

OPSEU Local 736



ON THE WATERFRONT

Message from the President

I was never so proud to be a part of the ORG as when I watched the Christmas presents you purchased for the children be taken to the Salvation Army. The donations of socks, the food drive and your continued support of the United Way Campaign raising over \$8,000 was amazing. The staff upstairs at the Student Support branch also contributed to the United Way campaign and food drive. It shows me that I work with a wonderful group of caring and compassionate people and I thank you all for your support.

On March 24 we elected new board members to represent our region on OPSEU's executive board see page 5 for details. At convention this year we will elect a

new president as Leah Casselman, our president for over 10 years, will not be running. She

has done a lot for our local, especially in our struggle to get unclassified staff converted. We did a press conference together at the Legislature and I was with her as she did a phone in show in Toronto about our office and the difficulties the public was having getting birth certificates. If you were there, you would have thought she had been sitting next to you for years doing the job. She was flawless in her responses and related them all to the need for full time trained staff. What I will remember the most about her time as President, is our Region 7 picnics. That's when I had first seen her as real person. Most likely, Leah wrapped your hot dog or burger. She didn't just come, enjoy the sun and make a speech. She rolled up her sleeves and worked her butt off with the rest of us volunteers. A new president and a new executive board will mean change.

In Solidarity
Sandra Snider

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President's Message	1
James Watson Memorial Scholarship Winner	1
Memberships Responsibility	2
ICE—In Case of Emergency	2
Making A Difference — An Update	3
Christmas Presents for Salvation Army Charity	3
Gifts from Speciality Services	4
OPTrust Pension Buyback	4
Regional and Convention	4
Employee Relations Committee—ORG	5
Region 7 Elections — Views and Results	5
Volunteer Opportunity—Teen 24 Hour Survival Challenge	6

James Watson Memorial Scholarship Winner

OPSEU Local 736 has initiated a new scholarship program, titled the "James Watson Memorial Scholarship" for family members who meet the scholarship's eligibility requirements. Criteria and eligibility requirements is the applicant had to be a family member of a present or retired local member and submit a short biography and news article/an essay.

When the applications are submitted, then they are passed to a Scholarship Review Board for review and selection. There were five applicants this year—all had to apply by January 31, 2007.

The 2006 - 2007 scholarship winner is Chantell Robere!! Chantell currently enrolled in her first year Dental Hygiene Program at Confederation College. The full article can be read at www.opseu736.org. Go to OPSEU Links and Scholarship Info.



You all have a responsibility to report any injury or illness to your manager, so we can help work towards making a better work environment.



Contact your manager for any time off sick (STP). If you are going to be off work for a long period, you can inform your manager to have your pay cheque (stub) sent to your house. You don't have access to WIN, so you will be able to review your pay, by having it sent home, review monies deducted. When there is any discrepancy contact your manager immediately. Be aware of your sick time, 6 days at 100% salary and 124 days at 75% your salary. You can supplement your sick time by using up vacation credits at a ¼ day vacation to give you 100% pay. If you chose to do this, administration must have it in writing.

After being off for 5 consecutive days, a doctor's note is required to return to work. If accommodation is needed your doctor must recommended that. Have him/her write up the requirements needed to perform your job.

We all need to be reminded of work hours and break. Management has right to monitor your time. When staff is abusing the working hours, other members have to pick up the slack for you. It has been brought to the union attention, that time will be docked from your pay cheque, as unauthorized time off. If extra time is needed, you need to discuss with your manager. Any other time that has not been prearranged (other than sick time/vacation), can be subject to pay reduction.

ICE – In Case of Emergency

In Solidarity
Vicky Brown

Your cell phone can be a lifeline during times of crisis.

ICE (for - *In Case of Emergency*) is an abbreviation that a cell phone user can enter into the phone directory to identify the phone number of a primary contact, such as next of kin. In an emergency situation, when a person may not be able to speak, the **ICE** listing allows rescue workers or other helpers to notify the appropriate person and get relevant information as quickly as possible.

A British paramedic came up with the idea of asking cell phone users to input an entry into their cell phonebook called **ICE**. Accompanying that acronym would be the name and phone numbers of the person who should be called if something has happened to the owner of the phone.

Now paramedics in the USA want to encourage **ICE** usage by Americans. "I certainly think it can help," says Matthew Levy of the International Association of EMTs and Paramedics. "(We are) hoping that we can get people excited."

