



Hidden Treasures

January 2007 • Volume 5 Issue 1

Long standing local president passing on torch

by Karrie Ouchas, Editor/Local Communications Committee

Demareski not seeking reelection as Local President

Kathleen Demareski, long time Local 340 activist, has announced that she will not be seeking reelection as Local 340 President on February 22, 2007.

Demareski has been an active steward since 1996. In 1997, she was elected to the position of secretary. In 1999 Demareski was elected as local president. She has been president since then, with a break from February 2005 to April 2006. During this time, Demareski was a member of the OPS bargaining team. Demareski is currently the co-chair of the Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee, a member of the Central Enforcement and Renewal Committee team and the co-chair to the Corporate Tax Administration Redesign (CTAR) Working Group. She is an avid health and safety

advocate, which she claims is her "passion".

"It is time for change," she states. "It's time

for newer activists to take up the torch while more seasoned activists are still available to provide sage advice and guidance. After 9 years of service as president of this local and dedication to its members, it's time for me to focus on other projects that impact all members in the Ontario Public Service. (OPS)."



Kathleen Demareski

Local 340 is holding elections at the General Membership Meeting on February 22, 2007. The meeting is in the lower auditorium of the Oshawa Public Library, starting at 5:00 p.m.

Elections for officer positions are held bi-annually on the odd year. To be nominated and elected, the incumbent must be a local steward.

Several stewards have declared their intent to run for officer positions, including Karrie Ouchas for President, Art Slade for Vice-President, David Loeffen for Treasurer and Benjamin Ng for Secretary.



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Editorial Policy

We invite Local 340 members to feel a sense of ownership of *Hidden Treasures* and our website. It is our intent that this publication will relate to local issues as well as share information from OPSEU corporate.

We encourage members to submit articles for publication. Where an article contains a byline, the views are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Local officers and stewards.

All articles must be signed and should contribute to the welfare of the Local, the Union and its members. If a person or office is named in an article, they will be given an opportunity to respond in the same issue.

We reserve the right to edit for libel, length and clarity.



Local 340 Executive

Officers

Kathleen Demareski, President
Art Slade, Vice-President (A)
Karrie Ouchas, Chief Steward
David Loeffen, Treasurer (A)
Norman Bell, Secretary

Stewards

Bernadette Bonfordi
Sandra Carter, Health and Safety Co-chair
Rob Cox
Deb Devine
Julie Folino
Kelly Howe
David Loeffen
Betty Marchegiano
Benjamin Ng
Nancy Robinson
Ina Spence
Terri Stevens
Genevieve Williams
Cathy Wood
Paul Zapp

Information Stewards

Bonnie Wheeler

Should I stay or should I go?

by Karrie Ouchas, Editor/Local Communications Committee

Understanding the employment stability process and other options for surplus employees

With the recent announcement regarding the Corporate Tax Administration Redesign Project (CTAR), understanding the language of Article 20B – Employment Stability – has never been more important to those that are affected. Article 20B.1 of the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Collective

Agreement states that affected employee must be provided with a pre-notice of 10 days for positions that are deemed surplus. The employee has a decision to make at this point. They can opt to exit the Ontario Public Service (OPS) through resignation or retirement or they can choose to invoke redeployment language.

Once formal notice is given, the employee either exits the OPS or all efforts are made for redeployment over a six month period.

Months 1 - 3

In the first three months, the Ministry of Government Services will attempt to identify a direct assignment (Article 20B.3). If a match is identified, the employee is assigned to the vacancy.

If a match is not identified, the employee may invoke bumping rights (Article 20B.4). Bumping a less senior employee is not restricted to a specific section, branch or Ministry. Seniority is determined by years of service

within the OPS.

If an employee accepts the bump, he/she moves into the position. If the bump is not accepted, MGS will continue to look for a direct assignment after the fifth month of the notice period has begun.

If a direct assignment is identified, the employee moves into the position. If a bump is not identified, the employee is laid off.

Months 4 – 6

If no bump is found, MGS will continue to

look for a direct assignment and will also search for conditional assignments (Article 20B.12).

If a direct or conditional assignment is found, the employee moves into the vacancy.

