

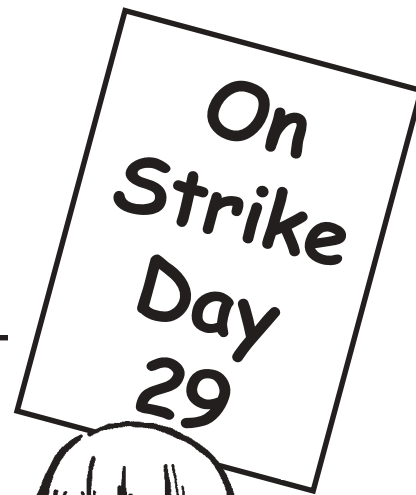
OPSEU



SEFPO

Frontlines

April 10, 2002



We can't talk

Talks continue

Both sides remain at the bargaining table, with the assistance of a mediator, under a continuing media blackout.

Your bargaining team members are doing their best to bring home a decent contract.

The process involves receiving a proposal from the employer and giving it a close study to see how it can lead toward a settlement.

That is normally done with the union team meeting by itself, so they

can discuss the issues involved without worrying about the employer listening in. It's called a union "caucus."

Then the union will respond to the employer with a position of its own, and the employer will caucus to decide how it will react.

When the employer responds, the union will again caucus and decide what to do next. This is a big contract with a lot of important issues. One back-and-forth is not

enough to solve them. And each time, the team has to weigh the importance of the issue, its priority to members, and the hardships facing members on the picket lines.

Industrial strength irony

The very best

"I, too, believe that Ontario has the best civil service in the country, bar none. I want to thank all of them for their professionalism, for their dedication to serving the people of this province, for their willingness to move forward with an agenda.

Many have said we made changes, many changes. It required a professional civil service to implement those changes."

— Premier Mike Harris, Statement to the Legislative Assembly, Dec. 13, 2001

Thanks for dedication

"I'd like to thank all of our civil servants for their dedication to innovation, professional achievement and finding new, more

efficient ways to serve the people of Ontario."

— Premier Mike Harris
"Amethyst Awards Salute Outstanding Work By Ontario's Public Servants: Harris"
News Release, Jan. 9, 2002

Comparable raises

Finally do MPPs deserve a raise? The short answer is a qualified yes. Based on their workload, riding size (equivalent to federal MPs), and ratio of politicians-to-constituents, they are underpaid relative to their counterparts in other provinces. Yet, any raises must also compare with what Ontario's public servants are being offered.

— Walter Robinson, Federal Director, Canadian Federation of Taxpayers, News Release, June 14, 2001

Worksite visits win

The Ontario Labour Relations Board has "amplified" its earlier decision on workplace visits, making it clear, among other things, that OPSEU does not have to make an appointment for a worksite visit.

Board vice-chair Christopher J. Albertyn has ruled:

To facilitate the visit, except in unusual situations, the union will notify the assigned Ministry contact of its intent to conduct a worksite visit.

The visits can't be designed to inconvenience the government, but the employer can't use inconvenience as a reason to deny or delay a visit.

Unless circumstances are unusual, OPSEU won't conduct

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(with more court and OLRB news)

Check the web: www.opseu.org has the latest on everything.

Working with the union solves childcare problem

“The power of the people is the power of the union,” exclaimed Nora Lee of Local 516.

She credits the work of Campaigns Officer Jan Borowy with solving her daycare crisis.

Nora has subsidized child care in Toronto, and when she first raised the possibility of a strike with them in March, she was told a strike could run four months before she would lose her subsidy.

Then at 5:30 p.m. Friday, her daycare told her the policy had changed to four weeks, and the four weeks was now up. “It was find a new job or cross the lines, and I’d never do that,” Nora said.

On Monday she talked to her local president, who passed it on to OPSEU. The daycare policy requires that people receiving subsidies be at work or in school, with a four-week grace period.

OPSEU called the city and said strike duties should count as work as they have in the past. Nora’s call to the Ombudsperson (416-397-1262) flagged it as an issue and they agreed.

Striking is work and strikers should not be stripped of subsidies.

“This shows how members and the union working together can resolve problems,” said Jan.

Nora is “extremely pleased and impressed with the strength of our union.”

