

Closest Race Ever Green Defeats Petry for OPEU's Top Post

Promising to bring OPEU into a stronger bargaining position and to move the organization into grassroots politics, District 2 Director Steve Green won a two-year term as union president.

While Green, a Salem right-of-way agent, was defeating incumbent vice president D. H. "Pete" Petry by one of the narrowest margins in OPEU history, John Clapp and Carol Laizure-Jellison won by comparatively larger margins in races for vice president and secretary-treasurer.

Clapp, a Portland bridegroom, defeated newly elected District 1 Director Steve Teters. Laizure-Jellison, a Salem journeyman silk-screen sign printer, defeated newly elected District 2 Assistant Director JoAnn Bowker.

"My actions as president will be aimed at continuing to build OPEU's strength as a bargaining unit," Green said. "Helping the membership realize the strength of their leadership, strengthening the smaller locals, moving OPEU into the AFL-CIO, developing a strike policy and developing a grassroots political organization are some of the most important actions we will take in this year."

Despite the important issues that were raised by Green and Petry, the race for president did not come down to a comparison of the candidates' platforms.

"Both candidates came to General Council with essentially the same platform," said one delegate who was neutral prior to the convention. "As a result, the question was really more a matter of style—Petry the politician or Green the tactician."

Throughout the General Council, Petry conducted a much more visible campaign from his position as vice president. Meanwhile, Green appeared to be working much more behind the scenes through his committee assignments and his position in the ODOT caucus.

Eventhough both candidates campaigned for months, the final outcome was determined much as it has been in the past—delegates from the Willamette Valley were basically

pitted against those from the rest of the state.

Pivotal to Green's victory however, was his ability to woo delegates from Oregon State University.

One long-time observer of the union's elections said, "Prior to the convention, Petry had commitments from most of Eastern and Southern Oregon and the Coast, while Green had most of the Willamette Valley in his camp—except OSU. The key to the election was Green's ability to bring in the majority of the vote from Corvallis."

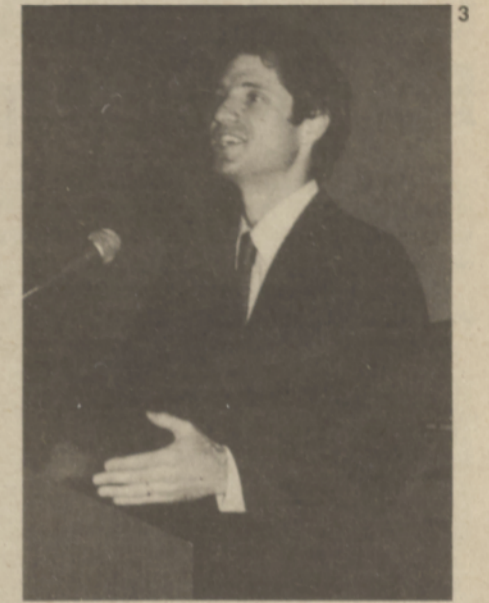
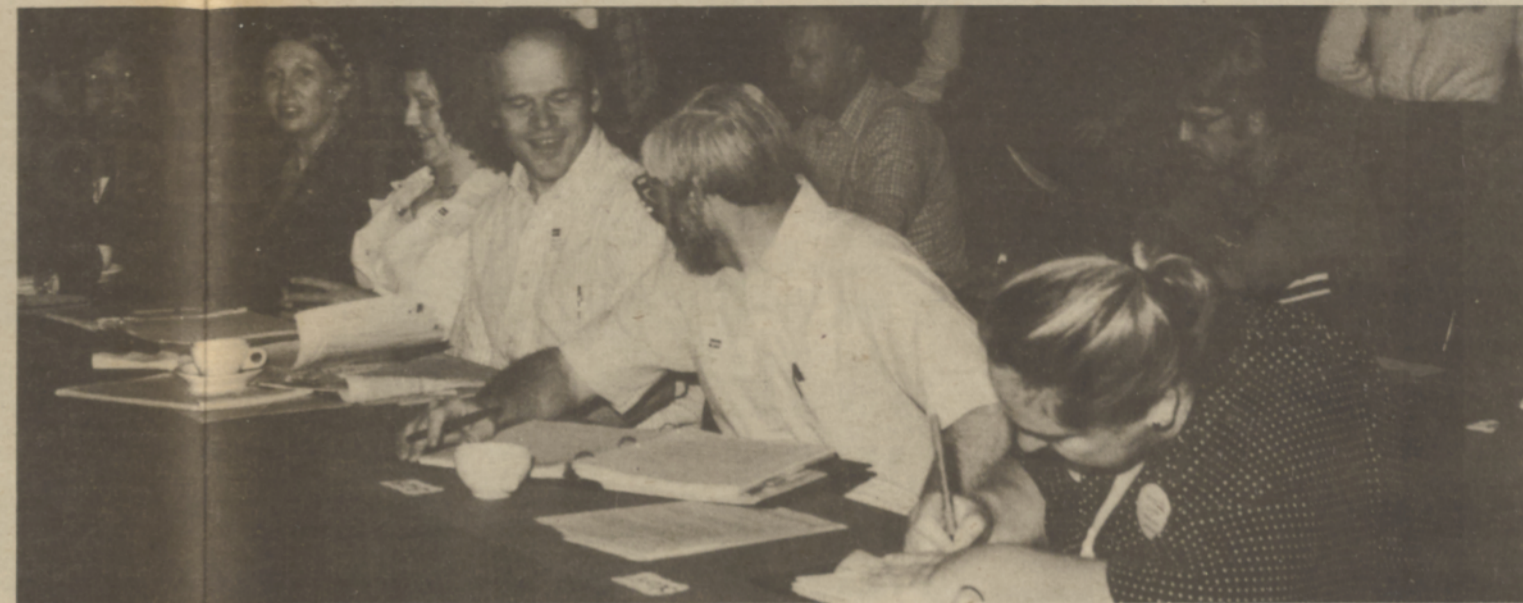
The platforms of both candidates for vice president were also much the same—prepare for negotiations in 1983 and get involved in the political arena. Their campaign activity prior to General Council was largely focused at developing name recognition with the members.

