



# NEWSLETTER

Employee Relations Committee (MERC) Newsletter  
For the Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Volume 1 Issue 2

May 2007

## Escort Memorandum of Agreement reached!

Recently, members of the Youth Justice Divisional Health and Safety Review Committee were successful in reaching a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry on community escorts. The agreement, which replaces the former arbitrary policy, takes into consideration changes to legislation governing the work our members perform at the four stand-alone institutions.

The majority of the changes are around reintegration leaves. Some of the changes include:

1. A minimum number of YSOs to perform the escort;
2. Language preventing an arbitrary security level downgrading;
3. Improvements to the assessment process to determine a youth's security level, up to and including the time of the leave;
4. Clear criteria to be employed in determining a youth's security level;
5. Direct case management team input into the assessment of a youth's security level.

The Medium, High and Extreme security level escorts are treated essentially the same as in the past. Vests, OC spray, batons and a full uniform will be required for these escorts. The new YSO uniforms will have identifiers, but as they will not be available until Fall 2007 at the earliest, escort officers will be issued the current correctional officer uniforms in the interim.

The employer has committed to ensuring that forty per cent of YSOs will be escort trained.

"We feel that this agreement addresses the health and safety concerns raised by the members," said committee co-chair Bill Bell. "It should also go a long way to ensuring that escorts are done in a consistent manner across the province. For some time now, each institution has operated differently."

The new policy will come into effect June 4, 2007 and a series of information sessions are scheduled at the four institutions throughout the month of May. The full text of the agreement will be posted on the OPSEU website.

### Your Ministry of Children and Youth Services Health & Safety Team:

Health and Safety is a concern to us all. If you have any issues that are not being addressed by your manager please forward them to your health and safety representative. Bill Bell represents Youth Institutions, Beth Anich represents Probation Services and Eric Thompson represents the Youth Justice Division.

#### Bill Bell, Chair

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# Disclosure at CPRI

In April 2007, OPSEU received a disclosure notice affecting the laboratory staff at CPRI. The notice stated that six staff and one manager would be moving to the London Health Sciences Centre.

Currently your Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC) team is working with Job Security and Staff Representatives to ensure that all entitlements for the affected staff are met. Laboratory staff at

London Health Sciences Centre are represented by OPSEU Local 106, a BPS local.

The transfer of the CPRI staff is the first under the new Bill 169. All OPS laboratory services are all slated to be divested from the Ministry of Health to private or public laboratory services. We want to ensure that this transfer goes successfully, as it will “set the bar” for the future divestments.

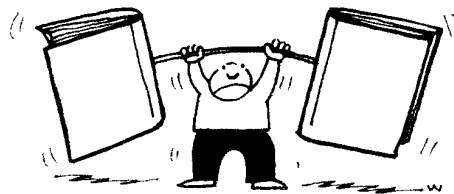
# Historic Training for Employee Relations Committees

On May 3-4, the MERC, along with Western and Northern RERCs participated in Labour relations training. This training was the first of its kind for our new Ministry. Both OPSEU and management wanted to ensure that committee members received a solid foundation to build positive labour relations. A total of 20 participants attended, divided evenly between OPSEU and management. Stephen George, Job Security Officer from OPSEU also attended, and Tony Magee, Pam Smith and Norm Pilon were the facilitators.

At the end of the training all the participants felt they had learned about the tools which will foster positive work environments,

enhance communications, provide a climate of mutual respect and provide a forum for discussion and efficient resolution of issues.

The Eastern Region Employee Relations Training will take place on May 23-24 at Rideau Correctional Centre. We are hoping to have the Central Employee Relation Committee completed in June. The rest of the Employee Relations Committees will receive training sometime in the fall.



# Probation Services Update

Regional Employee Relations Committees (RERCs) were elected in November at the OPSEU divisional for Probation Services. The Terms of Reference allow for the election of RERCs in probation, and training was negotiated for these committees as well as for Local Employee Relations Committees (LERCs). We have just completed the first phase of training and are hoping to have all of the RERCs trained by the end of June, with the rest of the MERCs completed in the fall.

