

National figures address General Council, Vice President Al Gore, Jim Hightower, John Kitzhaber, John August

Teamster John August outlines importance of organizing

"Union organizing is the single most clarifying notion about what it means to be in a union. And that's true for the members today as well as for the people who obviously need the union. . . .

"A union has to be at least two things: It has to be unified and it has to be democratic.

"There is nothing more democratic and more unifying than to have your organizers report to you about what it is to vote for the union and to become part of the union

"First, organizing is important for your own self-interest

"Another reason to organize is to show that you're alive, that you'll not be beaten down and you're



a force to contend with

"Third, there is collective bargaining pressure. If you're organizing, you keep pressure on the bosses. Even for the unorganized, you can keep standards up by organizing

"There are two other reasons that are not so clearly in our self-interest. One is somebody, someday, had to spend some money so you could be in a union

"The fifth reason is my favorite reason.

"I believe that organizing is simply the right thing to do.

"So, when the issue comes up about what are we going to do with our resources, my advice is to remember that organizing is simply the right thing to do because you never know, you never know, whether you're organizing a group of workers no matter how big or how small, no matter in what sector, you never know how it's going to come back to create something better in the future."

John August
Organizing Director
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Hightower applauds OPEU for agitating against the "powers that be"

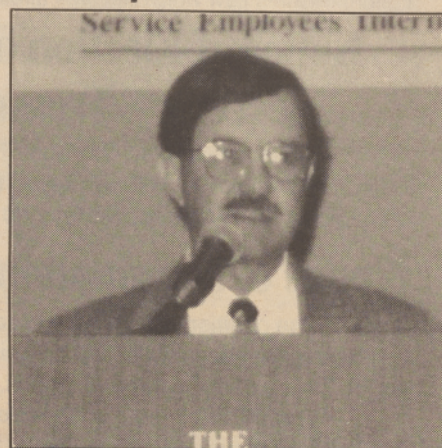
"It's been my job over the years to agitate with good unions like this. Activist unions, taking on those forces of ignorance and arrogance out there. Challenging the powers that be on behalf of the powers that ought to be. I'm talking about you working day stiffs. The people who really make America work.

"When you take on the powers that be, as you know, it can be a lonely exercise. I get to feel like

that guy B.B. King sings about: 'Nobody likes you but your Momma, and she might be jiving you, too.' Been there, haven't you. That's why I admire the go-get-em unionism of OPEU.

"We need this kind of fighting spirit more than ever before. George Bernard Shaw a long time ago wrote, 'You don't hold your own by merely standing still, but by attacking and getting hammered yourself.'

"The theme that embraces this hall, 'Fighting Back for Fairness,' is exactly how America feels today and is exactly the opportunity, the challenge, I guess, that is presented to



union leadership. No longer is it enough to become *progressive* in this country, we must become *aggressive* because the powers that be have become radically *regressive* running roughshod over working families, over old folks and children, over the middle class and the poor, over our environment, over the future, over the well-being of America's majority.

"This is a huge fight. It is a historic fight. The kind of fight that labor has led, on again and off again, over the decades."

Jim Hightower
Populist radio commentator



OPEU growing stronger, more democratic - Morgan

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something that this organization has long held but has only recently been able to see coming back to it what it has expended in trying to get there.

"We are also moving toward a more democratic organization that truly trusts the membership to do the right thing. That, in fact, if they are empowered and informed, our members want to do what's right and they will."

Dawn Morgan
OPEU/SEIU Local 503 President

Dale identifies threats to workers and action to combat them

"We have never been simultaneously faced with attacks on our pensions, funding of public services, threats to repeal prevailing wage guarantees, and constitution proposals to allow discrimination.

"These struggles will not be easy to win. We know that Nov. 8 is just one fight in the overall struggle. We can see that the anti-public employee forces are part of a much bigger opposition movement

The AFL-CIO nationally is losing a half million members per year. Current projections are that by the year



2000, we'll represent only 5% of the workforce.

"Annually, 50,000 workers win union elections under NLRB jurisdiction and yet, because of anti-worker biases in our labor laws, only 25,000 of these workers even get contracts...

"In order for the American labor movement to get back to 35% organized workers by the year 2000, we would have to organize 6 million members per year

"We need to dramatically change our thinking. . . .

"Those unions that are exercising bold leadership, that are keep-

ing member expectations high, that are questioning the old ways of representing workers, and that are marshalling resources to beat their challengers, are doing something to make a difference. Those unions that are organizing the unorganized work force, those that are expanding the ranks of their activists and fighting in the political arena to change the choices we have, are doing something to make a difference

"To win the battles we face, we need to challenge ourselves to take risks. We need to change the nature of the debate and speak with sincerity about worker issues that transcend our own needs."

Alice Dale
OPEU Executive Director