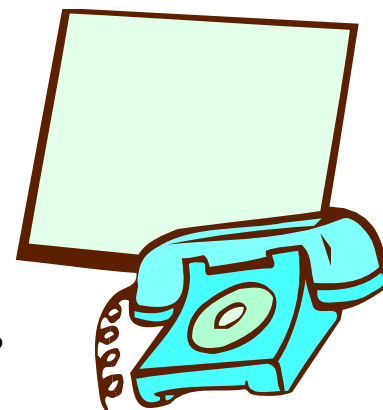
"In a medical emergency, past history is often critical information needed by the rescuers to assist them in providing the most appropriate medical treatment," said Jim Kay, Chief of Hamilton, Ontario's Emergency Service, Fire and EMS. "Having direct access to a number to call when the patient cannot talk will be invaluable, whether it be at a medical or fire emergency scene."

At the scene of an accident, where there are casualties, first responders or rescue services are making life-and-death decisions. It would be useful to know which of the numbers stored in your cell phone's electronic address book can be used to quickly reach your key contacts and next of kin.

Hospitals would also find this useful as they try to establish your identity in cases where ID is not on the person.

You can make their job easier by adding an entry in the contacts list in your cell phone under the label **ICE** with the names and phone numbers of people that should be called in case of an accident or injury. Simply put the acronym **ICE** before the names you want to designate as key contacts - creating entries such as **ICE1**, **ICE2** and **ICE3**, etc.

Many people say they carry cell phones in case of an emergency so it's a natural that emergency contact information be stored there.



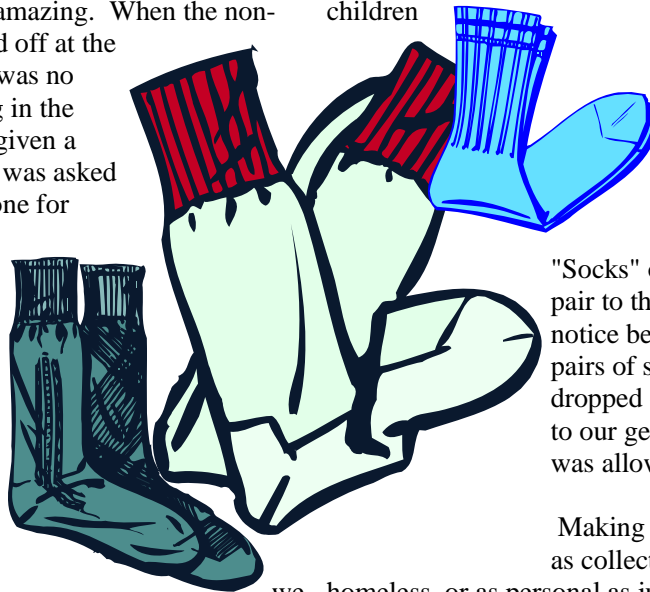
References: USA Today, Whattis.com, and Merginet.com

By Len Mason, In Solidarity

Congratulations everyone! Your contributions to the "Food Drive" for the Shelter House, the "Secret Santa" campaign and the request for "Socks" were truly amazing. When the non-perishable food items were dropped off at the Shelter House in November, there was no problem getting assistance carrying in the boxes of donated items. We were given a small tour of their new facility and was asked to extend a big thank you to everyone for considering the Shelter House as the recipient of the donations collected.

In conjunction with the Salvation Army's "Dinner for the Needy" on December 17, 2006, we collected a total of 77 gifts as well as cash for the "Secret Santa" campaign. I trust everyone had an opportunity to see the presents under the tree. Wasn't that an amazing sight?! As we were carrying in the wrapped presents, Gail Kromm from the Salvation Army was truly amazed and overwhelmed by the generosity of our donations and commented how the room

looked like "Santa's Workshop". She said she was really looking forward to the dinner and the reactions from the children attending. Here is her response a few days later!



Congratulations go out to Lori Shermack, Donna Blomquist and Susanna Shaffer who were the lucky recipients of the gift certificates.

"Socks" off to everyone who donated a pair to the Salvation Army on such short notice before Christmas. A total of 124 pairs of socks were collected and dropped off at the men's shelter. Thanks to our generous donation each person was allowed 2-3 pairs.

Making a difference can be as ambitious as collecting clothing or food for the homeless, or as personal as just spending an afternoon helping/talking to an elderly neighbour or relative. Either way, making a difference in someone's life is all that truly matters. Thank you!

Sandy Symons

Christmas Presents for Salvation Army Charity

We had quite a few families come to the dinner this year but we still had lots of gifts so we were able to give each child 2 gifts.



They were all so appreciative at receiving more than they expected and the gifts were just so nice. There were so many smiles and glowing faces it was heartwarming and I wish you had been able to come for even a short time.

