



# OPTrust Bargaining Update

Issue #1

Bargaining news for members of OPSEU Local 568 at OPTrust

April 30, 2008

## Team elections to kick off bargaining preparations at OPTrust

**It's that time again!** Our current collective agreement with OPTrust expires at the end of 2008. So it's time for OPSEU members to start setting our priorities for the next round of bargaining – and getting organized to achieve the best contract possible.

Over the next two months you will have three key opportunities to help set our bargaining agenda. Mark these dates on your calendar:

- **Bargaining team elections - Friday, May 9**  
Our bargaining team are the members we will be sending to the table, along with our OPSEU staff representative, to negotiate our next contract with OPTrust management.

- **Bargaining survey - week of May 26**  
Every member will be asked to fill out a bargaining survey. The survey is an important way for you to identify bargaining issues and indicate your priorities for the next contract.
- **Demand setting meeting - Thursday, June 19**  
This will be an opportunity for members to hear the survey results, discuss which issues matter most and vote on the key demands we want our team to take to the table.

*For more information on bargaining and the upcoming team elections see pages 2 and 3.*

## Bargaining Team Election Meetings

To allow for maximum participation, team elections will be held over two lunchtime meetings. The agenda for both meetings will include: 1) Overview of the bargaining process, 2) Role and structure of our bargaining team and 3) Election of 3 team members and 3 alternates.

**IMPORTANT:** Nominations for the team elections must be made in writing in advance or at the 12-noon meeting. No nominations will be accepted at the 12:45 meeting. Voting will take place at both meetings. (See page 2 & 3 for a nomination form and more details.)

**When: Friday, May 9**  
**12 noon - 12:45 and 12:45 to 1:30 p.m.**

**Where: 1 Adelaide St. East, P2 meeting room**

**\*\* Free Pizza, Juice and Pop \*\***

**Planning to come?** Let us know by Wednesday, May 7, so we can order enough food and drinks! Just contact one of your OPTrust stewards listed on page 4 – or send an e-mail message to [opseulocal568@yahoo.com](mailto:opseulocal568@yahoo.com).

# Elections give you a say in bargaining

**B**eing part of a union means you have a say in what you want in your collective agreement. It also means you have a vote in who will represent you at the bargaining table. That's where the bargaining team elections come in.

On May 9, we will elect three coworkers from the OPSEU bargaining unit at OPTrust to be on the bargaining team. We will also be electing three alternates, in case any member of the bargaining team has to step aside once the process gets going.

## Role of the bargaining team

The team's job is to work with our OPSEU staff representative to bargain the best possible collective agreement.

After the elections, the first step for the team members and alternates will be to attend a full-day training session at the OPSEU Toronto Regional Office on May 20<sup>th</sup>. (Anyone who is considering running for the team should plan on attending this meeting.)

The team will also be responsible for:

- coordinating the bargaining survey and presenting the results at the June 19 demand setting meeting
- working with our staff rep over the summer to map out a bargaining strategy and develop contract language to present to the employer
- determining how to respond to management's proposals – and how to maximize our bargaining power – once face-to-face negotiations with OPTrust management start.

The goal is to reach a strong collective agreement that the team can recommend to members in a ratification vote. But it takes two sides to bargain. So, our team also has to be ready to respond if management is not putting a fair offer on the table. If this happens, the team may have to make some tough decisions – like filing for “conciliation” to break the impasse or calling a strike vote, as we did in 2002.

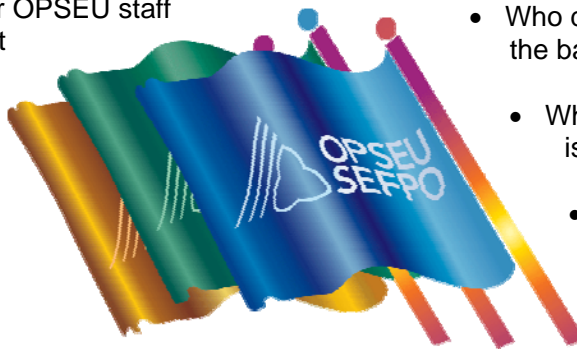
## Picking the right people for the job

We all have a lot riding on the bargaining process. That means it's important to pick the right people to be on our bargaining team.

Is there someone you want to nominate? Are you interested in running yourself? Or maybe you're just thinking about whom to vote for.

Here are some questions you might want to think about:

- Who will stand up for their co-workers and fight for the best possible deal when the pressure is on?
- Who will listen to different views and consider all the options before making a decision?
- Who do you trust to put the interests of the bargaining unit as a whole first?
- Who knows the workplace and the issues we face at OPTrust?
- Who supports the union and wants to make it more effective in addressing workplace issues?



## Nominations & elections

The team elections will take place over two lunchtime meetings starting at 12 noon and 12:45 p.m. on Friday, May 9.

To nominate someone – or be nominated yourself – just complete the form on page 3 and submit it by Thursday, May 8. Nominations must include the names and signatures of both the nominator and the candidate.