Months 5 – 6

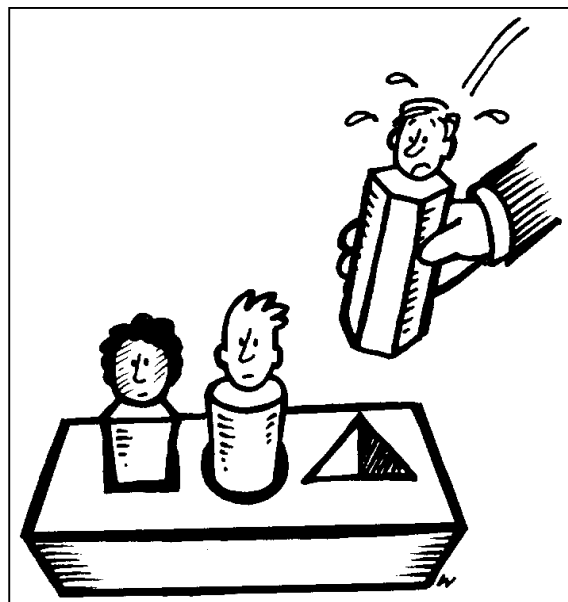
If a direct or conditional assignment cannot be found, MGS will continue to search for direct/conditional assignments. In the interim, an employee may be assigned to a temporary assignment.

If all these measures fail and, if the employee had been working in a temporary assignment ends without a direct/conditional assignment being identified, the employee is laid off.

It should be noted that, if an identified surplus employee successfully performs in the conditional, he/she will be permanently appointed to the position.

Voluntary Exit Option

Employees who have not received a layoff notice may volunteer to exit the OPS to allow for



*This edition of **Hidden Treasures** authorized for distribution by Kathleen Demareski, Local 340 President*

Some graphics and articles courtesy of



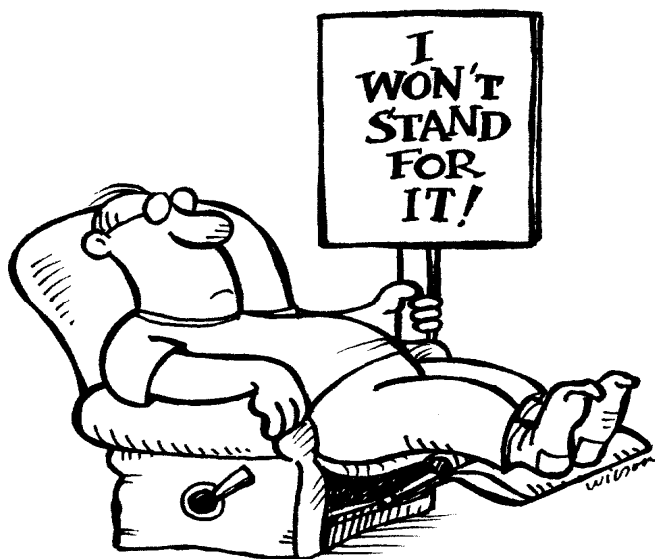
a position vacancy for a surplus employee. A surplus employee must be reasonably qualified to perform the duties of the proposed vacancy. If a match is determined, the employee volunteering to exit is entitled to pay in lieu of notice of six months, termination payments under Article 53, enhanced severance of 1 week's pay for every completed year of continuous service (Article 9) and the right to apply for restricted competitions from the last day of work until 24 months from the date on which the lay-off would have otherwise occurred.

Tuition Reimbursement

A surplus employee may be eligible for tuition reimbursement of up to \$3,000 if attending an approved education program, with receipts.

The reimbursement is eligible for surplus employees who have been laid off at the end of the notice period and for surplus employees who are working through their notice period and take a program for the purpose of upgrading employment related skills.

Notwithstanding the provisions described in the collective agreement, as described above, the CTAR Working Group and the employer have launched a Workforce Adjustment Measures (WAM) agreement which allows for more leniency for requests for lateral transfers. For more information, read the applicable articles of the collective agreement, contact a union steward or visit www.opseu.org.



THE ARMCHAIR ACTIVIST

A President's farewell

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a Happy New Year.

I hope that your holidays were joyous and the time was well spent with family and friends. It is important to remember what we must cherish in life most and that is loved ones. As this New Year unfolds, there will be many challenges ahead of us such as the Corporations Tax Administration Redesign (CTAR) project.

I am confident that this local has very capable and compassionate stewards that will represent the members fairly, equitably and competently. I am so proud of our Local 340 union activists. They are second to none.

It is with mixed emotion that I will report to you that I am passing on the torch as your local president. The time has come to encourage, support and promote a new generation of union activists. I will continue to be involved at the Local, Ministry and Central level of this Union.

A have very fond memories of the hardships that we have overcome and the battles won together in the past. I thank each and every member of this local for challenging me, and you're Union. It has been a very important part of my personal growth.