I would like to share one story. We have a family that comes every year. Everyone from the grandparents to to the grandchildren. Each year the group is a little larger as new grandchildren arrive. This year, after their visit with Santa they came back to their table and opened their gifts. One of the little girls opened her gift and it was a little doll with accessories. Her eyes just popped open and she exclaimed "This is just what I wanted!" and she kept repeating this over and over and showing everyone in her family. Then she opened her other gift and it turned out to be a big baby doll. Again she had this awed look on her face and she just said "This is mine. It's mine." And, reached into the box and gave the doll a big hug. She just could hardly believe what she had just received. All the children in the family were very excited about their gifts and were showing them off to each other and the adults in the family. When Santa came it to see what all the commotion was, they all ran up to him to thank him and give him a big hug. This was the moment that made the day special for everyone there. Some of the Valhalla staff were

in tears, they were so touched by what had happened.

Thank you for helping to make this Christmas special for many families here in Thunder Bay. Have a Merry Christmas.

Gail Kromm
The Salvation Army



Each year, Children's Aid compiles a list of needy families and Crown Wards and pairs these to those wishing to adopt a needy family/person at Christmas. In early September, Speciality Services decided to adopt a family through Children's Aid in lieu of a gift exchange between ourselves.

As a result, our department was provided the wish list of a 16 yr old Crown Ward. We collected three banker's boxes of food and toiletry items in addition to \$180.00 used to purchase items on "Matt's" wish list. Five boxes were delivered to Matt on December 20, 2006. His caseworker was quite surprised at the generosity shown by our team and thanked us on behalf of Matt.

Karen Pellizzari

OPTrust Pension Buyback - Do YOU know the facts?

There are staff members who has worked in the OPS for a few years, seasonal staff included—have never contributed or have known about contributing to their pension plan until within the last year or two. Staff were given forms to fill out to enroll into the OPTrust pension plan, papers to buy back past credit for service from their hire date. However—do we really know details behind this? OPTrust Client Services was called to get answers to these questions and this is what was given:

Q: Does buying back past service credit help you to retire early?

A: Yes, by buying past service credit—you essentially knock time off until you may retire.

Q: How is the cost of buying back "Past Service Credit" determined?

A: It is determined based on how many months / years you are buying back as well as your current rate of pay.

Q: When buying back "Past Service Credit", does the employer match dollar-for-dollar contributions, or another rate?

A: The employer does match your contributions (buyback cost or monthly contributions) dollar-for-dollar into your pension plan. For example—if your buyback cost was \$2900 and you pay the \$2900, the employer will match for a total contribution of \$5800.

Q: If an employee was to leave the OPS, would they be able to withdraw their pension contributions from OPTrust and role it into an RRSP?

A: Yes.

Q: Would the amount that would be withdrawn from OPTrust be only the staff's contributions or total monies contributed from employee and employer?

A: The total value of all contributions would be eligible for rollover.

Regional and Convention

On February 10, 2007 Local 736 had a general meeting. At this meeting, individuals were elected to represent our local at the Annual convention in Toronto.

Election for Regional members will be held March 24, 2007 at the Airline, where OPSEU members from all locals in Region 7 will come to vote for their representatives. At the February 10 general meeting, the elected representatives for Local 736 are:

Delegate 1: Vicky Brown

Alternate 1: Diane Harrison

Delegate 2: Sandra Symon

Alternate 2: Tim King

Observer: Nadine Sinclair-Horner

Convention will be held from April 19-24, 2007 at Sheraton Convention Centre in Toronto. Our Local will be sending two delegates, two alternates and one observer. The delegates from

our local will be our official representatives who will do the voting. In the event that the delegates are unable to vote, the alternates will go in their place. An observer is to go for the experience and to familiarize themselves with the procedures and protocols of convention. The elected members who will be attending the April Convention / Elections are:

Delegate 1: Vicky Brown Alternate 1: Pam Valente

Delegate 2: Rachel Brown Alternate 2: Diane Harrison

Observer 1: Leeann Cherwonick

Congratulations to you for being elected to be our representatives!

For President Leah Castleman's announcement, please go to www.opseu736.org, Announcements page and it's on December 18, 2006.

Well, as I write this, we have just selected our vacation for 2007 and it appears that on most teams everyone got at least one week of vacation in the summer. The change to the vacation policy is one of many issues the LERC has been working on with the employer. It may not be exactly what everyone wanted, but it is a vast improvement from what we had in 2006. We have also, been successful in working with the employer to negotiate the Shift Roster that is allowing evening shift staff to move to days; as vacancies develop both permanently and temporarily (if the vacancy is more than 6 months). Staff will move based on seniority rather than having to compete for a position they already have on a different shift. The first shuffle has started and we are eagerly awaiting new permanent staff on our evening shift to be announced to fill those holes.

