



Shutdown of Algonquin Park a complete success

This weekend's shutdown of Algonquin Provincial park was a complete success due to the participation of hundreds of striking OPS members from Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6.

About 400 picketers placed themselves at the four major access points to the park as well as six locations on the Highway 60 corridor

Local 306's Dan Slater, one of the organizers of the picket, said that attendance at the park was way below normal. Many cars turned around and left once they spotted the picket lines.

"It's a good thing that there were fewer people in the park this weekend," Dan said. "The employer pulled just about all of their managers out of the park to monitor the picket lines. There was likely little or no

enforcement or protection for those who entered the park."

Dan said that thanks to the effectiveness of the pickets, some cars had to wait two to three hours before getting into the park.

"Most of the park visitors who did cross were very supportive once they heard and read the information about the OPS strike," Dan said. "They were also very attentive when we told them about how the situation could affect them once in the park."

Dan said that due to the picket, many people not previously touched by the OPS strike are now better informed. "Many park users now have a much better idea of what Algonquin's staff do behind the scenes to protect, manage and sustain this precious resource."

Who benefits if you cross the line? Not you!

1. You do not have a collective agreement.
2. The employer can assign you to work any shift at any salary.
3. You are not protected should the employer act unfairly.
4. You stand alone.

Some lines should never be crossed.

Want to reach Ernie?

Here's how:

Ernie@ErnieEves.com

163 First Street,
Orangeville, ON L9W 3J8

Phone: 519-941-1255

Toll-Free: 1-866-225-3837

If you **are** going to Orangeville to picket Eves' office or to get involved in the campaign, give Tim Little a call. That way the local campaign will know you are coming and can plan for your participation.

Tim's cell number is:

416-540-7003

More hatchery deaths in Nipigon

The Dorion fish hatchery has recently seen high drama.

On Thursday, Local 724 learned managers planned to move fish out, and they stopped a truck and trailer with 30,000 yearling splake from leaving.

The proposed destination for the truckload of fish – Ronge Lake near Schreiber – raised serious questions for striking biologist, Rob Swainson.

“This sounds more like a dumping program than a stocking program to me.”

Mike Kenny, a Conservation Officer in Terrace Bay says Ronge Lake is a pothole that has been stocked with 1,000 to 1,500 splake maximum in the past. “30,000 is over-kill.” he said. “It can’t hold that many fish.”

He questioned the ministry’s preoccupation with artificial fish

while wild fish and game are under attack.

“We have moose being shot nightly, pregnant cows ready to calve. We have rainbow trout being shot and netted in the rivers. Last week we had a skidder drive through a creek to get at a load of wood. We are losing a lot more than a tank full of artificial fish out there and nothing is being done about it.”

On Friday, the local discovered huge numbers of young brook trout are dying in another area of the hatchery because they aren’t getting proper care.

They estimate more than 100,000 have died so far, with more deaths expected.

The main cause of death is bacterial gill disease, which occurs through lack of hygiene and

attention. Swainson said it “could have been avoided, given continuous care. What needs to happen is to get the full complement of trained hatchery staff back in there to look after this mess.”

Untrained managers are trying to cope with unfamiliar problems while experienced hatchery technicians stand on the picket line.

Another victory

Add the Canadian Tire stores in Hawkesbury and Aylmer to those that won’t sell hunting and fishing licences until after the strike.

The long walk

Barry Graham of Local 728 has walked 300 miles or 482 km on the line since the strike began, says Carmen Storey.

Ode to a Manager: Remember Me?

This anonymous contribution came from Jeanne Collins of Local 635, who said a member had handed it to her.

Remember me? The one who worked for you in that department right?

Yes, it’s me, the one that you called up, even late at night.

I’ve never really been involved or even taken a stand
But the agreement that was presented was really quite bland.

And I know you must be tired, because you have to do my work
But hopefully, you’ll be rewarded for being “just a clerk”

I’m sad though, as I know you remember, because it was not so long ago
When I came in early and stayed late and I missed my lunch too, you know.

