

OPSEU



SEFPO

# Frontlines

April 11, 2002

It's  
YOUR  
turn,  
Ernie

## Tory tactics:

## We've seen them before

There's three kinds of lies: Lies, Damned Lies and Tory Bargaining Statements.

Yesterday they leaked a document to the media saying the strike would go on for another two or three weeks.

We've been there before. On March 27, 1996, then management board chair Dave Johnson told the media that the strike would "drag on for weeks."

By March 30, the contract was ratified and on Monday, April 1, we were back at work.

In a statement titled *Johnson lies*, President Leah Casselman wrote: "Johnson's goal is to throw OPSEU members off balance and

cause a panic on the lines. Don't fall for it. Stay strong."

Yesterday's leak angered members on the lines. It has backfired on the government.

Today's leak says that the government tabled an offer on Saturday and the union has not responded.

This is another Tory Bargaining Statement. It's not true. We have been bargaining all week, so of course we have responded.

This is also the kind of information that should not be floating around when there is a blackout on negotiations.

The blackout is designed to make talks go more smoothly. It almost

seems as if the government doesn't want to reach an agreement with its biggest union.

Here's news for them: They may not want to, but they are going to have to. OPSEU is not going away.

In fact, OPSEU is heading into Tory faces. We'll be there Monday to greet the new premier when he is sworn in, and we'll be visiting his supporters. Read the next story to find out who in your community has been bankrolling the boss.

## Catch-a-Tory (not a chicken recipe)

At the website below, you can find the list of donors to the PC Party of Ontario.

The site contains an alphabetical list of individuals and companies. Unfortunately, it appears not to be sortable by city.

You can click on a year, e.g. **2000 Returns** then **Central Party**, then select **Party** from a menu on the left. That lets you scan all donations over \$100 in alpha listings.

Tim Little, who found the site, discovered oddly enough that one Greg Sorbara gave the Ontario PCs \$1,600 last year.

**Here's the website:**  
[www.electionsontario.on.ca/coef/index.htm](http://www.electionsontario.on.ca/coef/index.htm)

## Live like a Tory

The *Toronto Star's* Richard Brennan reports that ComSoc Minister John Baird is billing the taxpayers for some pretty fancy dining.

On Feb. 10, 2000, he billed \$213.93 for a "working dinner," and a month earlier he spent \$170, including a \$25 tip) at a sushi restaurant for another "dinner meeting."

In fact, the average monthly bill for Baird and his staff is more than \$930.95 over a 15 month period.

That's more than double the \$448 that a single mother on welfare with one child receives to live on.

One of his staffers even submitted a claim for four timbits – and had it honoured.

Some of the "working dinners" for staffers ended close to midnight, or even after.

During the same period, Baird and his staff averaged \$498.19 a month on hotels. And that's more than the \$325 shelter allowance for a single person on welfare.

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

# Our important work Environment is suffering

Gus Perkons, Local 205, an Environmental Officer in Hamilton, sent a long list of non-essential MOE work to his MPP, Dr. Marie Bountrogianni (Liberal – Hamilton Mountain). This is edited from that list of work not being done.

## Inspections

### • Water Treatment Plants (WTPs)

No inspections of any municipal or private WTP. These inspections assess the risks to water safety through a Drinking Water Protection Regulation compliance audit. Last year, more than half the municipal WTPs failed their compliance audit.

Orders to municipalities to comply with the Ontario Water Resources Act are not being followed up. No samples are being taken to ensure lab results are reasonable. A new Designated Facilities Regulation protecting vulnerable citizens (children and the elderly) is not being enforced.

### • Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)

An initiative to see if municipal STPs are obeying legal discharge limits (including E. Coli) and/or policy/guideline limits is only half way through its cycle. The results have not been published as they were last year. The annual discharge report on the MOE web site indicates significant non-compliance which is not being addressed.

No compliance audit samples are being taken to check lab results and STPs do not have to use accredited laboratories as do WTPs.

### • Industrial Generators

Routine inspections are not being

carried out. Compliance audits are the only way to ensure proper waste handling practices. Compliance audit samples on any discharges to the natural environment are not being done.

