



# Frontlines

April 2, 2002

On  
Strike  
Day  
21

## Back to the table

The mediator has called both parties back to the table.

OPSEU and the employer will meet Tuesday afternoon at 1 p.m., the first time since management walked away from the table on the morning of March 12.

President Leah Casselman called it an optimistic sign.

“At the bargaining table is the only place we are going to get a

settlement, so it is good to be back there,” she said.

“But there are still important issues to be resolved if we are going to start rebuilding public services.

“Your strength, resolve and commitment on the picket lines got us back to the table. Your continued strength, resolve and commitment will get us the settlement we all deserve.”

## Thank you for your strength

We praise your courage in standing up to this government and your determination to reverse the damage of the last seven years. You have put yourselves on the line for all of us. Thank you for your strength. We support you 100 per cent.

*Maureen Wall and Joe Chang,  
Co-Chairs, Mayworks Festival  
of Working People and the Arts*

## We're keeping the pressure on!

### On the highways

Pickets stopped all commercial vehicles last week with a focus on the province's weigh scales.

Windsor South and Putnam Truck Inspection Stations were the focus Thursday, with Lancaster, Vineland, Oakville and Whitby shut down earlier.

Inside strikers were on the job, but effectively did no real work on Thursday.

The effort created a huge backlog at the scales, Paul Dunseith reported. “We were concerned that rubbernecking might cause an accident, which we don't want, but there wasn't a problem.”

Local 140 President Tom Grimes said the emphasis on scale entrance ramps worked. “OPSEU picketers proudly held their lines.”

As a result the scales were never able to open Thursday. Leah Casselman visited the Windsor scale with a message of encouragement and strength from across the province.

“Our strike is definitely having an impact. OPSEU members are much stronger, more unified, and are more informed about everything from essential service duties to the bargaining issues this time around,” she said.

### In Gananoque

Region 4 Vice-President Bob Eaton reported on a successful one-day blitz at the construction site of a new charity casino in Gananoque.

Joined by fellow Region 4 EBM Gavin Anderson and nearly 100 members from Kingston, Brockville and Gananoque, they forced the construction trades to leave the site

Thursday and close down work for the day.

### In Chatham

Real estate lawyers planning a quick closing were surprised Thursday, when a rally originally planned and advertised for another location was switched at the last minute to the MCCR office in Chatham.

Members of Local 127, 129 and 130 enthusiastically greeted President Casselman at a noon hour rally and barbeque. The lines were bolstered by members from throughout Chatham and Ridgetown.

Leah's busy day started early with a visit to Local 126 at the Southwest Regional Centre and ended with an evening rally in Windsor.

Check the web: [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org) has the latest on everything.

# Strike hits huge Peel water project

## At OCWA in Peel

President Leah Casselman held a news conference Monday morning in Brampton to point out that the strike is delaying a \$500-million in planned clean water projects in Peel.

A March 26 letter to OCWA from Region Chair Emil Kolb says that “individuals operating treatment facilities have been significantly undervalued in the past.” Kolb talked about the need to attract and

retain skilled and dedicated workers.

“Contrary to what the government says, the strike is having a huge impact,” Leah said. “It’s having an impact on jobs, on capital projects, and on people’s lives. Public services are essential. The government should get back to the bargaining table so Peel and other municipalities can start projects that provide clean water for their residents.”

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## Just having fun

### Easter Bunny visits Local 455

Pickers at the MCSS office in Belleville received an early Easter gift thanks to the generosity of fellow picketer Nancy Roberts, reports Pam Smith.

“Every year this office does a traditional easter egg hunt and this year would be no exception. Foil-wrapped eggs were hidden around the outside of the building and picketers enjoyed finding and eating the goodies.

At the Criminal Court in Belleville, inside picketer Darlene Prentice provided Easter Treat Bags for the very grateful pickets.

### Street dance in Whitby

Local 331 had a street dance on April Fool’s Day from 3 to 7 p.m. on their lines at Whitby Mental Health Centre.

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## Clerks rule!

We cannot begin to express our gratitude and amazement at your determination to achieve an ‘A’ contract.

At every turn, your employer has put a roadblock on the path to the contract you deserve. They have used the courts, the Ontario Labour Relations Board, single independent arbitrators, and in some cases outright management intimidation to stop you, but to no avail. You have not flinched, nor backed off. You have outplayed and out-maneuvered the employer’s best efforts.

You continue to be innovative and creative. You are an inspiration of pride and determination to all of the striking inside and outside workers in OPSEU and all of the trade union movement.

You are the sleeping giant of OPSEU and your employer is now witnessing the effects of treating you with disrespect for all those many years.

Continue the good fight.

– Your bargaining team

## The ‘write’ stuff

### Think of the kids

*Honorable Dave Tsubouchi:*

I appeal to you to end this strike. Too many students are missing school [at provincial schools], through no fault of their own.

The government is spending too much money on advertizing. This money would be better spent in solving the real problems, helping special needs teachers.

### **Harris does not put kids first!**

If he did, we wouldn’t have this conflict. He would show just how he values them by ensuring the special teachers needed to work with these special students are helped out and not penalized.

– Roger St-Louis,  
Local 478

### Assets not liabilities

This government doesn’t give a hoot about the public, public safety or the managers they have holed up inside institutions. If they did, they would be sitting with the union, around the clock if necessary, to resolve this strike. Instead, they are wasting time and money on advertiing and running to court for injunctions that they aren’t winning.

This government is playing all of us. Every person in Ontario.

The issues are bigger than wages, otherwise employees would not be out in the cold losing income that is greater than the 3 per cent difference of a yearly wage increase!

David, please think of Ontario and her people, not just the dollar signs. Ontario’s employees are assets; not liabilities.

– M. Trudeau  
Penetang