

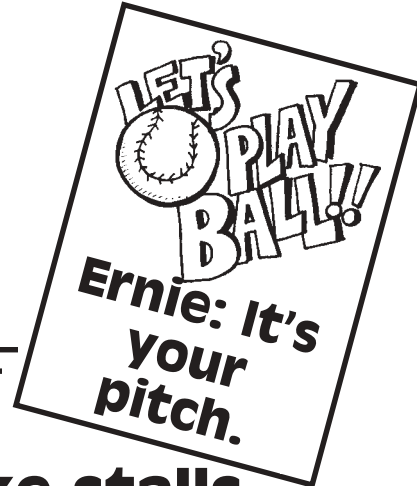
OPSEU



SEFPO

# Frontlines

May 1, 2002



## From 'doth' to dust

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice has struck down an order by the Court of Justice in Guelph that laid down the rules for the family court clerk there.

On March 21, Madame Justice Caspers issued an order setting out detailed marching orders for the clerk in her courtroom.

The clerk was to maintain the calendar and schedule.

With three more paragraphs, Caspers said the court "doth further order" the clerk to update dockets, maintain the judges' library and file documents, if necessary in the vault.

On Tuesday, Madame Justice MacFarland of the Superior Court turned all the doth's to legal dust.

The decision said the Caspers' order went beyond the court setting its own process, in an area where the union and employer disagreed about the clerk's essential duties.

That kind of decision should go to the labour board, not the courts, she said.

The original order was beyond the court's power to grant, and the ordering of specific tasks was beyond the jurisdiction of any court, said MacFarland.

## \$400,000 a week not to fly

MNR is spending at least \$400,000 a week for eight helicopters whether they move or not, reports Bob Thomas of Local 605.

And fire crews are refusing to fly in the choppers to attack forest fires during the strike.

The eight medium helicopters on hire from the private sector are not

included in the Essential/Emergency Services Agreement. As a result, MNR forest fire crews and other bargaining unit staff are not obligated to fly in them.

Each helicopter is costing the government \$1,800 an hour, with a four-hour daily minimum, even if they sit on the ground. Flight hours above the minimum are charged at the same rate. The eight are sitting in Kenora, Geraldton, Fort Frances, Thunder Bay, Chapleau, Sudbury, Hearst and Manitouwadge.

In addition to fire crews refusing to get into the machines, bargaining unit radio operators at MNR fire bases are refusing to communicate with the pilots of the non-essential helicopters. Managers are maintaining the radio contact.

## Happy May Day

May 1 is Labour Day to most of the world. OPSEU members in the Toronto area are recognizing the International Workers Day with a rally at Queen's Park urging Premier Ernie Eves to take responsibility for ending the strike and restoring public services in Ontario.

## Strike stalls repairs to leaky pipe

The strike is delaying repairs to a major leaky water pipe in Peel Region's water treatment plant.

If the repair to the main supply pipe isn't done soon, the region's water could be compromised.

"These repairs have been delayed since the start of the strike," President Leah Casselman told a Tuesday news conference.

"OPSEU members at the Ontario Clean Water Agency are the people who make sure you have water when you turn on your tap – and that the water doesn't kill you.

"We wouldn't be faced with this problem if the government would just give us an acceptable contract offer," she said.

"The government's job is to deliver these vital public services and at some point the people of Ontario have to start holding it accountable."

### A new email for Ernie!

Some people have had trouble with his election campaign email address. This one is from the Tory party's webpage:  
[webprem@gov.on.ca](mailto:webprem@gov.on.ca)

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

# Adventures in the private sector

Buoyed by success at three Brampton Canadian Tire stores, which have agreed not to sell hunting and fishing licences until the end of the strike, Scott McIntyre and a group of other Probation and Parole staff looked for new worlds to conquer in the private sector.

They turned their attention to Hertz Car and Truck Rental.

Hertz has been renting trucks to management at the Ontario Correctional Institute in Brampton

and the Vanier Centre to bring in supplies to the Managers who are keeping the Essential Services Correctional Officers out.

“The Hertz staff were none too pleased with our presence, given that we were displaying signs that read ‘Hertz Rents Scab Vans’,” wrote Scott. They got good exposure on busy Kennedy Road, and support from honking horns.

“It was abundantly clear that the private sector businesses, owners

and operators want nothing to do with striking OPSEU members and that the public was quite receptive to our presence in the private sector; a domain that perhaps we should consider spending a little more time in.”