Nominations can be submitted to one of our OPSEU shop stewards – Sonia Baistrocchi, Leigh Brain, Cheri Hearty, Sean Homaie, Patricia Johnson, Myles Magner, Henry Nanes, Shirley Pazhaidam, Richard Nelson, Joseph Rampersad, Jerry Sullivan or Curtis Wright.

You can also nominate someone in person at the 12-noon meeting on May 9. Note: Nominations must close before voting can start, so nominations will not be possible at the 12:45 meeting.

Once the nominations close, members will be able to cast their votes at either meeting. The three nominees with the most votes will make up our bargaining team. The three with the next highest number of votes will be the alternates.

# Why bargaining matters

**B**argaining is important to every OPSEU member at OPTrust. Why? Because our new collective agreement will have a big impact on our jobs, wages and working conditions and our rights in the workplace over the next several years.

For example, our new contract will determine our:

- ✓ salary, classifications and annual wage increases
- ✓ health, dental and drug benefits
- ✓ hours of work, overtime and vacations
- ✓ job security, seniority and layoff/recall rights
- ✓ sick leave, pregnancy/parental and other leaves
- ✓ health and safety provisions, and protection from harassment and discrimination

The collective agreement also ensures that we have a strong voice on key workplace issues, through our union. And the grievance procedure gives us a way to enforce our rights if the employer doesn't live up to its end of the bargain.

## Your participation counts

The key to negotiating a strong collective agreement is you. By taking part in the elections, you can help make sure we send a strong team to the table. By providing your input through the survey and demand-setting meeting, you'll help our bargaining team know what issues are most important to you.

And by supporting your team during negotiations, you can help get the message across to our employer – and ensure we get the best contract possible.

## Nomination Form: OPSEU Bargaining Team

To nominate someone for the OPSEU bargaining team, complete this form and submit it to one of your OPSEU Shop Stewards by Thursday, May 8 at the latest.

### Part 1: To be completed by nominator

I nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for the position of bargaining team member/alternate. (Print name of person you want to nominate)

Nominator's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 2: To be completed by candidate

I accept the nomination for the position of bargaining team member or alternate and will serve in either role if elected.

Candidate's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# OPSEU membership has its privileges

**E**very member of the OPSEU bargaining unit is covered by our collective agreement – including the wage and benefit increases and other improvements negotiated in the upcoming round of collective bargaining.

That's why we all pay union dues and have the right to be represented by our union, including the right to file a grievance.

## A member in good standing

However, to attend local union meetings, have your say and vote on union issues, you need to be an OPSEU member "in good standing."

This means that you need to have signed an OPSEU membership card.

## Signing your union card

Signing a card also gives you the right to take part in the upcoming bargaining team elections. That includes nominating someone or running yourself, attending the election meeting and voting for the candidates of your choice.

You also need to be an OPSEU member to fill out a bargaining survey or attend the demand-setting meeting in June.

## Haven't signed your card yet?

No worries. All you have to do is contact one of our stewards. You can also sign a card at the May 9 bargaining team elections.

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## Need Help? Who ya gonna call?

**W**orking together is the best way to win a strong collective agreement. That's what having a union all is about. But the work doesn't stop once that contract is signed. When issues with the employer come up, the collective agreement gives every member a way to get the problem dealt with.

### Your OPSEU steward, that's who

That's where your OPSEU shop stewards come in. Your steward is your "go to" person if you have a workplace problem or think your rights as an employee may have been violated.

If the problem is covered by the collective agreement or legislation, your steward can help you raise the issue with management. That includes filing a grievance, if necessary, and representing you during the grievance process. Your steward can also help decide if the problem can be addressed through the Labour-Management Committee, the Health and Safety Committee or other kinds of workplace action.

### Union representation – It's your right!

You also have the right to have a steward present if you are being disciplined, if you are asked to attend a meeting that could lead to discipline, or if you need help with a workplace accommodation or other issue. If you aren't sure whether you should have a steward present, check with one of them *before* you meet with your manager.

And if your manager tells you that you have the right to bring a union representative along, don't be shy about asking a steward to join you. That way you can be sure that your rights are protected.

### Your OPSEU team at OPTrust

In February and March, members of Local 568 elected a new group of stewards and a new local executive.

**OPTrust Stewards:** Sonia Baistrocchi, Leigh Brain, Cheri Hearty, Sean Homaie, Patricia Johnson, Myles Magner, Henry Nanes, Shirley Pazhaidam, Richard Nelson, Joseph Rampersad, Jerry Sullivan, Curtis Wright.

**OPSEU Labour-Management Committee Reps:** Cheri Hearty, Myles Magner and Shirley Pazhaidam.

**OPSEU Health and Safety Reps:** Keith Duguay and Sean Homaie.

**Local 568 Executive Committee:** Sonia Baistrocchi, Pam Blair (Secretary) Leigh Brain, Cheri Hearty (Vice-President), Myles Magner (President), Frances Wu (Treasurer), Stephanie Young.