I thank each and every one of you for your patience, kindness and support over the past years as your Local President.

In solidarity,

Kathleen Demareski

Training to serve you better

by Art Slade, Local Communications Committee

Local 340 stewards participate in training and teambuilding exercises

On November 20 and 21, 2006, stewards attended training and teambuilding workshops hosted by the Local 340 officers. The workshops were held at the Le Gala banquet facilities in Whitby.

Terry Baxter, former Chief Negotiator for the Ontario Public Service (OPS) bargaining, gave the opening remarks. In his speech, he told those in attendance that the steward body is the most critical role in the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). Stewards are the direct link between what's happening on the shop floor and head office.

Region 3 Executive Board Members, Doris Middleton (Regional Vice-President), Pauline Tapping and Patty Rout, provided words of encouragement to the local and an overview of the structure of OPSEU.

Eric Morin, the Central Enforcement and Renewal Committee (CERC) Co-Chair, led the training after the opening remarks.

The first day focused on identifying needs and leadership styles.

Participants were introduced to the theories of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Johari Window. Participants learned about the pros and cons of various leadership styles.

Participants were divided into groups for a friendly competition which challenged them to work as a team. Each

team was instructed to build a bridge that was strong enough to support a weight and wide enough for an object to slide underneath. The bridge could only be constructed of newspaper and masking tape. The exercise helped participants to identify their own leadership and communication styles.

The second day was committed to discussing communication techniques and managing conflict. Examples were driven home through various role playing activities.

The afternoon of the second day was spent interpreting the Ontario Public Service Collective Agreement.

Stewards who participated in the training left with a better understanding of themselves, their strengths as a union steward and a stronger bond with their union sisters and brothers who form the local executive.



Terry Baxter, former OPSEU Chief Negotiator, provided opening remarks

Eric Morin, CERC Co-chair facilitated local steward training

Photos courtesy of OPSEU Communications



L to R—Pauline Tapping (Region 3 Executive Board Member), Karrie Ouchas, Kathleen Demareski, Genevieve Williams, Kelly Howe, Sandra Carter, David Loeffen, Benjamin Ng, Monty Mohammad (OPSEU Member Development Trainee), Julie Folino, Art Slade and Rob Cox.

Corporate Tax Administration Redesign Update

by Kathleen Demareski, CTAR Working Group Co-chair

To date, the Business Services Transition Agreement and the Human Resources Agreement have not been signed.

The Corporate Tax Administration Redesign (CTAR) Working Group continues to meet to explore creative solutions to issues that are arising in advance of the potential transfer of OPSEU members to the federal government.

Craig Rix is replacing Doug Gray as the new Chief Negotiator for the Human Resources Agreement negotiations.

On December 13, 2006 the Ontario government introduced legislation that proposes to combine the Income Tax Act and the Corporations Tax Act.

A new vacancy management strategy is now in effect that has been agreed upon for OPSEU bargaining unit vacancies. Position in the Tax Compliance and Revenue Operations Branch (TCROB) Filed Audit, Tax Advisory Services and Tab Appeals will be posted as temporary for a period "up to 18 months". Positions in the Client Accounts and Services Branch (CASB) Operations and TCROB Desk Audit will be filled as determined by business needs and supported by a business case which must be approved by the branch director. Non-corporate tax vacancies will be restricted to division staff (Tax Revenue Division (TRD)). A new Workforce Adjustment Measures (WAM) agreement is now in place to ensure affected members can stay in the OPS.

Additional information can be found on the employer's TRD intranet site and on www.opseu.org.



Local 340 proposes motion to stop transfer

by Benjamin Ng, Local Communications Committee

At the Ministry of Finance, divisional Meeting (November 25 and 26, 2006 in Toronto), all of the delegates unanimously approved a motion proposed by Local 340 to actively engage in a campaign to educate the public and the membership about negative impacts of the Corporate Tax Administration Redesign (CTAR) project. This includes lower benefits, a loss of job security and loss of seniority rights for 600+ known OPSEU members directly and an indefinite number of members indirectly. In addition, the taxpayers of the Province of Ontario can anticipate millions of dollars of lost revenue that would otherwise fund health care and education programs.

The motion also directed that a sub-committee of the Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee (MERC) be established to investigate all options and take all possible actions to stop the transfer of corporate income tax administration from the Government of Ontario to the Government of Canada.

