

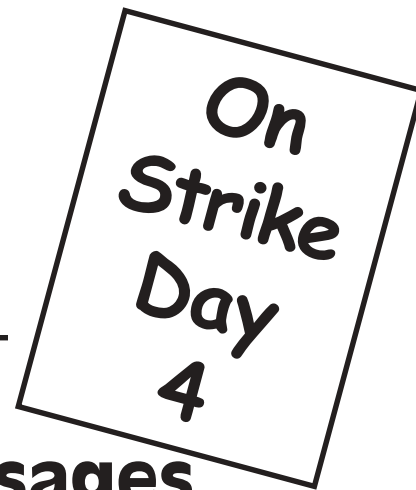
OPSEU



SEFPO

Frontlines

March 16, 2002



You sent them a strong message

Congratulations! The strongest strike mandate in Ontario Public Service history has turned into the strongest strike in our history.

“I’m very proud of the way our members have backed our bargaining team this week,” said Marg Simmons, chair of the Central Bargaining team. “We’ve done what we need to do and I’m convinced we’ll stay strong.”

On the other side of the table, Management Board Chair Dave Tsubouchi is obviously reeling from our strength on the picket lines and inside the struck facilities. All week, he was forced to spin a web of accusatory deceit in the news media as his taxpayer-paid lawyers kept busy lining up cases against OPSEU members for alleged breaches of essential services agreements.

Pick 2!

Our web goddess is swamped with wonderful strike pictures from everywhere and she’s doing her best.

But it’s just too much!

So here’s the deal. Pick two pictures – your two best – and we’ll put them up. Don’t force her to look through 40 shots and choose. OK? Pick two winners and we all win.

The big question for Week 1 was: “Where’s Mike?” As he has done throughout his tenure as Premier, Harris has managed to sidestep the turmoil and leave the issues to minions like Tsubouchi. (Remember the “late” Dave Johnson?)

With the Tory leadership vote scheduled for next week (in locations across the province) Tsubouchi and his Tory colleagues must be getting just a bit anxious. Polling booths, anyone?

Squash those rumours

Picket lines are probably the best rumour mills in the world.

You are outside, with colleagues in a situation where nobody has quite enough information. Someone hears the tail end of a radio broadcast and misunderstands it. They pass it on and it gets distorted, and before you know it – another rumour is born.

When there is news, you will get it here. You will get it on the OPSEU web page. You will get it through official union channels.

At the moment, we’re running an absolutely super ‘A’ Strike, so we can eventually get a terrific ‘A’ Contract.

Messages of support

Courage and determination

Congratulations on your courage and determination in standing together against the Harris government.

Nova Scotia’s 5,300 civil service members have been without a contract for two years. Without the right to strike, we have faced a Tory government that is willing to use every delay tactic possible to have our contract settled by arbitration. At times, it feels like we are powerless without the right to strike.

– Joan Jessome, president, Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union

Go! OPSEU Go!

As a former OPSEU member (Local 599 then 520) who took a very active part in the last strike – I resigned and moved to Germany so I’m no longer employed in the OPS, but I’m kept informed by email – I just wanted to tell you that I think you have done a far better job of presenting your points and getting the key info out this time around! It’s amazing. GO OPSEU, GO!

Congratulations, and good luck with the strike.

– David Howe

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

The news from everywhere

It's the government's fault

From a statement by a deputy judge in Sarnia Small Claims Court Thursday.

"We are dealing with a government that does not regard the government employees that work here as persons who require respect in my view. The staff in this courthouse that have been ordered to be here today are part of the union but are being ordered to cross the picket line, which is uncomfortable for them. It goes without saying that it's disruptive to everyone....

"She may not have been able to find the courtroom here today because of the lack of notice that's on the walls. That's the government's fault, not yours, not mine, not the staff's. It's the government's fault. First of all, they could have settled this strike quite easily. It should never have happened."

No change from Stockwell

Labour Minister Chris Stockwell was visiting loyal Tories at the Wingham Golf Club Thursday, so Executive Board Member Bob Reid and seven Correctional Officers decided to picket the club.

Stockwell and one Tory went in, but no other guests showed, so the picket line went in too, and the discussion turned to the strike.

In conclusion, Stockwell said if he is premier March 23, he won't change the employer's offer.

We are strong!

"this is jennifer a. black of local 121 goderich ontario composite local we had a great first day full support from all our membership, we had good support at the Registry office, Court House, both in goderich and Min. of Ag. Food and Natural Resources in clinton ontario... "hurray we are strong!"

Stupid manager of the week?

A lone picketer from Local 546 was standing outside 201 City Centre Drive. She was by herself, holding a sign and not impeding traffic or members of the public.

A manager approached and gave her a card which said that she would be required to negotiate a picket line protocol!

Local 636 rocks!

Local 636 President Tony Morabito reports from North Bay Psychiatric Hospital that lines are strong and strikers inside and out are having an effect.

Managers are constantly breaking the essential service agreement, he says. "We are regularly catching them in the act as we do our work site visits."

Four women stopped a bread truck in the early morning and had the bread delivered to the picket line. The administrator later came out personally to pick up the bread.

"What a victory for these women," Tony said. "We set the standard and we push the buttons that drive management crazy. Local 636 ROCKS!!!!"

Court cancelled

More news from Brockville correspondent Roger Haley. The would-be strike breakers who faced the eight-hour delay from Brian Burns in Kemptville haven't returned.

On Friday, Brian and Local 440 President Sharon Phillips effectively shut down the courts.

The pickets didn't do it, but the court decided to cancel all remands.

Essential service workers at the Brockville Jail had trouble preparing inmates for court; there were delays at the line getting the inmates to the police; and another line delayed their arrival at the courthouse.

"Police, lawyers and judges were all supportive of the 15 minute delay Brian asked for," Roger said. The court called it a day at 10.30 a.m.

Essentially visible

Executive Board Member John O'Brien reports that two essential transportation officers are scheduled three days a week at provincial weigh scales in northwestern Ontario. The scales are closed and the only essential act the two perform is "being visible."

Late sailing

The Wolfe Island Ferry was late on its first post-strike run at 12:20 a.m.

Local 428 President Kevin O'Shea wanted to conduct an essential services worksite inspection, but the manager refused. Calls up and down the chain of command produced the delay while Kevin held his ground.

What should have taken 10 minutes took 35.