

The Real Deal

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

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Mobilizing in the regions heats up

In addition to wearing black on Tuesdays to support Probation and Parole, several locals have found inventive ways to communicate the fact that OPS bargaining is going on and that they support their bargaining team.

Some activities are: wearing OPSEU buttons and hats every payday, the use of orange flagging

tape on car antennas or attached to members' clothing, having wiener roasts over a burn barrel at lunch hour, collecting food for member "food banks" in case of a labour disruption (and if not, donating the food to local food banks), wearing OPSEU clothing in the workplace and wearing black arm bands for those who cannot wear anything

but a uniform.

Activities such as these not only build solidarity among the members, but also send a subtle message to the employer that we are united in achieving a great contract. That message assists us at the bargaining table immensely. Keep up the spirit!

A pat on the head

In a ploy that falls somewhere between being "nice" and being totally condescending, some workplaces in the OPS are offering "rewards and recognition" programs to win over beleaguered public servants.

In a branch of the Ministry of Finance in Oshawa, if the boss feels that you as an employee have gone the extra mile, you are rewarded with a sucker or a chocolate bar. In another workplace, the manager writes you a "nice note" and leaves it on your desk with some candies or gum. In

yet another location, you get a written thank you to put on the "wall of fame" and then get to pick out your reward from the treasure chest.

We hope that the employer doesn't view these little "extras" as a substitute for wage increases and better benefits. We doubt that a Kit Kat is going to chase all of our blues away.

Does anyone want to wager that these "rewards" programs will continue after bargaining is over? Somehow, it's unlikely anyone will want a piece of this "sucker" bet.

Table Talk is in the mail

The first issue of Table Talk is currently in the mail. It will go to every Ontario Public Service member for whom OPSEU has a correct mailing address.

The article titled "Six reasons the Ontario government can afford a better deal for public employees" is an excellent explanation of the reality of our situation. The latest issue also covers articles on essential services, the employer's agenda, communications, basic facts about the OPS and things you can do to get ready for bargaining. You can also get Table Talk on the OPSEU website at:

<http://www.opseu.org/ops/bargaining/ttdec2001index.htm>

Rumours, rumours and more rumours

Across the OPS, rumours have been moving at a breakneck pace about everything under the sun.

The employer has not tabled their contract demands as of this time. Therefore, any rumour about what the employer's demands are is strictly that - a RUMOUR. If you hear a rumour, please contact us either directly or through your local executive. We will then attempt to set the record straight.

Please turn to page 2

POST AND CIRCULATE

Meet your team members

Steve Nield, Central Team Member

Steve Nield, a health and safety inspector with the Ministry of Labour, joined the OPS in 1987. An active unionist for his entire career, Steve has been very active in his local and on a provincial level.

Steve has been President of Local 123 since 1988 and chair of the London and District Area Council for the past 12 years. Steve is also the vice-chair of Ministry of Labour Employee Relations Committee (MERC).

Steve is one of the few returning members of the 1999



OPS Bargaining Team, and his knowledge and expertise have been a valuable asset. "This team is very knowledgeable and experienced,"

Steve acknowledged. "I am urging the members to trust and fully support their team."

Steve knows from the past how important member support is at the bargaining table.

"Members are like the engine in a car," Steve said. "Without the engine, you can have a nice looking vehicle, but

it won't get you anywhere. With strong support, we will achieve the members' demands and get a great contract."

How to contact your team members

You can contact the Central Team directly at (416) 815-1406, by fax at (416) 815-1412 or by e-mail at centralteam@opseu.org.

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Imagine what 45,000 members could do

Len Mason, a member of the Corrections Bargaining Team and president of Local 737 at the Thunder Bay Jail, has been working diligently over the past year lobbying city councils to oppose the privatization of corrections. Last week, the "Resolution Warrior" reached the 200 mark of municipalities he has convinced to pass anti-privatization resolutions.

Len was recognized for his work on Nov. 26 at an awards forum on privatization, sponsored by the Ontario Coalition for Social Justice in Toronto. Greg Malone from CBC's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* hosted the forum.

We also recognize the work, commitment and effort Len has put into this campaign and encourage others to join in. It's everyone's fight.

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 Marg Simmons, chair, Central team, and Leah Casselman, president.