If others have the same problem in Toronto, call the Ombudsperson.

For everyone, contact your child care provider to spread payments over a longer period.

At the board; in the courts

Half day’s training doesn’t cut it

The Ontario Labour Relations Board has decided the work refusal by nurses at the Metro West Detention Centre under the Occupational Health and Safety Act was justified.

They were within their rights because of an absence of competent and properly trained supervisors at the time.

The Board finds “some 20 managers working at the Detention Centre have not had the experience or training of Correctional Officers or other managers who have worked at the Detention Centre.

“Counsel for the employer advised that everyone received a half-day orientation session. The training programme for Correctional Officers is about six weeks duration.”

The Board found that “there is an obligation under the Act for the employer to provide competent and adequately trained supervisors.”

The Board directed the employer to tell the nurses about the qualifications of the managers, and to ensure that when nurses are scheduled to work, properly trained managers are present.

Reasons for the ‘P&P 11’ decision

Madam Justice MacFarland has issued her reasons for dismissing the contempt motion against the Probation and Parole 11.

Her written judgment confirms that the motion for contempt was dismissed on the basis that the Ontario Labour Relations Board order sought to be enforced was not quite clear enough.

To quote Madam Justice MacFarland, “there are factual disputes in relation to these issues which must first be resolved by the Board and clear direction given as

to what must be specifically done and by whom.

“Once this level of clarity is achieved, those Orders may be filed with the Court, and provided the procedural niceties are observed, will be enforced in the manner in which Orders of this court are enforced, which includes contempt proceedings in appropriate cases.”

She said that one part of the Board order was specific enough to enforce, but the Order had not been registered with the Court in the technically appropriate way.

Victory on worksite visits

Continued from Page 1

more than two visits in any 24-hour period.

Visits include access to staff washrooms and lunchrooms used by essential services workers. The union also gets access to boardrooms, meeting rooms and IT rooms, provided bargaining unit work is usually done there.

While OPSEU must provide the

employer with a list of worksite representatives, the union may change the names and the employer must accept the changes.

And worksite reps can talk to people performing bargaining unit work about their tasks and health and safety.

The ruling confirms OPSEU’s stand on workplace visits. It makes them a more useful tool.

POSO staff gag at gag rule

Staff at the Province of Ontario Savings Office (POSO) are holding a “gag day” on the picket lines Wednesday to protest an employer order that they can’t speak out against privatization even as union members on their own time.

“As union members, we have a right to speak out. This government demands silence from its staff, but this same government once leaked confidential POSO customer information to a pollster,” President Leah Casselman said.

She said POSO staff and customers are extremely concerned about the prospects of privatization.

“Typically, privatization carries huge costs, as the Provincial Auditor’s recent report makes very clear.

“As OPSEU members we’d like to tell customers about those costs, which could include account fees and lower interest rates,” she said.

“It could also include the cost to the public of our Minister of Finance going to New York to borrow money instead of using POSO deposits.”

OPSEU members say POSO staff has been told they cannot circulate flyers or petitions calling into question the government’s privatization plan.

An e-mail intercepted by OPSEU, from the Director of POSO tells employees they “are not to be seen as supporting or assisting in conveying messages contrary to government policy.”



It’s a boy!

Randy and Kathy Crampton of Local 728 in Red Lake became proud parents of William Garet on Saturday. He weighed 8 lb. 1 oz.

Both Mom and Dad were on the picket lines Friday, the day before the birth of their union baby.

It’s two boys!!

Lisa Cornelius of Local 340 and her husband Bill are proud parents of twins. William Charles 2 lbs. and Andrew Blair 1 lb. 11 oz. were born March 20. Bill reports that Lisa and the boys are doing well and getting better every day.

Given generously

Region 6 Board Member Will Presley reports they did a payday collection at offices of the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation last week.

Members of the BPS unit came up with \$10,000 for OPS hardship funds. Presley is proud of the \$10 a member average donation and challenges other non-OPS units to match it.

The money has been handed over to picket lines in the communities where it was raised.

Walkout gets (handwritten) cheques

Workers at the Old City Hall Courthouse in Toronto, Local 526, walked off the job at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday demanding they be paid money owing from their last paycheques.

