terms as First Vice-President/ Treasurer, was elected president this April.


Thomas's priorities include strengthening staff and activist development and skills, clearing up the grievance settlement process and pressing the government on the need to expand public services.

"Delivering strong services on behalf of the membership is key. It means strong activist staff development so that they have the skills to act in the best interest of the membership. It means being nimble enough so that when circumstances and issues

suddenly change, we will have staff and activists that are well equipped to meet the challenges head-on."

Thomas is not one to sit still for long. He believes there are tens of thousands of non-organized public service workers across Ontario who should be represented by OPSEU. He recognizes the union's need to keep pace with rapidly changing technology in order to remain a relevant force for its members.

And he is committed to keeping OPSEU in the forefront of social justice and equality campaigns. He sees a union that in 10 years is "bigger, stronger and more responsive" on all fronts.

"We have a loaded plate in front of us," he notes. "But as a union I believe we have the personnel, resources and dedication to make a real difference on behalf of all the people of our great province." 



## *New First VP from a long line of unionists*

**By Greg Hamara**

For generations Oshawa has enjoyed a well-deserved reputation as a centre of union activism.

It's not surprising then that Patty Rout, OPSEU's new First Vice-President/Treasurer, hails from that city, or that she comes from a family of dedicated unionists.

"Both my dad, Bill Cook, and my grandfather, Andrew Cook, were strong union members of UAW Local 222 when they worked for General Motors. And my grandmother Laura Cook was a social activist on behalf of seniors well into her 90s," says Rout.

There's no question she has maintained the family tradition. Within three years of graduating

in 1973 as a certified laboratory technologist from Peterborough Civic Hospital, Rout was elected president of Local 348 representing workers at Oshawa General (now Lakeridge Health Corp).

She has a long and enviable record of activism in the health care sector. Prior to her election as an OPSEU Executive Board Member, Rout was chair of OPSEU's Hospital Professionals Division and chair of the union's Health Care Divisional Council. In between these duties, she has been a force with the Durham Labour Council. In recognition of her efforts, Rout was nominated in 2007 for Woman of the Year in Durham Region.

The married mother of an adult daughter, Rout says she is driven by a sense of fairness.

"I truly believe all people, regardless of their status in society, must be treated fairly. People should be fed and not have to go hungry. Poverty is not for children – or adults. If I can help change the conditions people face for the better, that's what motivates me." ♪



# Convention

## Election

At its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual convention, OPSEU elected Warren (Smokey) Thomas its sixth president.

Thomas, 55, defeated two other candidates to replace Leah Casselman who retired after serving 12 years as OPSEU president.

“I look forward to working together with all the members and staff of OPSEU as we move this growing union into the future,” Thomas said.

Thomas, a long-time union activist and member of the OPSEU Executive Board, is a registered practical nurse from Kingston.

Patty Rout of Oshawa was elected the union’s First Vice-President/Treasurer, defeating two other candidates.



Elections 2007



Welcome from John Cartwright



Honouring Louise Arbour



Information  
booths: Ontario  
Can Do Better



# 2007

## OPSEU Awards

Stanley Knowles  
Humanitarian Award  
Madam Justice  
Louise Arbour

Rainford Jackson  
Education and  
Development  
Fund Award  
Native Women's  
Association of Canada

Health and  
Safety Awards  
**Individual:** Frank Pezzutto,  
retiree, Local 662.  
**Local:** Local 154, Windsor  
Court House, Ministry of  
Attorney General

Human Rights Award  
Carol McGregor:  
Advocate for human rights  
(posthumously)

Honorary Lifetime  
Membership Awards  
Bob Reid  
Harry Plummer  
Len Hupet



Convention floor



College workers on stage

Departing Board members and former president Leah Casselman

The Rank'n'File Band



# New OPSEU logo, new web site for changing times

By Emily Visser



Take a look around: the new OPSEU logo is everywhere, and you'll see more in the months to come.

