

The clock is ticking...

The OPS contract expires on Dec. 31, 2004. The bargaining teams have been at work since Oct. 5, 2004 in preparation to bargain a new collective agreement.

The members understand the process that must be taken to reach a fair contract. As the teams work through the legal process involved in negotiating an OPS contract, it is truly rewarding to hear the members from all regions

echoing that “we deserve fairness and we will do what it takes to obtain it.” This is clear by the demands put forth by the members during local demand setting meetings.

Bargaining team members are confident that the membership is strongly united behind us and our work. The bargaining teams have received the message from the membership that, “we are ready to take actions when needed, just say when.”

Government claims legal right to use SCABS during a strike/lockout

By *Barry Scanlon*

In spite of Dalton McGuinty’s clear statements while in opposition that a Liberal government would not use replacement workers in the event of an OPS strike/lockout, the government’s negotiators have taken the opposite position during essential service bargaining. When the OPSEU bargaining teams recently proposed language for essential service agreements banning the use of replacement workers, the government’s negotiators flatly rejected the concept in its entirety.

The bargaining teams then demanded that the employer seek direction from their political masters on the issue of replacement workers. The response from the employer and their political masters was clear. The Liberal government’s position is that in the event of an

OPS strike or lockout, Section 41.1 (1) of the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act allows them to use SCABS. The Liberals will not agree to anything preventing them from using SCABS.

The Liberal position is a slap in the face to every OPSEU OPS member. We will continue to battle the government on this issue and will keep you apprised of any developments. Perhaps when Liberal MPPs approach us for assistance as campaign workers for the 2007 election our response should be, “Go find a replacement worker.”

The matter was put in front of Ontario Labour Relations Board Chair Kevin Whittaker on Thursday, Nov. 25, 2004 and a decision is expected shortly thereafter. We will advise everyone as to the results of the arbitration as soon as the information is available.

Government employee security checks

The government disclosed to the union its intention to impose intrusive security checks on new employees and eventually on employees who currently are employed by the government. OPSEU and other bargaining agent representatives were invited to provide their responses on the developing government policy. The employer's proposed policy involves police checks, credit

checks, fingerprints and "known to the police" checks involving your local police forces. In April of last year, we stopped the government from implementing these security checks by way of a grievance order.

OPSEU has made clear its opposition to police checks and credit checks for **any** employees. In addition, OPSEU expressed concerns regarding who would be subject to security checks, where the information regarding checks would be kept, who would collect the security information and also who would be permitted to access the information. OPSEU will continue to advocate for our members on this issue. We will advise you when further developments occur on the security checks issue.

Barry Scanlon
Chair, Corrections team

Marg Simmons
Chair, Central team

Member mobilizers integral to bargaining

The key to a successful round of bargaining is organization, communication and member participation. Drawing from a pool of activists, in all seven regions, a great many names for mobilizers were submitted by bargaining team members and EBMs. The difficulty was not finding enthusiastic, knowledgeable members to take on this role, it was deciding on how best to utilize the vast pool of talent that emerged. In addition, the presidents of the five largest OPS locals (750+ members) have also been seconded to the mobilize team. Each region has chosen to implement a mobilizing strategy which best reflects the members and geographic needs of their particular region. Member mobilizers are an integral component in the bargaining process.

Across Ontario member mobilizers have attended training and have been active since early November. They are actively meeting with individual members and locals. They are organizing buses for the Nov. 27 rally, assisting locals to complete the surveys for the "Putting a Face on Public Services" campaign and assisting locals get set for the current round of bargaining.

Black Tuesdays

Black Tuesday has become the rally vehicle in Probation Offices and Probation/Parole Offices across Ontario. Every Tuesday, once negotiations for a new collective agreement begins, OPSEU members show solidarity with their bargaining teams by wearing black shirts to work. They show the employer that they will take action to back their demands at the table.

The 2004 Bargaining Teams, in recognition and solidarity with the sisters and brothers in these offices, have also begun the Black Tuesday tradition.

Team profile – Marg Simmons

As the current chair of the Central bargaining team, I believe this round of bargaining is about fairness for all. Fairness includes stability, living wages, pension, benefits, proper classification and flexible working conditions.

I was the chairperson for the last Central bargaining team and have been the union co-chair for the Central Enforcement and Renewal Committee (CERC). I have been employed with the government for over 15 years with Community and Social Services and as well, with Corrections as a Social Worker II.

I look forward to taking on the challenge that this round of bargaining brings and delivering a contract that will benefit all members.



Team profile – John Watson

I am proud and honoured to represent Region 7 at the Central bargaining table. I join other experienced members at the table from all around the province. I have been a Probation and Parole Officer in Thunder Bay since 1985. I started my career as a probation officer in Alberta in 1981. I have been honoured in the past to represent the union at the OFL, NUPGE and CLC. I represented Region 7 at the Corrections table during the 1994-96 round of bargaining.

I'm a past member of the Corrections MERC and presently, I am president of Local 701 and Chair of the Northern Region LERC for Probation and Parole. I look forward to the challenges and victories that this round of bargaining will bring and look forward to working with members from around the province.



The Source editorial committee

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *The Source*, your direct communication resource from the Central and Corrections bargaining teams. This is a collaborative effort by the members for the members. This is intended to keep you up to date and informed on bargaining developments. Your editors for this publication are Len Mason, Beth Anich and Moira Cowan.

The Source is your only accurate source of

Central and Corrections bargaining team information during this round of bargaining. If you do not read it here, you cannot be sure it is true. Do not rely on gossip and rumours. We will provide the facts.

The Source will be available by e-mail and on the OPSEU website.

The Source is authorized for distribution by Barry Scanlon, chair, Corrections team, Marg Simmons, chair, Central bargaining team and Leah Casselman, president.