In this subcommittee, we have brothers and sisters who work in the corporate income tax program who will be fighting for all of us whether directly in corporate income tax or other program that may be adversely affected by the transfer.

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) holds Ontario Public Service (OPS) divisional meetings bi-annually. Each local elects representatives to attend to discuss ministry specific issues.

Final report pending on classification grievances

by Karrie Ouchas, Editor/Local Communications Committee

The Joint System Sub Committee (JSSC) has recently indicated that the mediator's final report on classification grievances is still pending. Both parties have agreed that no details will be released until the final mediator's report is published. Once the report is available, the results will be posted to www.opseu.org. Information will be distributed locally, including the addition of a link to the report on Local 340's website.

In a letter of understanding signed upon ratification of the current Ontario Public Service (OPS) Collective Agreement (June 24, 2005), the employer and the union agreed to a process for dealing with the backlog of classification grievances. The agreement included the appointment of a neutral mediator to help expedite the settlement process. In addition, both parties agreed to a moratorium on the filing of any new classification grievances for the term of this

Collective Agreement.

The intent of the letter of understanding was to provide a solution to address the backlog of more than 6,000 classification grievances before the end of 2006. In the past, the JSSC was comprised of three employer and three union representatives. The union representatives were permitted only one week per month to review and prepare classification grievance cases to be heard before the committee. The review process did not include the assistance of a third party, such as a mediator. Provincial legislation does not currently allow for classification grievances to be heard before the Grievance Settlement Board (GSB).

Under the letter of understanding, two OPS members have been booked off full time to review and prepare the grievances for review before employer committee members and a mediator.

Kennedy House on strike shy of a year

by Karrie Ouchas, Editor/Local Communication Committee

Members of Local 361, employees of Kennedy House in Ajax, have been on strike since March 28, 2006. The issues are employee safety, wages and hours of work. This is the third consecutive strike for these members.

Kennedy House is a maximum security facility for young offenders from ages 12 to 17. Offences committed include armed robbery, murder and sexual assault.

Members face these dangerous offenders on a daily basis, making \$10,000 less in salary than those working in other young offender facilities in the province.

Support our Kennedy House sisters and brothers. Contact the Minister of Children and Youth Services, Mary Ann Chambers. Ask what she is doing to make Kennedy House safer for staff and clients.



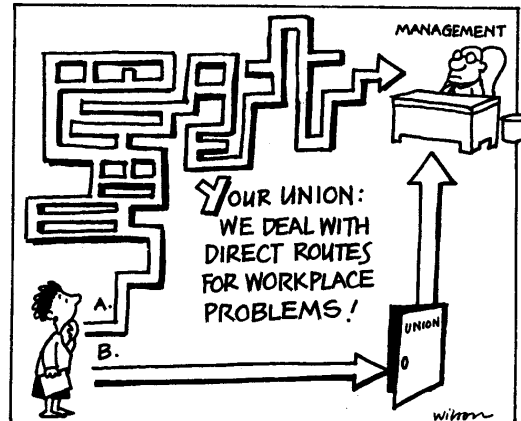
Who's got your back?

by Art Slade, Local 340 Communications Committee

In the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), the local steward body is your link to the central union. The steward's job in OPSEU consists of being an available resource for you. A steward acts as a direct link to the local executive body and can provide advice, preparation and presentation of grievances. Steward's also helps with interpreting the collective agreement and communicates important information which directly impacts members, such as bargaining.

A local steward is available to meet with you and your reporting manager, senior manager and/or a Human Resources Consultant (HRC) to represent your best interest on such issues as your enrollment into the Attendance Support Program, disciplinary hearings and the return to work/accommodation program. The steward ensures that your rights are upheld under the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Collective Agreement and legislations such as the Public Service Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Stewards have many different roles to choose from within the local. Each steward utilizes his or her own individual strengths to contribute to the local member body. Some prepare and present grievances. Some will run for officer positions to assist in the day to day operation of the local. Others act as information stewards whose job is to distribute information amongst the membership. Others play an active role on

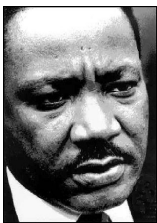


various committees, such as the Local Enforcement and Renewal Committee (LERC) or on special project committees, such as the Corporate Tax Administration Redesign (CTAR) Working Group. In our local, we are fortunate enough to have talented stewards who contribute to our communications committee, which is responsible for our quarterly publication, *Hidden Treasures*, the maintenance of our local website and other promotional materials necessary to communicate with the membership.

