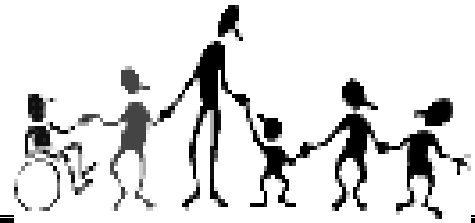




Developmentally Speaking

Spring 2003



A newsletter for and by OPSEU Developmental Services Sector members

Kenora ACL Victorious!!!

I am delighted to tell you of our victory at the negotiations table. On March 6, KACL ratified an agreement with a 15 per cent wage increase over three years. Our members' hard work and determination forced a determined Executive Director to see things our way. With this success, we as stewards, feel so empowered we can't wait to continue our journey of building a union/employer relationship.

Joint efforts from our staff rep. Joe Barron and MDT Michelle McColl made all this possible. Joe worked hard with our negotiating team, pushing the conciliator to make our executive director realize "we mean business." Michelle was instrumental in helping Susan and me with mobilizing our members. We started with a hesitant group, but within a few months they put their trust, and ultimately their jobs, on the line to support their union. Susan and I call ourselves the "mini-mobilizers." We also met a lot of well-wishers along the way via the union educationals. Our board members, John O'Brien, Jamie Tocker and Joe Catroppa, were also big supporters.

OPSEU and all of its staff on various levels played a part in our success and we invite everyone to enjoy the victory with us.

A special thanks to Leah Casselman as well for all her support and interest.

It is my wish to pass this on to all other members finding themselves in that same stressful position of fighting a nasty employer. My word of advice is to never give up and to remember you're not alone in this fight. Bring every possible contact you have into the ring with you and KICK SOME ASS!

In Solidarity,

Allison Cartwright Local 702
Susan Johnson Local 702



U-rated newsletter: CEP 1092 / CALM -- **WARNING!** This newsletter is rated "U" (for union). It may contain some material that management will find offensive. It is produced solely for the entertainment and information of union members. If you are management, proceed at your own risk!



ANGELS AMONG US



To all OPSEU members,

We are preparing to leave for the Hospital for Sick Children again with our very sick little boy Ryan, who has Crohn's Disease. I do not have much time, as the deadline for the newsletter is only three days away, but I would like this letter to be in the Spring edition.

I would like to thank all of my OPSEU brothers and sisters for the support shown to my family and me. Your gestures of deep concern, care, compassion, and the generosity in your donations to help with the cost of Ryan's medicine, travel, and care have deeply touched our hearts. You have reminded us that Angels do live among us, and we are ever so grateful.

I would also like to say a very special thank you to Judy Hodgins, Local 664, for seeking out resources to help with our long journey towards creating and maintaining Ryan's health, for caring for us so much, and for always being a pillar of strength for us. We thank you, and love you very much.

Again, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you to our OPSEU family for all of your support.

Stay well!

Yours in solidarity,

Natasha Grenier and family
Local 664
Iroquois Falls ACL

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Some of the information in the Developmentally Speaking Winter 2003 article entitled "Who's worth more? Pay Equity issues persist" is incorrect/out of date. I apologize for the error, and for any concerns this has caused. The following is an update to that article, with the correct information.

In Solidarity,
Annette Hansford, Editor

New Pay Equity Article for Local 667 North Bay and District ACL (NBDACL)

They said we couldn't do it. They were wrong.

We knew the fight would be hard and long.
We were ready.

We believed that the staff at NBDACL wanted pay equity and we were going to get it for them. It started by having our last pay equity plan overturned. That took going to the Pay Equity tribunal, but it was worth it. In November, 1999, we won. Then the proxy pay equity process began.

It became evident that to best represent our members, we needed to learn how to complete a proxy pay equity plan, so we took a course offered by the Pay Equity Commission. At first our employer said they wouldn't pay for our course time but we negotiated it and in the end they paid.