As a result, neither candidate had a clear-cut lead coming into the convention and the outcome of the race apparently came down to the Friday night meetings with the District caucuses. Clapp feels he was able to tip support heavily in his favor in the District 2 caucus and was able to gain a slight edge in the District 4 and 5 caucuses.

Asked what he felt was the deciding factor in Districts 2, 4 and 5, Clapp said, "The fact that I have at least two more years of active experience in the union."

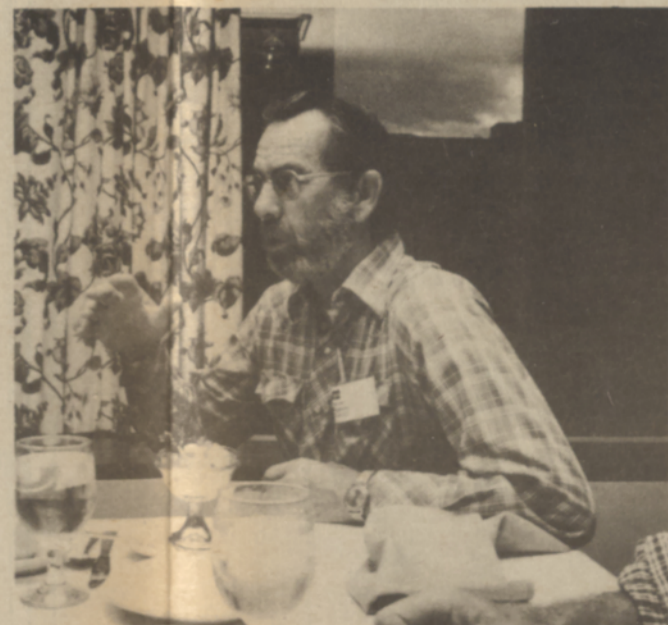
Unlike the other two races, campaigning for secretary-treasurer did not start until the candidates arrived at General Council.

Eventhough Bowker had more people helping with her electioneering, there seemed to be little consensus among the candidates prior to the Friday night caucuses. At those meetings, Laizure-Jellison won the election on her name familiarity and her pledge to make the union finance committee a group. She promised that the committee would meet on a regular basis—rather than just prior to General Council—and would stop the practice of rubber stamping financial decisions of the executive director and the business manager.



1. Don Prebus and Sue Weidmann listen to discussion on convention floor; 2. Delegates from Justice, Mental Health, Health and CSD on convention floor; 3. Congressman Ron Wyden; 4. Ken Stueve (right) congratulates Ed Wydronek for signing-up over 1,000 members since joining OSEA; 5. Dick Loscar makes a point during breakfast meeting of local government delegates; 6. John Cuff (left) and John Clapp engage in spirited discussion; 7. Rep. Max Rijken makes a point to Barbara Palmer, legislative candidate Steve Starkovich and Rep. Jim Chrest (back to camera).