If you have any questions concerning your rights and entitlements, your steward will provide you with an answer. If he or she is unsure or is unable to answer, they will contact someone who can.

Local 340 does not assign stewards to represent members in a specific area or location. Members are free to choose from the steward list whomever they feel most comfortable talking to.

Words to live by



*Our lives begin to end
the day we become silent
about things that matter.*
- Martin Luther King Jr.

*Dance like nobody's watching;
Love like you've never been hurt.
Sing like nobody's listening;
Live like it's Heaven on earth.*

- Mark Twain



*Courage, my friends;
'tis not too late to build
a better world.*
- Tommy Douglas

The vicious downward spiral of stress and staff turnover

by Benjamin Ng, Local Communications Committee

In our offices, we are bombarded with buzz-words like “leadership,” “participation” and “innovation.” These are supposed to be examples of the “new age of enlightenment”, compared to the “old school” days of Henry Ford’s assembly line. Yet, I dare say that not much has changed.

Regardless of each one of our positions, we can relate to the much to be desired computer systems that create more problems than they solve. Guess who has to manually clear up the mess? Or what about the virtual assembly line where our work is monitored against production quotas?

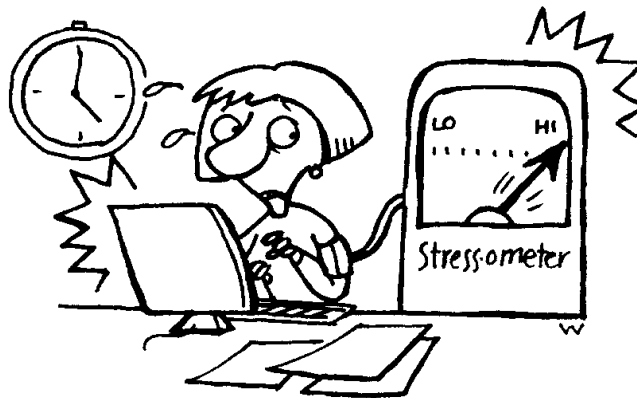
The inevitable result is that employees become stressed and leave the position as soon as they can. I don’t blame them. It is, of course, decided that the work that is left behind has to be borne by the remaining staff. It is not long before those remaining begin to apply for jobs elsewhere. So goes the downward spiral.

To address these workload issues, the typical

answer is new hiring. Unfortunately, this measure is only temporary. From obtaining approval to screening applications to interviewing and finally hiring and training, the lead time is often a year or more. When the new hires are familiar with their new jobs, they will most likely feel the same stresses as their predecessors and apply for jobs elsewhere. So the cycle begins again.

The solution is to create more variety in the work by using rotations wherever possible. Staff can accept development opportunities in other positions, providing the variety and increasing their transferable skills and knowledge. Even though staff would be moving around instead of staying at a fixed position, another employee would be given the opportunity to move into the temporary

vacancy. Initially, there may be a sag in productivity due to training. However, over time, the job enrichment may actually lead to higher long-term productivity.



Did you know Local 340 is a composite local?

by Karrie Ouchas, Editor/Local Communications Committee

Local 340 represents members of both the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Government Services (MGS).

The change came about with the transfer of approximately 45 I & IT systems officer to the Central Agencies Cluster (CAC). The CAC is a section of the MGS.

Local 340 is comprised of 1,397 members from the Ministry of Finance and section of the MGS whose work place is within Durham Region. Work sites are located at 33 King St. W., 40 King St. W. and 55 Athol St., Oshawa, 1600 Champlain Ave. and 590 Rossland Rd. W., Whitby and 1550 Bayly St. in Pickering.

The Desperate Auditors debut at festive event

by Art Slade, Local Communications Committee

At the annual Auditors Festive Dinner and Dance on December 8, 2006, approximately 110 attendees were treated to the inaugural performance of "The Desperate Auditors". Auditors from as far away as London attended the event with their spouses at the Holiday Inn, Oshawa. Pauline Goral, Executive Director for the Tax Compliance and Revenue Operations Branch (TCROB) also participated in the festivities.

What began as an office joke led to the creation of the group. Halina Witt had located a song on the internet called "My Cubicle". She suggested that it would be comical if someone would lip sync the song at the dinner and dance. Norm Bell, Francisco Villanueva, Benjamin Ng and Art Slade rose to the challenge.

As a part of their performance, Witt and Bell presented a slide show presentation which played in time with the music. The pictures were of staff working in their cubicles. The show was a huge hit. The Desperate Auditors performed one more song that night; "Johnny be Good" by Chuck Berry.