They were missing pay for the three days when the strike started. As essential inside workers, they were entitled to the pay.

Chips ahoy!

During the Local 627 Espanola strikers’ weekly pilgrimage to Manitoulin Island to support the six members of the local picketing at the Blue Jay Fish Hatchery, an interesting event happened

While we were standing around at the hatchery watching the cars go by on the highway, a Hostess chip truck drove up, stopped, and dropped off two big boxes of chips.

It’s a nice change from doughnuts, reports Brian Riche from North Bay.

Another Taj Mahal!



Local 130 strikers at ComSoc on Richmond Street in Chatham are warm and cosy thanks to the generosity of two gentlemen from the public. Fred Knight, husband of Barb Knight and Terry Moore donated their time on Easter Sunday to build a royal palace of a strike hut, complete with screen door.

Welcome support

The Rural Lambton Stewardship Network has donated \$400 to Local 130 to support the picket lines in Chatham. Darrell Randell made the presentation to striker Ron Ludolph, who works for the MNR.

In a conference call, the director of Toronto courts told them she would make sure they got their cheques by 11:30 if they went back to work. The handwritten cheques appeared about 11:40 a.m.

Shelley McCormick, an inside picket captain responded to the paycheque problem.

Our important work

(First in what could become a series)

Everyone knows their own work, and what happens when it isn't done. The OPS is full of wonderful people doing interesting and important work. Here is one member's description of what happens when she's not on the job.

Local 635 secretary Jeanne Collins usually works with the Ontario Disability Program Unit in ComSoc.

She explains:

Here are a few things that are not happening since the strike:

1. Clients applying for Ontario Disability Support (ODSP – income support for the disabled) are left waiting. Most of them are on Ontario Works, which has a \$520 a month maximum payment compared to \$930 for ODSP. Applicants must have their case adjudicated by a Medical Advisory Board which is not sitting during the strike. If they are getting Ontario Works

Great balls o' fire!

Friday was quite “chilli” in Owen Sound. Local 224's various picket lines were asked to cook up their favourite recipe and bring it down to strike headquarters for a “cook off.”

Members brewed up seven different recipes with ingredients ranging from Italian sausage to moose and venison. Participants sampled and voted for their favourite.

A hot time was had by all and nobody went away hungry. The winner was MTO/MNR's Cajun Coon.

money, they are obligated to be looking for work, regardless of their disabilities.

2. Internal Reviews and Social Benefits Tribunals are not being done. Clients can't appeal a decision which they disagree with. This has a longer-term impact as there is a time limit on response for both these types of reviews.
3. Two satellite offices (Bracebridge and Kirkland Lake) have been closed since Day 1 of the strike. Clients must contact North Bay or Timmins for services.
4. The legacy computer system, which is used to provide T5 information from Jan. 2001 to the date a new computer system came on board (in North Bay, September 2001) has been unavailable. This system is used to replace lost T5 information for social assistance recipients both in ODSP and Ontario Works. And the income tax deadline is approaching.

Groovy, man, Far out

The 70s came back to life on Local 638's lines Tuesday. Pictures show long blonde hair, headbands and peace signs in mad profusion.

“We went back in time just like our employer is doing right now with our contract. Peace, Love and RESPECT is what we want and we'll be here as long as we have to. Hang in there Central Team and get us an “A+” Contract,” writes our Hearst stringer, Suzanne Morin.



Mr. Tsubouchi,

I find it an insult that you are publishing public employees wages at this time.

You are in negotiations with your employees.

Are you trying to humiliate the public employees? Because, I am very proud of the public employees for their dedication in the face of massive cuts. You should be ashamed of having them work too much because of your government's cuts.

– Joe Perretta
President, Local 202

Give an editor a break

FRONTlines is always looking for stories about this strike.

You know the impact of your job action better than anyone, and among the folks on the line are people whose job it is to communicate with the public.

Please use those skills to communicate with your fellow pickets. What is this strike meaning to the people who depend on your work? What made you laugh today? What action buoyed your spirits? Share the stories.

I'm getting quite a few strike publications, which are a great source of news, but I'm sure there are more out there. Please send strike newsletters, stories and ideas to: kfitzrandolph@opseu.org, or phone: 416-448-7440 or fax: 416-443-1762.