Launched at Convention 2007, the logo was displayed prominently at this year's event on banners, signs, printed materials and at the OPSEU Shop. Many members now own their own t-shirts, jackets, buttons and pins with the new OPSEU brand. *All of these items and more are available online at <http://www.opseu.org/merchandise/merchandise.htm>.*

OPSEU office communications materials are all affected by the recent changes. You are now able to use new letterhead, envelopes, folders and fax sheets. And don't forget that new business cards have the updated design!

The redesign of the OPSEU web site is a major part of the rebranding undertaking. You'll notice the clean new layout and animated web banner are now in line with our new look. Please

**Our web site makes it easier to access information.**

take a moment to surf the OPSEU site and familiarize yourself with the new site, and let us know what you think.

The next stages of rolling out the new OPSEU logo include building signage, so keep an eye out for some more great changes ahead.

All Local Presidents have received a CD with the new logo in their kits at Convention. The logo can also be downloaded directly from the web site at <http://www.opseu.org/graphics/index.htm>. Please email Emily Visser at [evisser@opseu.org](mailto:evisser@opseu.org) if you have any questions. ☺



**The new logo was unveiled at Convention 2007.**



# The *value* of one. The *power* of many.

Discover the advantages of OPSEU's Group Home & Auto insurance program today!

## 1-888-336-7738

The OPSEU Group Home & Auto Insurance Program offers the following benefits to its members:

- **Preferred group rates** exclusive to OPSEU Members, spouses and dependents residing in the household.
- **Optional Six Star Protector** - Your assurance that your auto insurance premium won't rise as a result of a driving accident, even if you were at fault.
- **Strike Protection Plan** - Will allow deferral of payments on Home or Auto policies when a strike inhibits a member's ability to meet their obligations. Some conditions apply.
- **No interest** monthly payment plan.
- **Identity Theft** - Insurance that protects you.
- **Full service hours** from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm EST Monday - Friday.
- **24 hour emergency claim serves** anywhere in North America.

WIN **\$25,000**  
in home renovations!

Your choice of a home renovation, or \$25,000 in cash.

For your chance to win, call

## 1-888-336-7738

or visit at

[www.avivatraders.com/opseu](http://www.avivatraders.com/opseu)



# Solidarity in action

By David Cox

Union activists talk about solidarity, but what does the word “solidarity” mean in practice?

Two funds set up by OPSEU in 2004 are working to turn this concept into action. These are the Live and Let Live Fund and the Social Justice Fund.



Live and  
Let Live  
Fund 

**The Live and Let Live Fund** was set up to support organizations working to fight HIV/AIDS in both Southern Africa and here in Ontario.

In 2006, more than \$30,000 was transferred by the Live and Let Live Fund to two organizations – 75 per cent to the Stephen Lewis Foundation and 20 per cent to the Ontario AIDS Network. OPSEU also allocates \$50,000 to the Stephen Lewis Foundation annually.

Both organizations help grassroots organizations combat HIV/AIDS in both Southern Africa and Ontario.



Social  
Justice  
Fund 

**The Social Justice Fund** was set up to help workers in vulnerable communities in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia.

It assists development projects in education, health, water supply, fighting poverty, and emergency and humanitarian solidarity.

OPSEU members can get involved in the Social Justice Fund through education, exchanges and fundraising. Locals or members who have links with international development projects that OPSEU could support should contact the fund at: 1-800-268-7376 ext. 8788 or [bwall@opseu.org](mailto:bwall@opseu.org).

**Please visit: [www.opseu.org/solidarityfunds/index.htm](http://www.opseu.org/solidarityfunds/index.htm) for more information and guidelines.**



## BPS celebrates its 15th anniversary

OPSEU's Broader Public Service celebrated its 15th anniversary at a conference in Mississauga June 1-3, 2007. More than 600 members participated in workshops and plenary events highlighting the important role broader public service workers play in making government work for everyone. The event featured the first town hall meeting of the 2007 election campaign. OPSEU brought together Gerry Phillips (Liberal), Joyce Savoline (PC), Andrea Horwath (NDP), and Frank de Jong (Green).