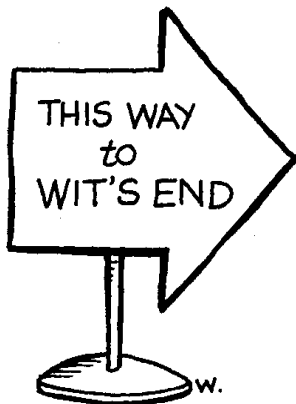
The Desperate Auditors
L to R—Francisco Villanueva, Benjamin Ng, Norman Bell and Art Slade

Staff in Pickering were treated to an encore performance of "The Desperate Auditors" at a pot luck luncheon on December 22, 2006. The group raised the bar at this performance, bringing in an electric guitar, bass and tambourine. Bell played lead guitar, bass was performed by Slade and special guest, Kamille Gopichand, worked the

tambourine. Villanueva provided lead vocals for the songs "Rock and Roll Music" and "Johnny be Good" by Chuck Berry. Bell took up the lead vocals for "I Shot the Sheriff" by Eric Clapton.

Both performances were well received. A "thank you" performance will be held on February 14, 2006 in Pickering. The Desperate Auditors are anticipated to appear at upcoming Federated Health events and will be performing in Oshawa in the near future.

Spokesperson for the group, Slade, says, "We look forward to working together creating music, and entertaining staff and others for years to come! Watch out for us at a party near you in the future. We will surprise you!"



Sign, sign, everywhere a sign

Posted in a Laundromat

Automatic washing machines;

Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

Posted outside a second hand shop

We exchange anything - bicycles, washing machines, etc.
Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain.

Outside a public washroom

Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.

New activist experiences solidarity firsthand

by Kelly Howe, Local Communications Committee

Wow! That was my first thought as I entered the conference room at the Toronto Sheraton Hotel on Saturday November 24, 2006. Oddly enough, that was also the first word used in the last speech given to us by Terry Baxter, Ontario Public Service Employees Union's (OPSEU's) Chief Negotiator, before he retired.

This was my first experience at an OPSEU Divisional meeting. I have to say that I have never experienced anything like it. The speeches presented at this meeting were moving and informative. What I liked the most, and took away with me, was the knowledge that I acquired. I learned so much about issues that were going on in other Ministry's that I had not heard about before.

This made me realize being an OPSEU member does not only mean knowing about what is going on within my own Ministry, but within the entire Ontario Public Service (OPS). I now view the OPS as our own little community and

am interested in any and all issues that may arise.

I found also that the divisional meeting motivated me. I instantly wanted to assist with stopping the changes to the Human Rights Commission and to help the part time college workers fight for the right to organize with a collective bargaining unit agent. And I wanted to do it that very second.

Something else that I found amazing was that if you needed help or if you wanted to discuss an injustice that was happening to you or any of

your colleagues, the six hundred people in that room were willing to back you up, and help you find a solution. Never before have I seen such solidarity, and it was and is truly breathtaking.

So thank you OPSEU and thank you to the many people that I met and spent my time with over the course of the weekend. It was definitely an experience I will never forget.



Casselman announces she's not running for 7th term

by Karrie Ouchas, Editor/Local Communications Committee



Leah Casselman, President of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), has announced that she will not be seeking re-election at OPSEU's 2007 Annual Convention.

The announcement came from her office late in 2006 after much speculation of her intent. Casselman has been president for an unprecedented 6 2-year terms.

The next president will be elected by delegates to attend convention from across the province.

**WE ARE ONLY
GOING TO SAY
THIS ONCE!**



our next meeting is:

**OPSEU Local 340
General Membership Meeting
February 22, 2007
5:00 p.m.
Oshawa Public Library
Lower Auditorium**

Local 340 2006 Grievance Statistics

| Status | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Pending Stage 2 hearing date | 3 |
| GSB referral (Stage 3) | 7 |
| Settled | 4 |
| Withdrawn | 8 |
| TOTAL | 22 |

The statistics are exemplary for a local with almost 1,400 members. The low numbers of grievances are indicative of the hard work, dedication and commitment of our local stewards to settle disputes in the earliest possible stages.

Union Crossword

Across

- Our union (abbr.)
- Number of years for the term of our current agreement
- Another term for union representative
- Referring to a person who filed a grievance
- Final step in grievance process

Down

- Service sector
- Another term for labour associations
- Unions largely contribute to the _____ Movement
- Collective _____
- Group of members represented by one executive body (plural)

