

The Real Deal

Bargaining news from your OPSEU Central
Bargaining Team in the Ontario Public Service

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Essential services: What's taking so long?

We have managed to sign off some essential service this week, and that leads us to a question we are hearing from members quite frequently: Why are essential services negotiations taking so long? What should have been a fairly simple process has been complicated greatly by the employer side of the bargaining table. According to the agreement made between the

employer and the OPSEU Central team in 2001, essential service agreements negotiated in 1999 were to remain the same unless major changes had taken place in the last two years.

So far, the majority of essential service agreements tabled by the employer have contained changes. We on the team have been investing a lot of time to ensure that changes have, in fact, taken place.

Hence, essential service bargaining is taking longer than expected.

Again, we need to stress the invaluable assistance we have received from the members who are providing information and resources to the team. Without these members, essential services negotiations would take even longer. We can't thank you enough.

What are they afraid of?

Rumours are circulating that the employer has cut off workplace access to the OPSEU website. We also have evidence that members in Toronto have been told by management that they are not allowed to hand out any bargaining literature in the workplace, even on their own time.

What is the employer afraid of? Maybe they are afraid that members will become *too* informed and not believe management spin on negotiations. We can see how the employer might find that offensive.

Marg Simmons, chair of the Central Team, said she is dismayed but not very surprised at these kinds of tactics.

"Incidents like these should lead members to the conclusion that this government has something to hide," Simmons said. "Perhaps the employer thinks that they can be successful at blocking information to our members. We have news for them: They won't be."

One of the documents on the employer's "banned list" is the "Plug Yourself In" survey that has circulated far and wide across the OPS. The information returned by the participants has been invaluable. We have also appreciated the comments attached such as "great job" and "keep up the good work, OPSEU."

Copies of the "Plug Yourself In" survey are still available at your nearest OPSEU Regional office. If you haven't filled out a survey yet, don't delay!

Team supports "Black Tuesday"

We want members in probation and parole to know that the Central Team is fully in support of the "Black Tuesday" campaign.

Probation and parole began this campaign a few weeks ago to protest staffing shortages and working conditions. We have been donning our black clothing every Tuesday since, to the raised eyebrows of the employer.

Keep up the fight!

Please turn to page 2

POST AND CIRCULATE

Meet your team members

*Peter Wall,
Central Team Member*

Peter Wall, representative for technical, operations and maintenance at the Central table, has been a Resource Technician 3 for the Ministry of Natural Resources for the past 23 years. Over the course of those 23 years he has been everything from fire crew leader to his current position in the forest health and silviculture section.

Peter has been president of Local 638, a composite local in Northern Ontario covering the communities of Hearst and Hornepayne, for the past four

years. Peter held the local vice president position for 10 years prior to that. He is also the current vice-chair for the North East Area Council, located in Timmins. The Area Council includes about a dozen locals from Hearst to New Liskeard.

Peter says that getting involved in bargaining was a natural progression for him to be a part of the solution.

"I've been ticked off with this employer for a long time now," Peter said. "They continue to take advantage of the working population of this province."

What does Peter think of the bargaining process so far?



"Being a first time member of the bargaining team, one of the observations I have made is that the employer continues to abuse the processes to achieve their agenda at the peril of their employees," Peter said. "Fortunately, we know the work that we do and that's what gives us the greatest advantage and the ability to expose their agendas."

How to contact your team members

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The Real Deal is your only accurate source of Central Team information during this round of bargaining. If you don't read it here, you can't be sure it's true. Don't rely on gossip and rumours. We will provide the facts.

The Real Deal will be available by fax, by e-mail, and on the OPSEU web site at www.opseu.org. To receive it directly, send your secure fax number to Lesley Williams at (416) 443-1762 or send your e-mail address to lwilliams@opseu.org.

*Authorized for distribution by
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