### • Landfill sites (both hazardous and non-hazardous)

These are not being inspected. Taro continues to operate even though the MOE inspector is on the picket line. There is no monitoring of what the Taro site is accepting.

## Enforcement

Investigations and Enforcement Branch (IEB) staff are not investigating, laying charges or testifying in court. These have time limits. Suspected violations are not being reviewed before proceeding.

## Technical reviews

MOE scientists, including hydrogeologists, biologists and air specialists, are no longer reviewing company-sponsored risk assessments. Applications for Permits To Take Water and Certificates of Approval are not being reviewed. There are no environmental officers to enforce the legislation.

## Air monitoring

The air quality monitoring network shut down for the first time in 30 years.

## Environmental officers

They know the bad actors. They know what they do when it's business as usual. They're terrified at what is happening now.

The government doesn't care about the environment, says Gus.

# Firefighters training at a standstill

OPSEU workers at the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst (Local 317) have been on the picket line since the strike began, closing the college to all training.

They are registration, and administration staff, instructors, a resource centre technician, maintenance staff, cleaners and cooks, who ensure that courses run smoothly and effectively

Fire services personnel across Ontario use the College to train and upgrade their skills in fighting fires, ice and water rescue, public education, fire investigation, medical courses and more.

These courses are important to the fire fighters taking them, and to the general public because they improve the skills and training of emergency workers.

Twelve courses in the company officer program and seven in specialized training have been cancelled, as have remote courses. Failure to mail out advance material may affect future courses.

## Don't bend to pressure

Please tell our bargaining team to be strong and not to bend under the pressure. I believe that this leak memo is a tactic to try to get more concessions.

They must be close to breaking and this may be a last resort tactic hoping the union will give in. After more than four weeks, we should not give them any concessions.

– Claude Berthiaume  
Local 629

## House arrest next stop for unclassified staff?

by Sandy Coll, *unclassified, part-time, Local 126*

It's probably difficult for people to relate to unless you have been in an unclassified position for 14 years, having performed your job duties with excellent evaluations.

Then you have to enter a job competition for a position that is given to someone who has only been with the employer for a year.

Being unclassified means that the employer expects you be available 24/7 without paying stand-by time. They expect you to have an answering machine, call display, call forward, voice mail, cell phone and/or a pager. Perhaps the next demand will be to put unclassified staff under house arrest for their convenience.

I was a victim-survivor of E. coli in 1999, the source of which was never found. I work in a Cook 1 position handling food.

I was near death when I was transferred to a London Hospital. I don't believe there was ever any investigation done in the workplace to find if the illness was work related. I definitely appreciate and value the work of the meat inspectors and the value of the Health Department.

If Walkerton was any indication of the tragedies that can quickly unfold, then just imagine this happening again with the lack of meat inspectors.

What I went through and what my family had to endure I would not possibly wish on my worst enemy.

## Dignity and strength in The Soo

Local 603 in Sault Ste. Marie is picketing under very trying circumstances at MNR's Ontario Forest Research Institute, where about a dozen OPSEU members, mostly research scientists, are crossing the picket line every day.

It is an extraordinary trial to watch a dozen of their co-workers selfishly go to work every day, with little regard for their 45,000 OPS coworkers, who know that the government's offer was unacceptable and that like it or not, striking is our only leverage.

These strikebreakers know that they will unfairly reap the same benefits that their co-workers, who have not been getting a paycheck these last four weeks, are working so hard to attain.

For the most part, the pickets are

**Solidarity:  
and learning  
about each other**

showing great dignity, strength, and professionalism. They have peacefully delayed strikebreakers up to an hour and 20 minutes, even though the strikebreakers or the managers call the police almost daily.

One strikebreaker has driven through the line dangerously on three occasions, including one incident in which two pickets were knocked to the ground, yet the police and the managers will not take any action to get this person out from behind the wheel.

The policy has been no visitors to the building, yet yesterday the managers antagonized the picket line by smuggling in a person who met with one of the strike-breaking scientists.

Local 603 President Bob McNeely deserves high praise for his ability to balance a broad range of viewpoints within the local. The other locals in Sault Ste. Marie deserve thanks for their ongoing support.

