



Frontlines

March 20, 2002

On
Strike
Day
8

Inside 'strike' is working well

"I have been faithfully wearing the great T-shirts to work as I'm essential and for once in my life, I'm not upset that everyone wants to stare at my chest – men and women alike," emails Lise Riel from the Crown Attorney's Office in Hamilton.

"But I particularly like the back. I think it's important for everyone to remember that we're all **On Strike** and not just those on the outside. I think the inside organization this time is very important.

"Last time, the essential services didn't really feel that they were part of the strike. We felt impotent. This time, as we've improved our tactics, we actually feel more involved. We do have an important part to play. May the force be with everyone!"

All kinds of wonderful things are happening. We have reports from 26 courthouses.

A judge at the 311 Jarvis court in Toronto refused to go into court with a fee-for-service court reporter, being used to supplement the essential services complement.

Counter clerks in Family Law at 393 University Ave. in Toronto refused to accept any documents except time-sensitive ones or on sensitive issues such as restraining orders or child protection.

All of this is the subject of a court hearing. Advice from the union says to hold the line on the inside. The strike is working well and has prompted a lot of Labour Board applications, where OPSEU lawyers are fighting for your rights.

You have rights as an inside striker.

- If you feel you are being harassed or intimidated for your union activity, file a grievance under the Collective Agreement. Under CECBA, it is not business as usual. Continue to do essential duties only.
- You should not be disciplined for doing only essential duties.
- If you are a contract staffer, you should not lose your contract because of your involvement in the strike.
- Work at a normal pace. You don't have to work twice as hard. There is a strike on.
- Keep wearing the t-shirts. We knew from the start this would require creativity. Where one door closes, another door opens.

Big board win!

The Labour Board has ruled that worksite reps must have access to our inside strike locations and anywhere we normally work.

It's your right. Use it.

Support

Courageous stand

I want to convey to you, on behalf of the 20,000 members of NAPE, our support for your courageous stand against such a militant anti-union employer.

– Tom Hanlon, president, Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

Outrageous

The Harris government's paltry wage offer and concession demands are both provocative and insulting to your members. It is outrageous that this government wants to roll back provisions like benefits, pension improvements, hiring and promotional procedures, and rights of casual employees that have been hard-fought for in previous rounds of bargaining.

– George Heyman, president, B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

A strong voice

OPSEU has been one of the foremost advocates of an improved and expanded Ontario public service. Your strong voice on behalf of your members has benefitted many workers in your own union as well as all working people across the province.

Ken Georgetti, president, Canadian Labour Congress

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

The news from everywhere

Sanity prevails

North Bay can have its fire barrels after all. Staff Rep Gord Hamilton has negotiated a compromise with the fire chief.

Barrels must be covered with a grill. They must have a pot with water or something else on the grill. They must be put completely out at the close of each picket line.

Each site must have a five-gallon container of water to douse the fire, if necessary.

It's the Taj Mahal

Local 225 President Gerry Hope reports a strike HQ extraordinaire.

Landlord Ron Levoy, Owner of Walkerton Graphics and founding member of the Concerned Walkerton Citizens, is charging \$20 a day for space next to his print shop. And he's provided use of a photocopier, fax machine, TV, VCR, overhead projector, four desks and office chairs, office supplies and foldout sofa.

"Leah told me on Saturday it's the best Strike H.Q. she had seen." says Gerry. "Where else but in Walkerton will you ever find this kind of community support for public service employees on strike!"

Two errors

In the interest of accuracy, the person nominated as dummy of the week by Claire Rowett is a woman, not a man, and a management employee, not a manager.

And the liquor temptation came not at the Chatham Jail but at the Ministry of Natural Resources Wheatley Fish Hatchery.

Hold the line

Congratulations on a strong strike! Hold the line, and give the Tories a run for their money. There is a lot of support out here for you. I was a picket captain in the last strike, with Local 520. I lost my job in the OPS shortly after. I am very inspired to see the strong strike vote and the strong first few days.

I hope you can win a good contract for everybody, and I especially hope you make progress for the unclassified, which I was for almost six years.

I also hope you are able to beat back the privatization agenda and defend our public services.

I'll be joining you on March 23 at the protest. I visited the picket lines last week on my lunch break and hope to do so again.

In solidarity,
Phyllis Waugh

Proper hell

From Local 103 retiree Ian Seddon, a picket line tale:

My son was a passenger in a car driven by a friend of his, whose Mother is a manager in the Ministry of Health in London.

They were driving past Local 112's picket line at London's Children's Psychiatric Rehabilitation Centre and his friend called out, "Suckers!" My son gave him proper hell for displaying such a bigoted attitude toward honest and committed public servants who are doing the only thing they can to get across a message to the Harris government about fairness and respect for Ontario's public servants.

I felt really good about his story!

Burn those wires

You're meeting the public on the picket lines – citizens, businesses, deliveries, couriers, etc.

Suggest that they call their MPPs offices (even give them the phone numbers) – and tell MPPs to get their side back to the table.

We want to be working because we are serious about our jobs and care about the welfare of the public.

Verse and worse

Local 102 secretary Heather McMichael reports on the Friday talent contest. This is an excerpt from a much longer poem written and read by "The Pylons" – dressed in black with orange cone-shaped hats and one "car" roller-blading around the pylons.

Dufferin Ave. proves to be the spot.

We have the barrel burning piping hot.

With one fire marshall and three police men.

Justice for all, we'll fight 'til the end.

Our pensions and benefits mean a lot.

So we'll keep pacing in this spot. I know every crack in this sidewalk.

I've met new friends, cause all we do is talk.

I get real bored, but that's okay, Cause with any luck, I'll get more pay.

I think we're done our little poem Now let's get a contract and all go home.