

OPSEU



SEFPO

# Frontlines

April 3, 2002

On  
Strike  
Day  
22

## The strike: Phase 2

### Intensify, intensify

Members want to know more about Phase 2 of the strike, mentioned in the last *Real Deal*.

Phase 2 is the time to intensify all strike actions.

#### 1. Hold the line – inside and out.

Do what you are doing so well, only more so.

#### 2. Focus on the issues.

Let the whole world know why

you are on strike.

#### 3. Make the boss accountable.

Your supervisor, your MPP, and whoever is in charge at Queen's Park need to know that you deserve respect and recognition for the great job you are doing.

In the hours and days ahead, your Service Area Coordinating Group will have details about province-wide actions you can take part in.

## Bring your woolies to Convention

Rebuilding public services will be the theme of the 2002 OPSEU Convention April 4-6 in Toronto.

OPSEU President Leah Casselman said the Convention was going ahead as scheduled because the union has important issues to discuss, including strategy for the next provincial election. Delegates will also be supporting the OPS picket lines.

"For the first time in our history, nearly half of our members in the public service have been forced out on strike at Convention time," Casselman said.

"Traditionally we do some kind of rally during Convention. This year we will be supporting our own members' picket lines.

Striking OPS members will not have lost-time or own-time payments during Convention.

"Strike duties are up to locals, but participation in the union's highest policy-making body is certainly union business. I assume locals will consider participation by their elected delegates and alternates as strike duties," Casselman said.

## Employer reneges on Factor 80

The government wrote to OPSEU March 21 that it was prepared to accept OPSEU's request to extend Factor 80 until Nov. 30, subject to their ability to work out some of the details.

The employer even sent out their own press release March 22 stating that, "the government has agreed to OPSEU's latest proposal to extend early retirement to employees on a short-term basis."

The employer has now reneged, despite the press release in which



### Talks continue with a media blackout

This means that both parties are at the table. It means we can't tell you anything about the talks. But it is hopeful, because there is no possibility of settlement when the parties are **not** bargaining.

they bragged about their "good will." The employer is trying to block us from using our own surplus, regardless of what is in the sponsorship agreement.

This issue will now go to arbitration. OPSEU has used a provision in the plan that allows us to write to the Chief Justice of Ontario and have them appoint the government nominee, since the employer has refused to appoint an arbitrator to the process.

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

# More support

## Preserving a quality of life

On behalf of the 92,000 UFCW Canada members in Ontario and the over 220,000 across Canada, I want to convey to you our support in OPSEU's struggle with the Harris-Eves government.

The stand you have taken is not just about preserving and protecting what your members have fought so hard to attain, but about preserving and protecting a quality of life for all working people in Ontario.

After seven years of Tory cutbacks, mismanagement and erosion of rights for working men and women in this province your members were left with no alternative but strike action.

UFCW Canada stands in solidarity with OPSEU members and wishes them every success in obtaining the best possible agreement.

— *Michael J. Fraser, Director  
United Food and Commercial  
Workers, Canada*



## Shame on Sampson

Corrections Minister Rob Sampson says: "Public safety is the top priority of our government. OPSEU workers are purposely jeopardizing the lives and the safety of the people in our institutions for their own interests. Their actions ... are disappointing and shameful."

Consider his government's record: the Walkertonization of public service; the death of Dudley George. Where does this man get off making statements like this?

Talk about jeopardizing the people in our institutions.

What about every citizen of Ontario with the privatization of the jail system?

What about the destruction of our health and education systems?

We must be the only jurisdiction in the world that doesn't have any public health scientists, fruit and vegetable inspectors and just enough meat inspectors to fill a small Volkswagen bug.

The shame is on Rob Sampson.  
— *Richard Stewart, Local 122*

## Waterbombers are not ready to fly

April 1 is the first day of the 2002 forest fire season.

Usually, most of the province's waterbombing fleet is in readiness, with pilots conducting flight tests on the aircraft and undertaking spring flight training on areas of open water.

This year no planes are ready.