## Tide has turned in Woodstock

by Sandra Arn, *Local 117*

There have been frustrating days at Local 117 in Woodstock.

A number of persons have crossed the picket lines at the Province of Ontario Savings Office (POSO) and the Ministry of Agriculture.

But the tides have turned. On Wednesday, a non-supporter at POSO said she could not face crossing that picket line again.

CAW members from the Cami Plant in Ingersoll came out to support our line at the office giving us excellent news coverage.

On Thursday, SUCCESS!

The Scab Van that appeared daily got tired of waiting over five hours and went home. It must have been awfully hard to sit there watching the picket line have fun, with a breakfast BBQ of sausage, bacon, eggs and English muffins.

At lunch they had to endure the smell of BBQ sausage on a bun. Local 117 gives the Scab Van the Bladder Control award.

We are all looking forward to greeting our new boss on Monday. Welcome to the real world, Ernie. Take a look at your new family and treat them with the respect they deserve.

# Court workers walk

The sisters stepped up.

On a day when women activists from OPSEU's sister unions were popping up on rowdy picket lines all over, the sisters (and some brothers) in a couple of Ontario courthouses decided to take a little action themselves.

About 40 court workers at downtown Toronto's big courthouse at 361 University Ave. walked off the job yesterday morning when they found out they weren't getting paid – not properly, anyway. The walkout shut down all 22 criminal courtrooms in the building, including a high-profile murder trial, for the whole day. A similar walkout took place in Windsor, with the same results

"I've worked in payroll for a private company," said a Toronto court worker, "and it's not hard to figure out how to do paycheques with deductions. All you need is a brain and a calculator."

Inside sources have confirmed that the Ontario government does in fact possess calculators.

OPSEU president Leah Casselman called the courts a "public sector sweatshop" and affirmed the union's determination to

## Conservation Officers are solid

Media stories generated by COs keep suggesting that we be declared essential. We are not asking for that, and we never have. We know it is important to have minimal essential services for an effective strike.

We are all in this together. We have been delivering a very focused message to put pressure on the Government to make a good deal. We also have a Special Case on the table and that's no secret. We

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win fair treatment for part-time unclassified workers.

The OPSEU members in Toronto turned down several attempts by the employer to get them to go back to work. Paycheques arrived at about 4:30 p.m. The employer agreed to pay them for the lost day and guaranteed that there would be no reprisals for the job action.

The Shared Services Bureau, where managers are running the calculators, issued a sheepish apology at the end of the day.

## ...sisters rock!

Picket lines in Brockville, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Windsor got a big boost Thursday when women from several unions showed up to bolster picket lines.

Reports indicate that Brockville had 200 people out and Hamilton over 300. The 400 people at the main Toronto rally wrapped up by marching down Bay St. to show support for court workers who walked out. Pickets stayed throughout the day in solidarity.

believe that if we keep pounding our message home, we can make a difference for the good of everyone on the line. We are not doing this to be an essential service.

The call for us to be essential comes from supporters who don't understand the bargaining situation.

We are in total solidarity with the whole OPS.

– Bill Fisher, Local 309  
President, OCOA

# Box scores

**P&P11: 2**

**Gov't: 0**

The government was back at the Labour Board Thursday trying to get what it couldn't get in the courts on Wednesday. Still no go.

The board said the government had to give the dispute settlement mechanism a fair try before it could take its case to a higher level.

And it chastised the government for trying to sneak new material into the dispute.

"I hope this is the end of the emotional violence they are inflicting on us," said Dave Kerr, Probation and Parole MERC rep. "At this rate it will take a contract and 10 years to restore workplace peace."

## Northern Ontario: 1 Management: 0

Late last night, our local was advised that MNR senior management had attempted to hire replacement workers in the Timmins service area, reports Local 649, Carol Cachagee.

The new hires, told that this was no more than scabbing, said that they will not honour the agreement with management. If it's happening in MNR, it's happening elsewhere, Carol says.

## MTO: 0 OPSEU: 4

Thursday at both the Lancaster and the Putnam scales, MTO staffed the truck inspection stations with seven managers to the two essential services workers.

"How many managers does it take to inspect a truck?" asks Paul Dunseith of Local 230. "It takes two of our people."