

OPSEU



SEFPO

# Frontlines

March 18, 2002

On  
Strike  
Days  
5-6

## Leah to court in Newmarket Monday

President Leah Casselman will be in the Newmarket Courthouse Monday morning facing a citation for contempt of court.

It's six years to the day from the March 18 protest at Queen's Park where OPS strikers were attacked by the OPP riot squad.

A Newmarket judge, told Friday that the strike was the reason inmates scheduled to appear before him hadn't arrived, cited the president.

She will be responding to the citation.

"I also welcome the opportunity to talk about the problems facing our unclassified members," Casselman said. "More than half of

the court workers in Newmarket are living from contract to contract. I'm delighted to be able to talk about justice for them."

In other weekend developments, the Ontario Labour Relations Board found at least one correctional facility had locked out its essential service staff, in violation of an earlier board order and of the Essential Service Agreement.

We have other charges against management pending.

The Ontario Labour Relations Board was sitting around the clock working out problems with essential services Agreements in Corrections and in a host of other workplaces around the province.

## Support the media effort

We've had calls about news reports that focus on money and stories that don't say everything we want the public to know.

You can help the union's central communication team get the message across.

**1. Letters to the editor.** Write to say you are on strike over the pension issue. You don't want to be told what to do with your own money. Say you want to rebuild the public service. Talk about the issues important to you. Tell your own story. There

is a lot of information on the website. It's full of facts and figures. Look at the issue sheets for starters and ideas.

**2. Radio call-in shows.** A number of these have talked about the strike in the last few days and there will be more. If you hear one – and it's nice to have a boom box on the line – and they are slagging OPSEU or the strike, find a cell phone and call in.

Don't let them get away without a rebuttal.

## Messages of support PSAC backs our struggle

I am confident that our PSAC membership will support our OPSEU Sisters and Brothers in their current struggle against the Harris government.

– *Gerry Halabecki,*  
*Regional Executive Vice-*  
*President, Ontario for the Public*  
*Service Alliance of Canada*  
*(PSAC)*

## 'We've seen the damage'

The MPPs of the NDP Caucus and I wholeheartedly back your actions and your end goal.

I stand with you ready to assist in any way I can to bolster the spirits of your members and sustain their resolve to win a just and negotiated settlement.

From our vantage point across the legislative floor from the Conservatives, and seeing firsthand the damage their policies have created, we share your view that respect and fairness for workers is woefully lacking.

– *Howard Hampton, Leader,*  
*Ontario New Democratic Party.*

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

# The news from everywhere

## It's the government's fault

*From a statement by Deputy Judge Robb 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.

David Starbuck in Sudbury reports Saturday wasn't much better for Stockwell. About 100 OPSEU strikers and supporters picketed all entrances to the downtown Sudbury Ramada Inn where Stockwell was appearing for a leadership event. Fewer than 30 people attended that party.

## When in doubt – picket

Chris Moore, President of Local 554 at Reena Foundation spent some time on a Ministry of Transportation picket line recently. He was there but there wasn't any line, so rather than leave he and some of his members set one up.

They stopped delivery trucks, and enforced a 15-minute protocol. That's tangible support from one of our Broader Public Service units.

## No dish washing

From Day 1, food service workers at Huronia Regional Centre took the position that washing the dishes was not part of their essential service work.

So managers were washing all the dishes after each meal to get ready for the next one. The employer took this dispute to the Labour Board.

And the board agreed with the food service workers. In a ruling Saturday, it said that preparing the food was essential, and washing the pots and pans was essential, but the plates, bowls, cutlery, cups and so on were management's work.

Hope they don't blow too much on rubber gloves for the Huronia managers. Thanks to Dave Chew for this tidbit.

## Solidarity forever

Here is the first verse of the traditional labour anthem, *Solidarity Forever*, with a new second verse.

It was written by Takanya and Oriana Marsh (ages 11 and 14), daughters of Marius Marsh of Local 532 with the Ministry of the Environment.

*to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic*

When the Union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run  
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.  
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one  
But the union makes us strong.

Solidarity forever, solidarity forever,

Solidarity forever, for the union keeps us strong.

It is we who serve the public, clean the water and the land  
Working hard to keep our country beautiful, alive, and grand  
We are here out on the picket line to show how much we care  
Negotiate a contract and we'll work when it is fair!

Solidarity forever, solidarity forever,

Solidarity forever, the union keeps us strong.