"The government could soon find itself literally playing with fire, with human life and property values at risk," said Local 605's Bob Thomas in a press release.

Fire starts usually appear first in the more populated southern parts of the province in the spring and track northward following warmer weather.

The 2001 fire season saw an unusual number of large fires in southern Ontario, outside the traditional fire area, where municipal fire crews required the assistance of MNR fire crews, supported by waterbombers and helicopters.

It was the first time in history that MNR was called in to fight such a fire in the Greater Toronto Area.

Seven of the province's CL-415 heavy waterbombers are sitting in Sault Ste. Marie, with two more in Dryden.

None are ready to fly. MNR's five medium waterbombers, the de Havilland Twin Otters, are at various maintenance bases and are even less prepared for fire dispatch.

Some are still equipped with wheels instead of waterbombing floats; one is sitting in Winnipeg, minus an engine; and another is in Dryden with no engines.

## Different strokes for different folks

There are some people out there whose lives aren't completely focused on the strike, reports Local 126's Tracey La Butte.

But you still have to check.

On the day shift, March 28, a car was stopped near the Southwestern Regional Centre for quite a while.

It made picket Paul Tripp suspicious that someone was trying to sneak into the building along the fence. So he got into his truck and drove down to investigate.

He arrived in time to find a couple getting back into the front seat!

As their car passed the picket line, the line gave them a round of applause and the man returned a smile and thumbs up.

Not anti-union people. Just folks with other priorities.

## *They are strong in The Soo*

# Blind River to Wawa

Local 601 President Beth Anich is pretty proud of OPSEU members in Sault Ste. Marie.

“They have pulled together in support of this strike in a variety of ways that I have found to be quite exhilarating. This power can only enhance the work of OPSEU and the labour movement for many years to come.” Beth reports on strike highlights.

### **‘Malcom in the Middle’**

On the Day of Action in the courts, they wrote OPSEU across the snowbanks surrounding the courthouse in blue dye. Two members wore Grim Reaper costumes to depict the demise of the public service should privatization continue. They delayed traffic entering the parking area. As Beth was crowned “picket captain of the day,” they had to dodge police who threatened to arrest her for contempt.

The essential workers in the court were ready to walk out if that happened. Luckily, a local lawyer, Malcom McLeod, came out at the request of essential court workers to advise Beth of her rights. Things calmed down; there were no arrests.

### **Touring the North**

On March 20, 25 picketers toured to Wawa, about 2½ hours north of SSM.

“We arrived in Wawa to a very warm welcome from the members there, and the local manager from that site served up chili to all the pickets. We sang a few military style chants, walked their lines and headed back to the Soo.”

On March 27, about 45 members went to Blind River, about 1½ hours east of SSM. “The local there had a great barbecue for us.”

They delayed one car trying to leave the worksite, and he “shouted that we were acting like a “bunch of steelworkers,” Beth reported.

“We took that as a compliment and delayed him a little longer.”

They have had support on the line from Steelworkers, other OPSEU locals, Tony Martin NDP MPP, NDP Leader Howard Hampton and others.

“Sault Ste. Marie is a labour town and the support we are getting from labour affiliates and the public is incredible.”

### **There are good managers**

The managers involved with essential workers in Local 601 have been truly great, Beth says.

“Just today, a manager told me that he now understands about the ‘real work’ – the work that our members do.”

The manager of the Forensics Lab has not forgotten his OPSEU roots and offers support daily to the lines. He walks the lines; he delivers food and goodies on an almost daily basis.

He had an Easter egg hunt for the essential workers and brought bags of chocolates to picketers before Easter. Other managers of my other sites have been very supportive as well.

“The members of Region 6, Sault Ste. Marie service area, remain strong, and determined to stay strong, until the bargaining team gets the deal we all deserve.”

## Heroes



### **Giving up pay**

Staff Rep Gus Collins reports that several members of Local 649, who wish to remain anonymous, have been doing their full picket duty and donating their strike pay to other sisters and brothers in their local who are strapped for cash.

It’s happening in other locals too.

These anonymous unionists are strike heroes.