We circulated a questionnaire to our members seeking detailed information on what their jobs consisted of in 1994. Then a sub-committee evaluated each position, establishing the job value rate. We had two locations in our geographic area that we could use as our proxy comparator. One was our local hospital and the other one was the Ontario Hospital (OPS members).

After much debate, the committee, with three management and three union members, agreed to the Ontario Hospital.

We are now finalizing our plan and are in discussions about the payouts to staff.

Our last pay equity payout was in 1994. We received a salary raise of 4 per cent in 1999 through our collective agreement. The last time (two years ago) we added a letter of understanding to our collective agreement saying that any money from "Revitalization" dollars must be applied to pay equity. We have now received two years worth of revitalization money, and once the plan has been signed, staff will start getting their money.

We continue to watch for a positive outcome to the court case hoping that the Ministry will assist agencies in complying with the pay equity act, as I am sure many of you are.

Equal pay for equal work means pay equity!

Kathy Witiuk
President of Local 667

Protesting “is good for you”

Group protests, or “collective action,” may have health benefits for participants, according to research by UK psychologists.

A study by Dr. John Drury, a lecturer in social psychology at the University of Sussex, suggests that group protesting and demonstrating is good for people’s health because it encourages a sense of empowerment, mutual support and unity.

“Many published activist accounts refer to feelings of encouragement and confidence emerging from experiences of collective action,” said Dr. Drury.

“It’s similar when people come out to welcome home a winning football team, go to Trafalgar Square on New Year’s Eve or go to a rave. They have a sense of community - but with protest, people have the addition of a sense of changing the world.”

The study involved more than 40 in-depth interviews with activists and protestors from a variety of backgrounds. Participants described more than 160 experiences of collective action, including traditional marches, fox hunting sabotages, anti-capitalist street parties, environmental direct action and industrial mass pickets.

“The main factors contributing to a sense of empowerment were the realization of the collective identity, the sense of movement

potential, unity and mutual support within a crowd,” explained Dr. Drury.

He found that the protestors experienced events as joyous occasions, almost without exception, and that they felt a deep sense of happiness and even euphoria at being involved. Simply recounting events in interviews brought a smile to their faces, Dr. Drury added.

Even when demonstrations involved violent clashes with the police, protestors tended to feel good if they thought they had won the battle. If the

police were seen as the victors, less experienced demonstrators had negative feelings, while veterans were able to put events into context and deal with their emotions.

Over the last few years, psychologists have become more interested in how psychological and physical good health can be improved by positive experiences, which improve the speed of physical recovery, the ability to cope with stress and a reduction in pain, anxiety and depression.

“The take-home message from this research, therefore, might be that people should get more involved in campaigns, struggles and social movements,” said Dr. Drury. “Not only in the wider interest of social change, but also for their own personal good.”





HUMOUR

Looking for some help...

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost.
He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below.
He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me?
I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied, "You are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."



"You must be an engineer," said the balloonist.
"I am," replied the woman. "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far."

The woman below responded, "You must be in management."
"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are, due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems.

The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault!"



*"If we pay them starvation wages—
why do they need a lunch break?"*

The Broader Public Service Conference

The BPS Conference is just around the corner, June 6 and 7, and it should be a very good one for us in the Developmental Services Sector.

We will be the guinea pigs for the new Developmental Services Health and Safety course, which has been created by our H&S rep. Violet Stringer and Brock Suddaby, our Secretary/Treasurer working with OPSEU staff.

It sounds like a great course, with sector specific examples, including lifting issues, working alone, and violent clients.

We hope to get this course out to the regions to everyone else in our sector, so we will all need to lobby in our regions to make sure this happens.

On Sunday, June 8, we will be holding our sector meeting. This will include elections for all positions, as well as discussion and debate on any issues brought forward.