<http://www.opseu.org/bps/conference/>



Images from the conference and BPS chairs (below)



# A fairer voting system — working people need it now

By Tim Little

This provincial Election Day, OPSEU members and all working people in Ontario can change to a more democratic, modern voting system that delivers fairer results, more choice and stronger representation.

In a special referendum, we can decide whether to keep the current voting system — and the winner-take-all politics that go with it — or switch to a made-in-Ontario form of proportional representation, known as MMP.

## What's wrong with the way we vote now?

“Under our current voting system, political parties can win absolute majorities with about 40 per cent of the vote,” explains OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas. “With this ‘phony majority,’ they can cut jobs and public services at will.”

“Progressive people often have to choose between a

‘strategic vote’ and a vote likely to be ‘wasted’ on a party that can’t win in their riding. This must change.”

The proposed system is fairer. It’s simple: If you get the votes, you get the seats. No more choosing between ‘strategic voting’ and a ‘wasted vote.’

As a bonus, under MMP, our Legislature will likely look more like our province. (It’s no secret: the current legislature is dominated by people who are wealthy, middle-aged, white and male.)

But we have a huge challenge ahead. It will take 60 per cent support in the Oct. 10 referendum to change to this new, fairer system. (That, too is unfair!)

## What's the new plan?

It’s a made-in-Ontario plan based on models that work well in New Zealand, Germany, Scotland and

Wales. The new plan was developed by the non-partisan Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform — 103 representative Ontario citizens.

We’d get two votes: the one we’ve always had to elect a local MPP, and another vote for a political party.

Just 90 MPPs will be elected from single-member ridings. Another 39 will be elected to province-wide seats, to balance the unfairness of the riding system.

The result: no ‘wasted’ votes, and a legislature that looks like the one Ontarians voted for.

OPSEU’s 117,000 voters can achieve a big breakthrough on October 10. By voting for the new, fairer voting system, we’ll be ensuring the election of governments that truly represent whom we voted for. ♪



## Mixed Member Proportional:

- ✓ more choice
- ✓ fairer results
- ✓ stronger representation

**October 10 electoral reform referendum:  
It's time to make democracy better!**

For more information:  
[VoteforMMP.ca](http://VoteforMMP.ca)

email: [info@VoteforMMP.ca](mailto:info@VoteforMMP.ca)  
toll-free phone: 1-866-283-3667  
in Toronto call: 416-644-1034



# Objections from the gallery — a response to the critics of MMP

**Many pundits have criticized the Citizens' Assembly plan. Here are their main arguments — and our responses.**

*Won't MMP mean more politicians?*

Yes, and more democracy. It will still mean fewer MPPs than we had in the 1980s and 1990s, when Ontario was far smaller. Ontario now has the fewest democratic representatives per capita in Canada. Right now each MPP represents 110,000 Ontarians. More democracy? We're all for it!