The Canadian Tire stores are at Trinity Common Mall, Shoppers World, and Airport Rd. and Queen St. in Brampton.

## These lines are strong

Picket lines in Thunder Bay closed offices on Water Street Monday, said Region 7 vice-president John O’Brien.

And last week the MTO offices were shut for a day, as engineers and AMAPCEO members honoured the line.

And Bill Davis of Local 309 reports strong lines in Minden sealed the MNR building for the second straight day.

## Trouble in ambulance dispatch

Ambulance dispatchers in the Durham region (Local 302) say the Ministry of Health is jeopardizing the care of area residents. Their complaints include:

- The centre operated for two nights with only two dispatchers, despite an essential services agreement requiring three.
- Some dispatchers were forced to work 16-hour shifts, four hours more than normal.
- Managers from Metro Toronto have been brought in, who don’t know the provincial system.
- Management installed illegal audio surveillance of dispatchers, which was discovered several weeks into the strike.

# Show my mom some respect

*Mr. Eves:*

My mom is Nancy Shepherd and she works at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as a Policy and Program Advisor. My mom works hard, and is the major breadwinner in our family. She needs to be at work.

I am 13 years old, and this is the second time my mom has been on strike. The first time was in 1996 when I was 7, and we had to sell our car in order to pay the rent. I was proud of my mom although I didn’t fully understand what it all meant. This time I fully understand what it means, and am even more supportive of her taking a stand. Now it’s time for you to do some

understanding and supporting.

1. Our family pays taxes.
2. Two of the four members of our family are eligible to vote.
3. My mom has worked for the OPS for 23 years, and chose a career in public service not to get rich (obviously) but to make a difference.
4. My family understands that Policy Advisors are not “front line” workers, however the work my mom does makes a difference in the lives of the people who receive those programs.
5. My brother and I are in need of the basics – shoes, clothes, other things that growing kids need.
6. My mom was on the OPSEU

bargaining team in 1999 and said that Mike Harris had no respect for process, for collective bargaining, or for his employees. We were all hoping that you would keep your word and settle the strike. Show people like my mom some respect.

7. Oddly enough, my family lives on Main Street in Toronto. So if you mean what you say about not being Bay Street, perhaps you could tell your representatives at the bargaining table to help the Shepherds of Main Street.

Could you do that, huh?

With Respect,

– Allegra Shepherd

*Allegra’s Mom is first vice-president of Local 520*

## Telephone manners #1

Jane Topozini of Local 649 called **Frontlines** to remind OPSers about the importance of telephone manners.

Her newsletter points out that nobody has updated their government voice mail messages since March 13.

Quite shocking, when you think about it. In the interest of good customer service, she suggests folks phone in (if they can), update their message, express regret that they are not at work to serve, and leave Ernie Eves number as a forwarding call. Try this number for Ernie: (416) 325-3777.

## Telephone manners #2

Management and excluded staff are on the phones at the Ontario Energy Board call centre dealing with confusion over the May 1 opening of the electricity retail market.

They have received only one or two days training for the struck work. Many are poorly trained, and cannot speak French.

If you are calling about the changes in electricity policy, make the point that OPSEU members do a better job.

The number is 1-877-632-2727. Press 1 for English and then zero three times to bypass the messages.

## A big cheque

Local 464 (Ottawa Hospital) has boosted the morale of the striking OPS members in Ottawa with a cheque for \$10,000 to the area Hardship Fund.

# Why not let us vote on the offer?

The easy answer is that the offer on the table is not good enough.

If the bargaining team had an offer they thought had merit, they **would** be bringing it back to the members for a vote.

When you elect a bargaining team, you give them a lot of serious responsibilities.

You ask them to take the demands from a series of local meetings and pull them into a central document that can be tabled with the employer.

You ask them to go to the table and to argue as strongly and persuasively as they can in support of your demands.

You ask them to resist giving in to employer demands to take away rights, benefits and contract language that you have won in past rounds of bargaining.

You give them the power to call for a strike vote, and maybe a strike.

The bargaining team has been working on this since Sept. 6, with the support of experienced union staff.

In the nearly eight months they have been preparing for and taking part in negotiations, they have learned a lot about bargaining and the impact of different strategies on the bargaining table.

While each round of negotiations has different dynamics and issues at play, there are also some things that provide consistency.

