

The Real Deal

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

Issue #19
January 24, 2002



Central Team applies for conciliation

The Central Team has taken a decisive step to get proper recognition for your issues at the bargaining table.

The employer, in response to a proposal at the table, told us what affects their decision at the bargaining table. They said, "Our principals, when responding to your issues, look at flexibility, efficiencies and the overall cost of doing business." This is employer-speak for a workforce that the employer can do whatever they want with, whenever the employer wants to, without paying you what you deserve.

Of course it also translates into their total disregard and lack of respect for their employees – you!

Our chief negotiator, Andy Todd, made it clear to the employer that their statement was most regrettable, and that his "principals" (the 45,000 members we represent), make proposals with the idea of fairness, equity and with the need to balance family and life. Our members are determined and mobilized to act on those principles, said Todd

The Central Team and the Corrections Team have made an

application for Conciliation. This means that a conciliator, assigned from the Ministry of Labour, will be sent to work with us in an effort to move forward. There is no limit as to the length of time that conciliation can last as long as the parties agree.

We appreciate the wonderful mobilization work you have done to date. It's now time to step it up!

And the survey says...

Many of our members were contacted in the past couple of weeks for part two of OPSEU's OPS bargaining survey. The reaction and responses were extremely inspiring and reinforce the bargaining team's position to stay the course. Members have indicated their

willingness to support their issues and their collective agreement in whatever way necessary.

The most important thing we can do right now is to get out and talk to each other. Communication at this stage is vital.

ERCs should cease meeting

In light of our decision to seek conciliation, the Central Team has taken the position that Local Employee Relations Committees (LERCs), Ministry Employee Relations Committees (MERCs), Central Employee Relations Committees (CERCs) and the Joint System Sub-Committee (JSSC) cease to meet or otherwise engage with the employer as of Monday, January 28, 2002.

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POST AND CIRCULATE

Employer silent on wage offer

On December 18, 2001, your Central Team put forward demands for a general wage increase of 12 per cent over two years. On January 24, 2002, a request was once again made for the employer to respond with a wage offer to us. The employer

has made it clear that they are not prepared at this time to make any wage proposals.

Perhaps the employer thinks that our number one demand of a wage increase is really not that important. Or maybe they are afraid of your reaction to their

idea of a wage increase. Especially when that offer is not likely going to compare to the 36.6 per cent increase the MPPs got.

Bring it on.

Members mobilizing in record numbers

As more and more of you attend the inside strike training, more and more unique ideas continue to emerge. Because we don't want to tip off the employer, we'll keep them to ourselves for the time being but stay tuned for strategy ideas.

Local meetings are setting attendance records and generating positive results. Activists and non-activists alike are mobilizing like never before.

One hundred and eighty members turned out from Local 310 in Newmarket to support their representatives. This is now not unusual. Local executives seem to be caught with having to order more food,

as attendance exceeds their wildest expectations.

Strike headquarters have been opened or are in the process of being opened and strike committees are in place.

In Sudbury, The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union/United Food and Commercial Workers have donated their union meeting hall to serve as strike headquarters.

In North Bay, the Ministry of Natural Resources rallied, calling for more respect and a stronger commitment from the province. About 80 per cent of the workers in Local 635 turned out to show support for the bargaining team.

Unclassifieds strong in their demands

Mobilizing and bargaining is ongoing and remains a priority to our unclassified members. Worksites such as the Public Guardian Trustee have shown 100 per cent support by wearing black on Black Tuesday. Members wore buttons in support of bargaining and posted unclassified posters in that worksite as well.

We must continue to orchestrate these types of activities and send the message to the boss that we are strong in our demands. In relation to all of our demands, conversions, and being dealt with fairly and equitably, are paramount.

Where did that member go?

Members who have not signed a union card wind up in a "catch all" list at OPSEU Head Office known as the "Local 999" list. It's important to start clearing up this list and ensuring that members are listed in their proper locals.

When doing your workplace surveys, please ensure that your members are signed up. Remember, you must be a dues paying member (have signed a membership card) to receive strike pay.

How much is strike pay?

We have received several calls on the amount that members (who are not performing essential services) will receive for strike pay should we be in that position.

Members who are performing picket duty will

receive \$125 per week strike pay plus an additional \$20 for each dependent. That amount increases if a strike or lockout lasts longer than four weeks. Watch for detailed information coming out soon.

Central Team quote of the week:

“You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory...victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival.” – Winston Churchill

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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Leah Casselman, president.*