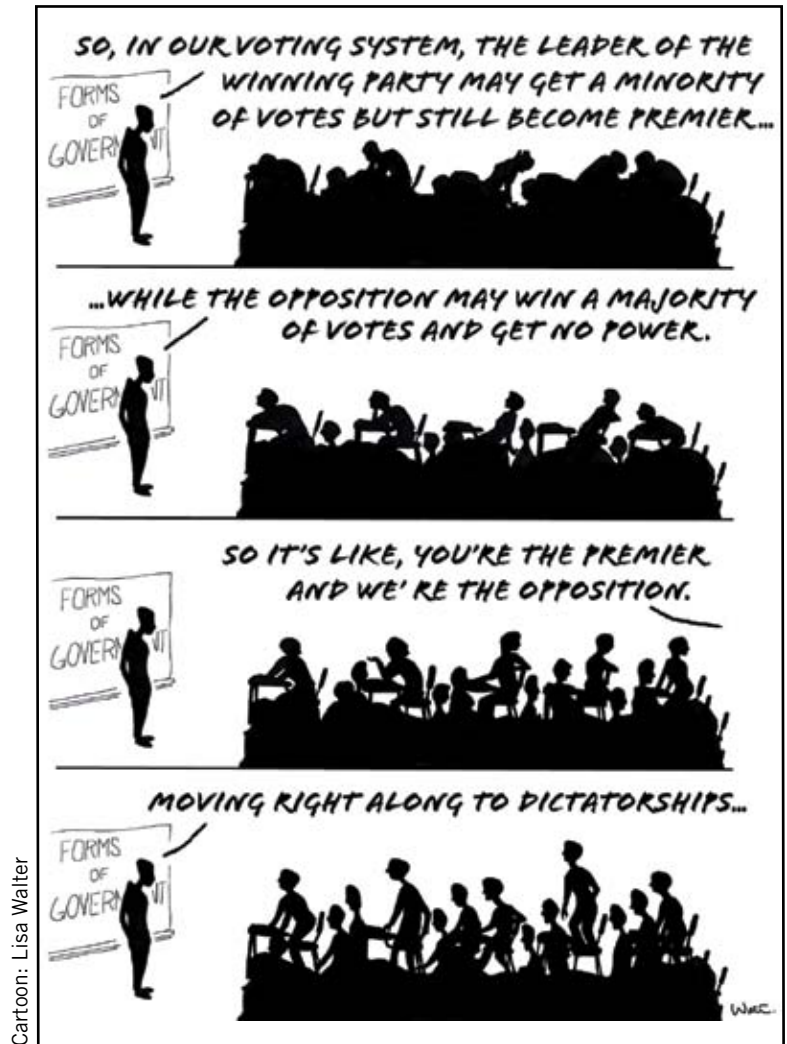
*Won't it create a new class of political hacks?*

No. Everyone will be elected. Under our current unfair system, legislators look pretty much alike, and come from similar backgrounds. Under MMP voting, parties will choose a group that looks more like Ontario. Elsewhere, countries with MMP systems approach 50 per cent women in parliament (by contrast, Ontario and Canada average below 20 per cent).

*Won't we be condemned to permanent minority governments and instability?*

No — only if that's what Ontarians vote for. No Ontario government has received majority voter support since the Depression. Since then we've had many 'phony majorities' we didn't vote for. If we want a majority in future, we'll have to vote for it!

Minority governments under MMP-style systems are just as stable as majorities under the present system and almost always last the full term. In New Zealand, no minority government has fallen in the 11 years of MMP so far. This is because there is no possibility they can win the phony majorities that the present system can deliver to one party. MPPs will have to learn the art of compromise for the common good.



Cartoon: Lisa Walter

*Won't this give small parties too much power?*

No — parties will get seats based on votes received. You get exactly what you vote for. (For example: a similar change at the federal level would transfer dozens of seats from the Bloc Québécois to the NDP, based on voting support.)

*Isn't the proposed system more complicated?*

No. Any system seems complicated if you are new to it, but simple if you've grown up with it. Even so, 'complicated' is better than 'unfair.'

**Find out more about the multi-partisan VOTE for MMP campaign at [www.VoteForMMP.ca](http://www.VoteForMMP.ca). See the full report of the Citizens' Assembly at [www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca](http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca).**

<http://www.opseu.org/politicalaction/index.htm>

# OPSEU Provincial Mental Health Forums expose government's moral failure

By Luisa Quarta

The transition from institutional to community mental health has been a complete failure for the seriously mentally ill who roam our streets, end up in jail or in homeless shelters.

This year OPSEU's mental health forums, held in cities across Ontario, highlighted some of the issues.

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas spoke at mental health forums in London, Kingston and Thunder Bay, May 7-12, Mental Health Week. Another forum is scheduled for Toronto in the fall.

"The government cannot expect to quietly continue the practice of saving money on the backs of a vulnerable group," says Thomas. "There needs to be a comprehensive strategy to make community mental health work."

Participants in all three cities had a long list of complaints.

These included lack of supportive and affordable housing, insufficient hospital resources, vulnerable inpatient programs, and lack of community services and the failure of the Mental Health Act to protect the chronically mentally ill.