### **Rallying for medicare**

Jarrett Harris of Local 547 saw heroes in Toronto and reports:

“It is refreshing to see the labour community rally together for the common cause of health care. Enduring the weather and showing passion for such an important social issue. Not to mention the respect Commissioner Roy Romanow gave us by coming down in person and hearing the “Mass Appeal” offered by the members of the demonstration.

“It was a stirring moment to stand with Canadians and voice our health care concerns to a commissioner who had ears and appears to see the importance of that system to our country. Then together concluding the demonstration by singing O Canada. We’ve got great people in this country.

“Kudos to our brothers and sisters who took social action this day and more important kudos to my OPSEU brothers and sisters – essential services and those working the picket line.

“Together we are strong and more important, our common goals will be heard. Solidarity folks, together we will make it!

## Two new radio ads hit the air

Here are the scripts for two new radio ads which started running April 1. They are designed to draw attention to our issues: real jobs and public safety.

We know it's not about money.

### Learn from Walkerton

#### *Background chatter*

**Male announcer:** To hear the Ontario government talk, you'd think the OPSEU strike is about wages. It's not. It's about safety – like whether you can drink tap water and live to tell about it.

Walkerton taught us that we need strong public services. But we're short staffed. Temporary jobs are replacing secure ones. Real wages are down 12 per cent. It's hard to keep skilled employees.

**Warm music** Let's learn the lessons of Walkerton. Please support OPSEU members as we fight to rebuild Ontario's public services.

### Courtroom drama

#### *Court room gavel pounding*

**Male Voice:** Order..order..all rise.

**Female Announcer:** When a killer goes on trial, Ontario court workers keep track of the evidence. You need their expertise. One mistake can mean criminals go free.

**Warm music** Yet 90 per cent of courtroom staff work on temporary contracts. Temporary jobs are replacing secure ones across the public service. It's hard to keep skilled workers. Please support public employees as we fight to rebuild Ontario's public services. A message from OPSEU.

# The Media Page

## Stop wasting my money

**Dear Mr. Tsubouchi:**

One of your supporters drove through a picket line recently, narrowly missing one OPSEU member, a child and a dog.

He thought we were out only for more money and a better pension. He left knowing that all we wanted on pensions was to leave the pension alone. As a pensioner himself, he saw things much differently, and apologized to us all for his earlier attitude.

I hope that you enjoy your long weekend in whatever your tradition is. For those of us on strike, we will enjoy our dented can of tuna knowing that we are making a positive difference for the people of

Ontario.

OPSEU is wisely using its money to fund our strike pay and won't get into a media campaign that will drain our resources. The resources that you have at your fingertips are also my resources as I was a taxpayer until March 13. So I ask that you quit spending my money on lies. Be productive, be imaginative, return to the table and save whatever face you may have left.

OPSEU will surely have money left over when the next election is called and you can count on us being in your face again. We will not let the people of Ontario forget what the P.C. party is doing.

– Ken McWatters, Local 447

## Solidarity in The Soo

*By David Helwig*

*SooToday.com*

*Tuesday, April 02, 2002*

Maxie, the OPSEU picket pooch, was one of the dignitaries on hand today as Soo labour leaders rallied to the support of striking provincial government employees.

Fashionably clad in a sweater and a "Bite Me Ernie!" sign, the local publicity hound joined Sault MPP Tony Martin and Dan Lewis of the Sault Ste. Marie and District Labour Council in a "Day of Solidarity" demonstration at the Roberta Bondar Building.

Maxie delighted the crowd by barking appreciatively after each speaker.

Also among the demonstrators

present were delegations from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Canadian Auto Workers Union and the United Steelworkers of America.

The walkout by 45,000 members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (including 800 in the Sault) began three weeks ago.

Similar solidarity gatherings took place today in 21 other communities across the province.

A few blocks away, members of the Ontario Nurses Union were picketing at the Sault Ste. Marie Court House.

On Wednesday, members of the OSSTF are expected to lend lunch-hour support on OPSEU picket lines across the city.