

The Real Deal

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

Issue #5
October 11, 2001



Big talk, little action

This week, we've had to endure presentations by the so-called employer experts who are explaining the nuances of the work performed in the Ontario Public Service. We have countered these lectures by bringing in member resources to interpret and verify the information being received.

The employer is tabling essential service documents at an excruciatingly slow pace.

Instead of submitting entire packages for each ministry, the employer is giving us bits and pieces of different ministries. We have put forward the position that we want the employer to submit all of the relevant documents so that we can make informed decisions on essential services.

The employer has refused to arbitrate any disputes until they have submitted all of the

documents. However, the employer continues to delay tabling all the required paperwork. We hope to have more productive talks next week.

Next week, OPSEU Policy Planning and Programs administrator Heather Gavin will make a presentation to the Central Team on pensions and the OPSEU Pension Trust.

Mob rooms are open

The OPS Member Mobilization rooms are open and ready for business!

Last week was the official opening of the "Mob Rooms" at the Toronto OPSEU Regional Offices at 525 University Avenue and 620 Wilson Ave.

Members have been assigned to assist in getting Toronto area local plugged into negotiations and rallying their support. You can reach the Mob Rooms as follows:

University Ave.: (416) 593-0959 or by e-mail at qpmob1@opseu.org

Wilson Ave.: (416) 638-1904 or by e-mail at downsviewmob1@opseu.org

Surveys go like hotcakes

The "Plug yourself in" surveys, available at the regional offices, are going like hotcakes. Due to a paper shortage in Toronto, 10,000 copies have been distributed across the regions. Another 25,000 will follow next week in the regional mail. Locals who have received copies and find themselves short should make additional copies until more can be sent out.

Unclassifieds: Make yourselves heard

30 per cent of Ontario Public Service employees are unclassified. The "Plug yourself in" survey is a great way to make yourself heard.

We're hoping that at least 30 per cent of the returned surveys come from unclassifieds. We need your input. Don't waste this opportunity.

**Central Team quote
of the week:**

Those who dare, win.

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POST AND CIRCULATE

Stand behind your Team

A contract settlement between the Alberta government and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) underscores the importance of supporting your bargaining team.

AUPE reached a tentative three-year agreement with the Klein government on October 3. The settlement will give provincial employees a five

percent raise in the first year, a four per cent raise in the second year and a salary re-opener in year three. The salary re-opener allows the union to negotiate another pay raise in the third year of the contract without affecting any other provisions of the collective agreement.

Mike Boyle, AUPE representative, observed that “the

level of support among the membership for the bargaining team was at an all-time high, making this agreement possible.”

This statement proves that member support for bargaining has a direct impact on the quality of the contract. Make sure your employer knows that you support your team!

Meet your team members

Marg Simmons, Central Team Chair

If the bargaining process seems familiar to Marg, it's because she's been here before.

Marg Simmons is a social worker at Local 263, Vanier Centre for Women. In the last round of OPS negotiations, Marg was the vice-chair of the Institutional and Health Care team.

“Being elected chair of the Central Team is a great honour,” Simmons says. “It's more responsibility than I had in the last round, and I know that I'm up to

the task.”

Marg has been in three OPS locals in the last 12 years, and a member of the executive at all three locals. She first became a steward when she was still unclassified.

Marg first became interested in the precise wording of collective agreements when she was surplussed from the Ministry of Community and Social Services three weeks prior to the 1996 OPSEU strike.

“When your job is gone, you rely on your rights under the contract. Thanks to the language of the collective agreement, I was

able to get a job in Correctional Services.”

Marg has always believed in the value and importance of public services.

“We enforce rules, care for those who can't care for themselves and help people in a time of need,” Simmons said. “We keep this an orderly, safe and well-run province. It's time to stop the destruction of the Ontario Public Service and return to quality jobs with real benefits and compensation. That's how you get and keep the best people...and quality service follows.”

Mark Kotanen, Central Team Vice-Chair

Activism is Mark's middle name. At least that's what comes to mind when you look at the history of a man who has made union and politics a life's work.

Mark Kotanen is a correctional officer at Local 128, Sarnia Jail. He was also the Corrections Team's choice to represent their interests at the Central table in this round of bargaining.

Mark is a University of Western Ontario grad and has been involved as an OPSEU representative since

1987. Since that time, he has held almost every local elected position up to and including local president, a position he still holds today. Mark has also been involved in the Bargaining Unit Overhaul committee and is the elected vice-chair of the Corrections Ministry Employee Relations Committee.

If that isn't enough to keep anyone busy, Mark is also heavily involved in Sarnia municipal politics, and is on the executive of the Sarnia-Lambton NDP riding association. Mark has run as an NDP candidate provincially, and has co-managed a federal campaign.

So what does Mark do with all his “free” time?

“I have a stern-drive boat that I drive no matter what the weather,” Mark said. “I also read at least five newspapers a day. That keeps me up to date on things that affect working men and women alike.”

Mark is passionate about trade unionism and his belief in the public service. “Public service in this province used to be held up as an example to people all over the world,” Mark said. “It's now becoming like the service you get in a chain department store. We need to bring the pride back.”

Training for OPS members ongoing

The following OPS Mobilization and Service Area Coordinating Group (SACG) training sessions are scheduled:

Oct. 13, 14

Region 3:

OPS Mobilization Training
Holiday Inn, Peterborough

Region 4:

OPS Mobilization Training

Four Points Sheraton, Kingston

Region 5:

OPS Mobilization Training
Colony Hotel, Toronto

Region 6:

OPS Mobilization Training
Timmins Regional Office
Oct. 20

Region 6:

SACG Training
Sudbury Regional Office

More sessions are scheduled.
Watch here for updates.

Training for members forced to provide essential services is also scheduled for the near future. We will be posting times and locations as they become available.

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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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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