In London, St. Joseph's Regional Mental Health Care recently laid off 29 registered practical nurses despite a bail-out by the province. Last year, the hospital could not account for \$14 million given to it in 2003 for harmonization of wages. Thomas is demanding an investigation into the hospital's finances.

In Thunder Bay, participants said program closures scheduled for 2011 are causing great concern when

most people with mental illness can't get access to services in that city.

In Kingston, police said inpatient mental health beds are always full. The shortages in Eastern Ontario were recently highlighted by a *Toronto Star* series on actor Tony Rosato, who spent the last two years awaiting trial at the maximum-security Quinte Detention Centre instead of receiving treatment at a mental health hospital.

October 10 is both Election Day and World Mental Health Day. Let's make candidates accountable and demand changes to mental health delivery. ♣

**For more information:**  
<http://www.opseu.org/bps/health/mental/index.htm>



## OPSEU Symposium on mental health reform in Ontario

**November 13 and 14, 2007, Delta Chelsea Hotel, Toronto**

A Symposium which will bring together mental health care professionals, consumers/survivors, family members, people working in advocacy organizations, government and the justice system to discuss how our current mental health system can better ensure the dignity and respect promised to people with mental illness.

For more information, please contact Luisa Quarta at 416/443-8888, 1-800-268-7376 ext. 8207 or [lquarta@opseu.org](mailto:lquarta@opseu.org)



# OPSEU developmental service workers hold government accountable and win substantial gains

By Sarah Jordison

This summer, seven OPSEU developmental service bargaining units put themselves on the line in an historic strike that won substantial gains for their members. These courageous workers in London, St. Thomas, Chatham, Strathroy, Meaford, Tillsonburg and Picton successfully raised the bar for the other units still bargaining.

Beginning in January, developmental service workers lobbied hard to increase funding to the sector. They built strong relationships with the families of the people they support, and educated families and the media about the funding crisis.

When it came time to hit the picket line the government was unable to dodge direct responsibility for the strikes.

Members in the striking units stood strong, stuck to their message and traveled the province to keep the pressure on. OPSEU members from every region and sector came out to show support.

It was a hot summer — OPSEU developmental service workers made it much hotter and achieved new collective agreements that significantly boosted wages, especially for the lowest-paid. You couldn't be prouder of what they accomplished. 🏆



Photo: Kerry Kearns



Photo: Kerry Kearns



Photo: Kerry Kearns



Photo: Kerry Kearns



Developmental Services members on the line.

# Victory for college workers rights closer after summer campaign

by David Cox

College workers across Ontario celebrated Aug. 30, 2007 after a government announcement brought rights for part-time workers a giant step nearer reality.

That's when the McGuinty government said it intended to recognize the rights of part-time college workers to bargain collectively.

OPSEU's 15,000 full-time academic and support staff, and the Organization of Part-time and Sessional Employees of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (OPSECAAT) welcomed this as a huge victory.

"College workers spoke out for education quality and fairness, and the government listened," OPSEU President Warren (Smockey)

Thomas said. "This will benefit all workers in the colleges, and the students, by creating a better environment to both work and learn."

"We are going to take this as a promise by this government to improve education in Ontario," Thomas said.

OPSECAAT President Roger Couvrette said months of hard work by college workers across the province was coming to fruition.

"College workers worked hard and made it clear this was an issue of education quality in our colleges," Couvrette said.

This announcement came after a vigorous summer campaign. OPSECAAT executive members toured the province in a colourful van,



Photo: Sue Honsberger

turning up at many events in the pre-election period.

As well, in June 2007, a Supreme Court of Canada ruling that collective bargaining rights are protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gave a boost to the workers' cause.

Last year, the Geneva-based International Labour Organization ruled that Ontario's Colleges Collective Bargaining Act (CCBA) should be changed to allow part-time staff employed by the 24 Ontario colleges to join a union and engage in collective bargaining.