People who ask why not just vote on whatever the employer has on the table and get it over with are expressing very genuine frustration

**• You ask, we'll answer.**

with this round of bargaining. Frustration is not the best emotion to produce a good contract.

If the team were to put the current offer to a vote, it would have to urge members to reject it, to vote no, and to continue the strike.

Holding this kind of vote is a very public process. It can expose any arguments, splits and differences that might exist within the union.

It gives the employer a great deal of information about the union's strengths and weaknesses. And the employer will exploit that knowledge to the detriment of the union and its members.

Modern technology, particularly email, gives members a direct way to let their bargaining team know where they stand and what they are thinking. This allows the bargaining team to get the members' views, without sharing those views with the employer.

The team balances the feedback from the members of the union with what is happening at the bargaining table, the strength of the strike, the input from professional staff and other sources of information.

When the bargaining team feels it has achieved the best possible contract, it will sign a tentative agreement with the employer and bring that tentative agreement to the members to ratify.

Any other action on the part of the team would be a betrayal of the members' trust. They know you want the best that can be achieved.

## Professional, not groupie

Premier Ernie Eves' reference to protesting strikers as "Mike's OPSEU groupies" has angered Lillian Mercer of Local 246.

The slight, at a \$150-a-plate fundraiser in Cambridge, was unprofessional, she wrote.

"We are not OPSEU groupies, but are supposed to be your respected professionals of the OPS.

"I urge you to remove David Tsubouchi and Kevin Wilson as negotiators and **get involved yourself.**

"Eight weeks is way too long for a government/union standoff. The employees need to get back to doing work they enjoy, and the economy needs the money we are not spending at this time," she said.

## Hero nomination

Nancy Miranda of Local 504 nominates AMAPCEO member Terry Jamieson as a strike hero.

He was suspended for 20 days, with pay, for assisting Local 504's officers during the strike.

"We were also told that the 'technology forensics unit' was called in to further investigate Terry Jamieson and his involvement in helping OPSEU," Nancy said. "Terry is a wonderful manager who is always on the OPSEU side."

## Goderich council urges Ernie to bargain

Goderich City Council has passed a resolution calling on the premier to intervene in the OPSEU strike "to achieve a fair contract for your employees and a responsible deal for the people of Ontario."

The resolution notes that 250 Goderich residents work for the government, and the strike has cost

## People were equal and treated with dignity What is Ontario becoming?

*Mr. Eves,*

Currently my husband and my sister-in-law are involved in the OPSEU strike.

This strike is causing, and continues to cause, much hardship for many people living in Ontario. My sense from talking with people who are actively picketing is that they are indeed willing to negotiate and compromise.

However, it is not surprising that the members' leaders are fighting for benefits, job security and the right to control their portion of their pension.

Please devote some of your time to actually looking at the contract and maybe talking to someone from OPSEU.

## Different corporate approaches

While Canadian Tire is winning OPSEU friends across the province, Re/Max real estate was making enemies in Local 546.

Local vice-president Louise Raymond said Re/Max agents were "so obsessed" with getting across their line they risked injuring pickets. The ComSoc office on Burnhamthorpe Rd. W. in Mississauga, is in a complex that includes a Re/Max real estate office.

"We ask the members to abstain

the local economy about \$1 million in lost spending power.

"We, the undersigned Members of Council, urge that you end the adverse economic impact that this unresolved labour dispute is creating across many sectors of our local economy by intervening personally and immediately in the negotiations

I know that you have many responsibilities and that actually getting elected in a riding is a time-consuming business, but I believe that this strike and the issues on the table speak of what Ontario is becoming.

I really want to believe that the Ontario of my youth, where all people were equal and treated with dignity and respect will be my Ontario of the future.

P.S. I don't mind paying more taxes to ensure this.

P.P.S. Please explain why selling Hydro 1 will benefit the people of Ontario now and in the future. I am confused, when I read of California and how they regret a similar action

– *Kathy Marrocco*

from using Re/Max," Louise says.

Also in Mississauga, lines were strong at the MCSS on Mississauga Road, where government efforts to encourage strikebreaking have failed.

"To all of us holding the line, struggling with a million and one difficulties and yet not giving up, thank you, your struggle is my struggle and I hope I can share mine with you," writes Anne Pereira of Local 246.

between Management Board of Cabinet and OPSEU.

Richard Steward of Local 122 said similar resolutions will be submitted to other local councils in the vicinity over the next two weeks, and a modified version will be going to Chambers of Commerce.