Photos by Faith Dubin, Douglas Crooks



Budget Deficit Dictates Course Delegates Take on Resolutions

Many long-time delegates to General Council said that they had never seen the annual event so best by fiscal responsibility. Some called it an obsession.

So serious were the delegates that they would offset the projected \$57,000 deficit, that they passed a motion requiring authors of all resolutions to suggest where budget cuts could be made if their proposal had any projected cost.

The question surrounding every debate was, "How much will it cost?" As a result, delegates bit the bullet. Resolutions that had broad popular support—such as a full-time retirement lobbyist, which would have cost approximately \$40,000 annually—were defeated. Resolutions that were almost unanimously opposed—such as holding General Council every other year, which would save approximately \$50,000 per biennium—were passed.

Following is a brief summary of the major resolutions that the 174 delegates approved:

Biennial General Council

Debate over changing General Council from an annual to a biennial event was long and heated. Delegates argued both sides of the question both on the convention floor and in back rooms. Ultimately, delegates saw they had little choice but to approve a biennial session in order to balance the 1982 budget.

Two-Year Offices

In order to keep union officers' terms succinct with the change from annual to biennial conventions, delegates voted to increase terms for statewide and district officers to two years.

Dues Reduction

Delegates considered several resolutions to reduce dues for lower paid employees. They settled on a proposal that lowers dues from \$9 to \$7 for employees making less than \$500 per month. It is thought that this is the first dues reduction in the union's history.

Clerical Committee

Two resolutions were presented to delegates asking that the work of the clerical study committee be con-

tinued. Both were surrounded in controversy before delegates even assembled.

At one end of the issue were members who feel OPEU is only beginning to adequately address women's issues. At the other end were members who think the union has devoted too many resources to women's concerns.

Viewing their opposition, sponsors consolidated their proposals—and found partial sources of funding—before the issue arose in committee. Despite these efforts, the belt-tightening mood of delegates left the proposals significantly changed, even compared to the consolidated version.

In its final form, the resolution changes the name of the committee to the Special Program Committee, changes the emphasis from primarily women's concerns and clerical issues to a broad range of clerical issues and reduces funding to the \$1,500 the sponsors gathered in commitments from locals and districts and \$500 from the general budget. The original resolutions asked for either \$4,000 or \$6,500.

The final resolution left many members of the old Clerical Study Committee complaining that delegates had moved away from any emphasis on women's issues.

Local Rebates

Under the system of rebates that locals had been operating under since Jan. 1981, the larger locals—primarily ODOT and AFS—found themselves very well-off financially. The opposite was true for smaller locals; so much so, that many of these smaller units were not able to organize into effective bargaining units.

As a result, delegates passed a resolution that will redistribute approximately \$4,000—mostly from ODOT and AFS—to locals with fewer than 200 members.

\$1 Political Checkoff

One of the major issues at General Council was how to increase OPEU's political clout. Two needs were continually raised: forming a grassroots political organization and increasing OPEU's political action

fund. To address the later need, delegates passed a resolution calling for a voluntary \$1 per month minimum payroll checkoff.

This checkoff will be in addition to the 25¢ per member, per month, that is currently deducted from dues unless the member specifically requests a rebate. Sponsors of the resolution estimate the checkoff could raise up to \$24,000 per biennium.

Strike Fund Committee

Creating a strike fund was one of the political hot potatoes of the General Council. To raise money for the fund, delegates would have had to increase dues—an action that has about as much popular support as raising taxes. Delegates also had to consider the impact such a move would have on the current elections to deauthorize fair share.

After a stormy debate in the Constitution and By-Laws Committee and some heated discussion of the convention floor, delegates decided to form a special committee that will make recommendations on establishing a strike fund and a strike policy for 1983.

Retiree Insurance

Delegates reaffirmed their position that the Bargaining Units Benefits Board (BUBB) should do everything possible to design insurance programs that keep retired members from OPEU bargaining units in the active pool of employees. Without such protection, retirees would face a 200-300 percent increase in insurance rates.

ADDs as Delegates

The number of delegates to the 1983 General Council was increased by adding assistant district directors. Costs for transportation, lodging and food for these delegates will be borne by their respective districts.

Union Stewards

Recognizing that OPEU's union steward system is not as strong as it should be—especially in the area of contract enforcement—delegates passed a resolution calling for closer evaluation of stewards and for locals to implement procedures for easier selection and removal of stewards.