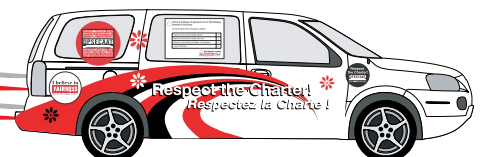
The struggle continues, but college workers are now just one step away from our goal. ▴

**For more information:**  
[www.collegeworkers.org](http://www.collegeworkers.org)

**The OPSECAAT campaign has included an appearance at the OPSEU Convention (top), a visit from activist Stephen Lewis, and a campaign van (bottom, left).**



Photo: David Cox





### Mayworks Cabaret showcases part-time college workers

Part-time college workers in Ontario's twenty-four community colleges live in constant job uncertainty, their skills underappreciated and their talents undervalued. At the Rivoli in Toronto, May 2, 2007, as part of the Mayworks festival, OPSEU and OPSECAAT highlighted the talents of some visual and performing artists who also work part-time at Ontario colleges.

Hosted by part-time college worker Anna Willats (George Brown College in Toronto), the Do the RIGHTS Thing Cabaret showcased professional artists

including jazz performer Hilario Duran (Humber), blues artists Up the Line (George Brown), the group Kavli (Humber), saxophone player Colleen Allen (Humber) and her trio. As well, Maja Ardal (Humber) performed a piece from her one-woman hit You Fancy Yourself, Susan Allen (George Brown) and partner Susiawan performed shadow puppetry, Kirsti Wynne (Seneca) read from her recent work, and Emily Visser (formerly of George Brown) read a poem about part-time work. Visual artists Margaret Rodgers (Durham) and Genevieve Nolet (Centennial) had works on display.

# Save Ontario Parks!



Photo: Canapress

Volunteers at the annual Region 7 picnic model OPSEU's 'Save Ontario Parks!' t-shirt as part of the union's campaign to increase funding for provincial parks and the entire Ministry of Natural Resources. President Warren (Smokey) Thomas and First Vice-President/Treasurer Patty Rout (front row, left) are surrounded

by the volunteers who made the picnic happen. Also shown are Regional Vice-President Jamie Tocker (on the ground, left) and Region 7 board members Brenda Clapp (front row, third from right) and Sandra Snider (front row, right).



*To learn more about the parks and MNR campaigns, visit [www.saveontarioparks.ca](http://www.saveontarioparks.ca) and [www.savethemnr.ca](http://www.savethemnr.ca).*

# Corrections members fight for systemic change

## It takes struggle...and patience

By Barb Thomas and Bebe De Freitas

A huge program in one Ontario ministry could point the way for other Ontario workplaces to challenge workplace discrimination.

The Systemic and Anti-Racism Organizational Change Program grew out of efforts by OPSEU and its members to fight for dignity and equality in the workplace.

Two key legal cases in the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services helped bring this about. These were the 1988 racial discrimination complaints of Michael McKinnon, at Toronto East Detention Centre, and the 1994 gender discrimination grievances of Cheryl O'Brien, at Windsor Jail.

The Systemic Change Program is an order of the Grievance Settlement Board issued in the O'Brien case Aug. 1, 1995. For McKinnon, it took more than 17 years of struggle, and recurring discrimination and harassment on the basis of Aboriginal ancestry, before the Tribunal appointed third-party consultants to ensure the ministry carried out its orders. In late 2005, anti-racism was added to the Systemic Change Program that arose from the O'Brien orders. New terms of reference were developed for the Systemic and Anti-Racism Organizational Change Program in the ministry.

### The Systemic and Anti-Racism Organizational Change Steering Committee

The joint committee overseeing this process is the provincial Steering Committee. Its job is to ensure the orders in the GSB O'Brien decision and the Human Rights Tribunal McKinnon Decision are carried out effectively. The committee has five OPSEU members and five management members.

By 2009, all corrections facilities and Probation & Parole clusters will have a Local Systemic and Anti-Racism Organizational Change Committee. These will apply, support, and monitor changes in the workplace. Collectively, they will be representative of the workplace, and will include women, racialized persons and Aboriginal peoples. Committee members at several pilot sites in Northern and Southern Ontario have already received training.