The process for how an issue gets to the MERC table is listed below. Issues should first be addressed locally with your manager. If there is no resolution, the issue should be forwarded to your RERC member. If issues are not resolved at the RERC table they then move up to the MERC table. Referral forms can be found on the OPSEU website. Please attach any documentation as well.



## **Your Ministry of Children and Youth Services Regional Employee Committee members are:**

### **Northern Region**

Beth Anich  
Linda Kunat  
Helga Mayer Habal  
Liz Anne Beauchamp

### **Central Region**

Sheldon Schiffer  
Mark Manser  
Patrick Killeen  
Lesley Barclay  
Amanda Clarke

### **Eastern Region**

Steve Spence  
Robert Hawkins  
Adam Cameron  
Bob Eaton

### **Western Region**

Anne Pereira  
Robert Malcu  
Paul Van Blaricom  
Darlene Humeniuk

# **Issues at the Tables**

**Professional Identification (Badges):** These will likely be issued in late fall.

**Workload:** Probation officers need to keep monitoring the workload and advise their managers when it becomes high. Also, let us know so that we can address it at the MERC and RERC tables.

**Training and Development Committee:** This committee has not met yet, we are hoping to have a meeting in July on this issue.

**Anti-discrimination and Systemic Change:** The parties are very close to having an agreement, but it has not yet been finalized.

## **RERC Member Profiles**

As noted earlier, two RERCs received labour relations training. The members profiled here attended the training.

### **Your OPSEU Northern Regional Employee Committee For Probation Services**

**Beth Anich**  
Beth, President of Local 601 in Sault Ste. Marie, is the Co-Chair of this committee. She has many union hats including being the Probation representative on the Provincial Health and Safety Committee. She is also the newly-elected Provincial Women's Committee member for Region 6. "I am looking forward to a much-empowered RERC committee in the Northern Region," Beth said.

**Linda Kunat**  
Linda came to MCYS in 2004 from MCSCS during the disentanglement. She was hired in 1986 as support staff and has remained in that position for 21 years. She is a steward in Local 629 in Sudbury. "I look forward to serving the members at this

table over the next two years," Linda said.

**Helga Mayer Habal**  
Helga is a Probation Officer in Moosonee. Helga said that she attended the training so that she can better articulate union matters in a concise and effective manner. Helga stated that "the training exercises encouraged one to consider alternative methods to facilitate mutually acceptable resolutions."

### **Your Western Regional Employee Relations Committee for Probation Services**

**Anne Pereira**  
Anne is a Probation Officer in the Hamilton office. She recently celebrated 20 years as a member of OPSEU. Anne worked as a social worker at Syl Apps for 10 years and then as a probation

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officer in both Central and Western Regions for 10 years. Anne is Vice-President of Local 222 and has been a steward since 1999. Anne said, "I am really excited about co-chairing the RERC. I am committed to hearing the concerns and ideas of the members."

**Darlene Humeniuk**

Darlene is a Probation Officer in Windsor. Darlene worked at Southwestern Regional Centre in Windsor prior to becoming a Probation Officer. She is a member of Local 133 and has held various union positions including steward and treasurer. Darlene stated that her goals are to build an effective ERC committee through positive communication, problem solving and resolution. "The training offered has been useful," she said. "I look forward to empowering members and working together with the employer."

**Paul Van Blaricom**

Paul is a Probation Officer in Brantford and has also worked as a Correctional Officer at the Arrell Youth Centre. A steward in Local 219, Paul said that "hopefully we will be able to be productive and work through issues."

**Robert (Bob) Mahev**

Bob has been employed with the provincial government for 30 years. He has held a variety of positions including Correctional Officer, Probation and Parole Officer, Parental Support Worker, and Probation Officer. He works in the Owen Sound office, which oversees two huge counties (Grey and Bruce), making it rather unique in comparison to other probation offices in Western Region. Bob said he is looking forward to being a member of Western RERC and hopes to fairly address and represent many of the challenges his region faces.

**If you have any issues or concerns your MERC team can be reached at:**

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Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President