The family vacation that I had to cancel because you had a deadline to meet.

But that’s okay, your promotion came through and you moved to another street.

The days I left my young ones as a project needed to be done.

We had our dinner late; bed-time stories were limited to one.

I’m sorry if this is a surprise to you because I’m usually mild and meek.

And the time sure flies but by golly, it’s been six weeks.

And I still stick up for you, when they say you are puppets on a string.

But I know there is a way for you to do the right thing.

Remember me when you pick up that pen or even place the call

Just say Hello to Ernie and ask him to end it all.

Ask for the benefits, the pension too but mostly for his respect

Because you are the one who knows me best and the job that I protect.

Flying squads are effective

Members of Local 517 and other surrounding facilities, joined with the local at the Ministry of Health, Mississauga Square One, on Friday to stop strikebreakers from entering the building.

The mission was very successful, reports Local 517's Mort Todd.

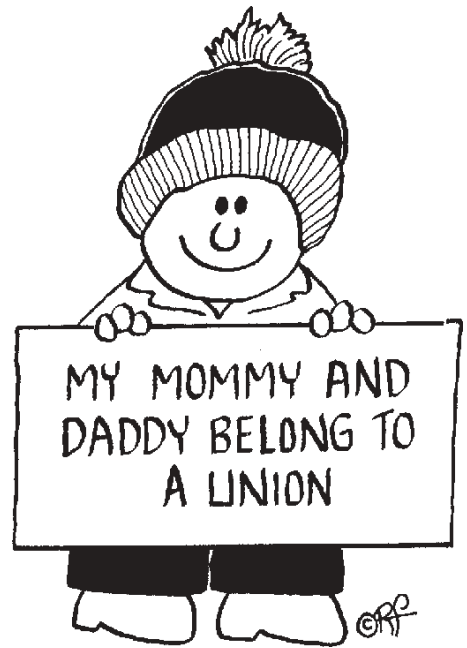
Many AMAPCEO workers were stopped, as well as many OPSEU bargaining unit employees.

The group then moved on to the office of Chris Stockwell to deliver the message that the management

negotiator, specifically Kevin Wilson, has been lying to the cabinet.

There is no new offer on the table. We were never offered 10 per cent, and there is still no 10 per cent offer.

This type of action is far more effective than sitting on our butts at the Metro West Detention Centre, where nothing is happening at this time. We, therefore, encourage more of our members to participate in these flying squads.



Why did we stop going to arbitration?

Members who have been in the OPS for ten years or more will remember when contract disputes used to go to binding arbitration.

People who worked for the Ontario government did not have the right to strike.

Members elected bargaining teams and developed contract demands. The bargaining teams met with the employer and talked about the issues in dispute, until they disagreed.

At that point, they went through mediation and eventually to arbitration.

At arbitration, the union would prepare a large "brief" spelling out its best arguments supporting every one of the contract demands. The government would come in with its brief opposing them all.

The two sides would argue in front of a three-member arbitration board. Both the union and the government appointed one person to the board, and those two people would have to agree on a chair.

After the hearing, the arbitration board would sit down and talk about the merits of the two positions

• You ask, we'll answer.

and eventually the arbitration board would write the contract language.

This process could take months, or even years. By the time the arbitration board award came down, people would have almost forgotten what the issues were. It was a distant and technical process, where members didn't have any real involvement.

In the seventh week of a strike, members might be forgiven for thinking that they have had too much involvement in collective bargaining at this point.

Before jumping to arbitration as a magic solution, however, consider this.

Arbitration follows government-set rules. In the earlier days, a union could get a fair shake through arbitration, because the law said that arbitrators had to try to reproduce the effects of free collective bargaining. In other words, the arbitrators had to give unions what they would have received, if they had the right to strike.