The local SAROC Committee is a joint employer/union committee like the local Health and Safety Committee and the Local Employee Relations Committees. And like these Committees, it has a provincial counterpart.

### Inside OPSEU

An OPSEU Project Team has been working to develop union capacity to challenge workplace discrimination. It has run two, two-day leadership training sessions for Corrections Local Executive Committees in Toronto and Thunder Bay. This fall, it will conduct two more in Hamilton and Toronto. It has also produced five Info Sheets, available from OPSEU Communications. These include "Dealing with Co-Worker Harassment: A 4-Step Process;" and "Co-Worker Harassment: Practical Supports to the Parties." //△

**For more information:**  
<http://www.opseu.org/hps/justice/index.htm>

## York Region

On Aug. 27 members of Local 304 at York Region CAS went on strike over workload issues. On Aug. 30, the members got a boost when they were joined at a rally by guests including OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas, First Vice-President/Treasurer Patty Rout, Regional Vice-President Doris Middleton, Toronto and York Region Labour Council President John Cartwright, and MPP Cheri DiNovo (not in photo). Also pictured are Local 304 President Lisa Maynard and Vice-President Erin Kinsley. Support came from the whole community in this fight for better services for the region's children at risk.

# Privatization by stealth: The high cost of LCBO Agency stores

By Greg Hamara

If you thought the LCBO privatization issue had been settled once and for all, think again.

While liquor workers scored a resounding victory over Mike Harris's scheme to sell the LCBO in the late 1990s, a new threat is gaining steam: expansion of the number of private "agency stores" popping up across Ontario.

Agency stores are private businesses allowed to sell alcohol through grocery and convenience stores, gas stations and other retail businesses. Originally intended to serve remote, northern communities, today there are more than 200 agency stores, many in high-growth areas. OPSEU

members say at least 90 should be "repatriated" as full-service LCBO outlets.

Call it privatization-by-stealth. Agency stores undercut sales at real LCBO stores and threaten OPSEU members' jobs and hours of work. They do not promote social responsibility, and they increase the risk of full-scale privatization in the future.

The province is losing millions of dollars of revenue through these stores. A recent study commissioned by OPSEU found that the government could recoup \$340 million in revenues over the next 10 years by phasing the most profitable 90 agency store locations back into the LCBO.

OUR LCBO  
LET'S KEEP  
IT PUBLIC!

Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED) members are fighting back. The Agency Stores Campaign was launched earlier this year to educate the public, politicians and the media about the threat agency stores represent to our publicly-owned system of alcohol sales.

OPSEU is calling for an immediate freeze on all new agency stores until a full public review of the program can be held. ♪

**For more information about the Agency Store Campaign please visit:**  
<http://www.opseu.org/lbed/index.htm>

## CAS members stand firm on workload



Photo: Luisa Quarta

# Voices from the Edge

By Lisa Walter and Archana Mathew

OPSEU members who attended the Broader Public Service (BPS) conference in June 2007 heard from an amazing group of workers. Like us, they fight for workplace rights.

The Workers' Action Centre (WAC) is a worker-based organization. They mobilize unorganized workers from diverse communities to pressure government for fairness and dignity at work.

WAC recently released a damning report, *Working on the Edge*. The report documents life in low-paid, temporary agency and contract jobs where employers fail to meet minimum labour standards.



Photo: Lisa Walter

WAC's Regi David (left) and Lucia Prabakaran (right) address the BPS Conference

Heading into the provincial election WAC has three key demands:

1. Increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour – now
2. Effectively enforce the current Employment Standards Act (ESA)

3. Amend the ESA to cover and protect temp agency workers

***We share common goals.  
To get involved, visit:  
[www.workersactioncentre.org](http://www.workersactioncentre.org).***

**SHOW YOUR TRUE COLOURS WITH OPSEU**

For orders: <http://www.opseu.org/merchandise/merchandise.htm>  
or call 1-800-268-7376 x8664