We have also been accepted as challengers in the annual Trivial Pursuit game. This is a competitive and fun informal event, which is taken quite seriously by those who have been involved for many years now, i.e. CAS, Children's Mental Health, etc.

If there is anyone attending the conference who is a skilled Trivia buff, please let us know so you can help us make a good showing at this game. It would be quite the upset if Developmental Services took the trophy in our very first game!

Annette Hansford

OVERWORKED
Underpaid

Grievance activities involving Developmental Services Sector units

A review of the grievance activity for this sector shows that using mediation prior to a hearing works. In most locals, we have hired an outside mediator to help the parties resolve the grievances prior to arbitration. Most grievors like this process because it is less confrontational than hearings and resolves their complaint more quickly.

Arbitrator's fees range from \$2,500 to \$3,200 per hearing day. A mediator will charge \$700. We can also deal with several grievances in one day. In Region 3, we have two bargaining units that built the mediation process into their collective agreements.

Most of the grievances filed in this sector, excluding the individual matters such as discipline and dismissal, stem from the following issues:

- 1) **Scheduling** – Employers continue to play around with call-in procedures to fill open spots on shifts. Some collective agreements have the call-in procedures written in and we can grieve any violation of these procedures. It would be a great benefit for those units that don't have call-in language to keep trying to bargain it.
- 2) **Posting & filling of vacancies** – The main problem here is employers not posting vacant full-time positions and either using them as an open spot on the schedule or using part-time employees to cover the shifts. Some employers have hired part-time employees instead of posting a full-time position, but they seem to be backing off
- on this. If your contract separates full-time and part-time bargaining units, the employer cannot take from the part-time pool to fill full-time positions.
- 3) **Work of the Bargaining Unit** – Some locals have grieved when the employer uses management to do some of the work of the bargaining unit. To win such a grievance, we need to look at the amount of time that manager is doing our work. The grievances that have been filed were settled at mediation with the employer's agreement to stop this practice.
- 4) **Health and Safety** – The nature of this work brings a lot of health and safety grievances, mainly over aggressive clients. The employer has argued that it is part of the job, but that is not true. You should not be exposed to harm just because you work in this field. An arbitrator looks at what steps the employer has taken to ensure that you have a safe working environment. When we are grieving, we need to tell the arbitrator where and when the union raised these issues with the employer, and what was the response.
- 5) **Transfers** – We had an issue in one workplace that consisted of a number of different houses, where the employer was trying to transfer people from one house to another. When the positions were posted, they stated the specific house where the person would work. That stopped the employer from moving people. This grievance was resolved at mediation.

6) **Changing working hours** – We have an ongoing grievance from Region 7, which is into the ninth day of hearing. The employer decided it needed to save money so they changed the schedule for the support workers. The full-time support workers previously would rotate through all shifts, and the part-time workers would fill the vacant spots. The employer's change meant they no longer worked any night shifts. They hired new people to do the night shift work at \$4 an hour less, after taking

away some of the cleaning jobs traditionally done on the night shift. They took the extra staff and reassigned them into existing vacancies, so while no one lost their job, the part-time employees did lose some shifts to the new night awake positions.

Prepared by Anne Lee, Regional Grievance Officer

From the Editor:

I would like to thank all those who submitted articles for this newsletter. This publication is for the members, written by the members. Everyone is welcome to submit an article about their workplace, local negotiations, letters to the editor, or any information on issues that are of interest to us all. Please note the submission deadline for the next issue. I will send a reminder notice out to all members who have provided me with their e-mail address. If you would like to be added to my e-mail list, please send an e-mail to me at the address below. I apologize for not sending a reminder e-mail out for this publication, but I was rushing to get it out before the BPS conference. For any locals who publish their own newsletters, I would love to receive copies. If there are articles you would like to submit to the sector newsletter from your own, that would be wonderful. All of the above is subject to change, depending on the results of our upcoming elections.

Fall Newsletter

Tentative submission deadline: September 16, 2003

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Authorized for distribution:



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