Most of the staff at the ORG attended the Service Ontario Kick-off with Bob Stark. At those meetings, he listened to your concerns and issues and committed to getting back to you on the input you provided. Some suggestions were implemented almost immediately. You met again in your teams, to suggest solutions to those concerns and issues with a further commitment from management to look at your solutions. Now is the time to have your say., bring your ideas forward and hopefully they will help to improve the organization.

Your LERC committee is also committed to bringing your issues and solutions to the table for discussion. The LERC consists of Sandra Snider, Vicky Brown, Tara Urbanski, Candy Kushner and Tom Bryson as the alternate for the Union. Sandra Leonetti, Kelly McDevitt, Debra Hyatt and Ian Altman for the employer. To bring your issues forward—e-mail any Union member of the committee, place it in the LERC suggestion box located by the main union board (white box) or online at <http://www.opseu736.org>—FORMS tab. We will try to respond to all suggestions. The minutes are available on the I:\ drive in a folder marked “ERC Min” and posted on the bulletin board by the exit door for anyone who wants to read.

Sandra Snider, Co-Chair LERC

Region 7 Election - Views and Results

The Regional Elections was held at the Travelodge-Airplane on March 24, 2007. Delegates, Alternates and Observers from all over Region 7 were in attendance.

Six members have been nominated and ran for three Executive Board Members positions. John O’Brian, Brenda Clapp, Sandra Snider, Joseph Catroppa, Kyle Pearson, James Tocker.

Speeches were made by all delegates that followed by a number of questions from the floor. A number of questions included issues on what the statement of respect meant to each running member, what plans would there be for retired OPSEU members, if elected – how would they preserve the uniqueness of our region, and to explain their views on the budget announcement.

Four ballot rounds have occurred. The first round – James Tocker (Local 706) was voted in. Second ballot round produced no winners. Third ballot round was tight to the wire but announced Sandra Snider (Local 736) elected next Executive Board Member. Last ballot round and third Executive Board Member to be voted in is Brenda Clapp (Local 710). Jamie Tocker was also voted in to be Region 7’s Vice President and Sandra Snider was voted to be the regional Vice President’s alternate.

Vicky Brown was voted to be an alternate at the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) convention in June. Nadine Sinclair-Horner, Tim King, Sandy Symons and Vicky Brown were voted in as alternates to attend the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) convention in November 2007. Nadine Sinclair-Horner was voted to attend the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) convention in May 2008, while Vicky, Tim and Sandra Symons were voted to be alternates.

Other brothers and sisters elected to committees representing Region 7 are: John Watson for Resolutions committee; Carl Thibideau for Constitution committee; Credentials committee is Mark Polson. The Provincial Women’s Committee has Mary Cory as a member, Greg Snider was elected to the Provincial Human Rights committee and Kyle Pearson was elected to the Provincial Young Worker’s Committee.

It was a positive and informative experience representing Local 736 as delegates, alternates and observer. Meeting the candidates, fellow members from other Locals in the region and experiencing the election proceedings where the most memorable and educational. We look forward to attending future conferences, conventions and gatherings.

Tim King and Sandra Symons





This would be a fun and exciting Opportunity for our Local to be apart of. The event is from 10am June 2 to 10am on June 3, 2007. Volunteer roles during the event include:

Team Leader (similar to being a camp counsellor) - would prefer to have these people commit to being there for the full 24 hours. They can sleep during the night. Tents are provided.

Agency/Business staff (eg Ontario Works, Employment Office) - Shifts 4-8 hours

Role Playing (eg Drug Publisher, Police Officer, Nice Person-gives money to homeless, etc.) - shifts 2-6 hours

Security—Friday & Saturday all night—shifts 6-12 hours

Evening Supervision—Approximately from 5 to 10pm. Supervise as participants take part in workshops also some recreational activities

Night Supervision—10pm –6am—supervise both sleeping and awake participants,

supervise and maintain camp (hobo) fires.

Breakfast & Wrap-up—Assist in supervision during breakfast, participant evaluation, help hand out prizes and with closing activities

Registration Table—Sign-in participants, give supplies, accept donations collected—shift 2-3 hours

Site Setup—June 1 during the day and evening shifts 4-8 hours

Site Take-down—June 3 approximately 10am-1pm

Thank you for any assistance you can provide.
Sincerely,

Gail Kromm
Public Relations & Development Representative

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Do you have a story to tell, experience to share or news to report?

Do you ever find yourself needing medical / dental / drug claim forms and you are not at work?

Do you have any family members that is in post-secondary education? There are lots of scholarship opportunities for enrolled students to apply for!

Do you want to recognize a fellow OPSEU member for a contribution or give out a special mention?

Do you want to know more about your local, their announcements and representing committees?



VISIT

WWW.OPSEU736.ORG