Then the government changed the laws that govern arbitration. Now arbitrators are required to consider the employer's "ability to pay." When the government says it is broke, the arbitrator is forced to accept that statement, so it is very difficult to get a fair ruling.

And with the OPS, the government is the direct employer. It can set the arbitration rules however it likes, to tilt the system in its favour.

In the event the government were to legislate the OPS back to work, it would undoubtedly define very unfair rules, such as eliminating some issues from consideration, and maybe even naming a specific arbitrator that it favours.

It was because of the injustices in the arbitration system that OPSEU lobbied long and hard to gain the right to strike.

When you get right down to it, it is tough to take on a tough employer.

When the employer can make the rules, it is that much harder. But when people stand up united, they are a force to be reckoned with.

'Lowbrow gutter tactics'

Mr. Wilson:

Democracy works when everyone plays by the rules. This applies to breaking the rule of a media blackout.

As a striking OPSEU member who voted for the PC Party and Mike Harris' Common Sense Revolution, I feel outraged that you would stoop to such lowbrow, gutter tactics. It is equally lacking in ethics that the media would go along with your game, trying to demoralize your employees.

– *Rodger Lucas*

Strong line in Minden

Pickets at the MNR building in Minden blocked all managers and staff, including staff from other ministries, who were working here on Friday.

"We will continue to do so until further notice or this government gets serious about dealing with its workers," reports Bill Davis of Local 309.

Charges at Rondeau

The OPP charged a non-resident couple Saturday in a picket line incident at Rondeau Provincial Park.

Local 130 was conducting a stepped up picket at the park, when a Michigan couple who have a cottage in the park attempted to run the picket line.

The OPP, who were at the line, pursued the vehicle and laid charges.

There were no injuries. The local recognizes the quick action of the Chatham-Kent OPP officers.

A bumpy ride for Ontario

I support every public service worker in the province of Ontario that has taken the stand in fighting for what I believe is their right(s).

However, I am anxious to know what the estimated length of time we are looking at in regards to our services resuming as usual. Mr. Eves has turned a blind eye to the citizens and the valuable services on which they depend.

I know nothing about Mr. Eves, and already I feel the citizens of Ontario are in for a bumpy ride.

I am waiting for the strike to end, so that I may join my fiancée in my ancestral country, the United Kingdom. I am patiently waiting for services to resume so that I may obtain documents. Until then I remain unemployed.

As mentioned earlier, I commend the pickets. I say fight till the end. Good luck to everyone,

– *Ms. B Cozens*

Seniority, seniority, seniority!

We keep hearing on the picket lines that the central team seems to think we are tired on the lines and will take nearly any deal. Well let me reassure you that we in Local 670 are far from ready to take anything less than the full issues we went out for.

Remember the 88-98 per cent votes!

Please carry out your full mandate and especially get some hard results for us casuals. i.e. seniority, seniority, seniority.

Good luck!

– *Dave Pauze, Local 670*

We will be stronger

by Linda Benedict, Local 102

Local 102 is holding a strong line at the London Courthouse. Every day is a new adventure and proof that simple ideas go a long way.

Our local has made blue and white solidarity ribbons that everyone on the line and all essential workers are wearing. They bond the inside and outside strikers.

We hand them out to everyone that shows up at our line – lawyers, union members from a variety of trades, and the general public. This has saved money. Instead of handing out the same pamphlets every day, we opted for ribbons.

Frequent users of the courthouse can get through the line when sporting their ribbon, and it's a visible show of solidarity to strikers. When the strike is over, everyone will hang their keepsake ribbon at their place of work as a remembrance and we will never forget what we have achieved together.

There is always food and drinks for everyone. Potluck lunches are big. Essentials inside have made us their top priority and it works both ways. On April 19, our line held a hot dog lunch for all unionized workers that are building the arena across the street.

Ironworkers from Local 700, electricians and laborers all joined in support and donated money to our efforts and had a good time. We all were empowered by this event.

Hold that line. Keep your chin up and dig in your heels. We will be stronger for having gone through this.