

OPSEU photo



Andy Todd and his wife Betty Lou enjoy his retirement dinner.

Andy Todd

Union members, staff and associates paid tribute to retiring Chief Negotiator Andy Todd on Oct. 24.

Todd was the union's chief negotiator for 29 years, during which time he also handled many other assignments, including time as an assistant to the president.

Andy's expertise was instrumental in starting the collective bargaining that led to proper union contracts for members in the Ontario Public Service, and he was involved in every round of OPS bargaining from the beginning until the settlement reached after the 2002 strike.

His knowledge and expertise are reflected in virtually all of OPSEU's contracts, either directly or through the influence of other staff negotiators he has trained.

"We're going to miss his knowledge, his commitment and his sense of humour," said President Leah Casselman. "With his retirement we have come to the end of an era."

When Todd came to OPSEU from a position with a union at the CBC, it was still the Civil Service Association of Ontario. The transition to a modern union was still in the future, although the winds of change were blowing. ▲

Fred Nice

Fred Nice, a long-time OPSEU board member from Timmins, died Sept. 15. He was 66.

Fred, an activist from the Ministry of Transportation, had retired in 1993. He was president of Local 649 for many years. Fred served on the union's executive board from 1982 to 1989. ▲



OPSEU photo

Terry Connolly

Terry Connolly has been a tower of strength for OPSEU in Region 7 for as long as most activists can remember.

He was first elected to the union's executive board in 1977, and served for 20 years. He was re-elected in 2001 and continued serving until his death Oct. 11. Terry was 60.

Terry's interest in minor hockey linked OPSEU and the sport. During the 1970s and into the early 1980s, the champion Peewee Hockey team in Ontario received the coveted OPSEU Cup.

Terry was a tireless campaigner, from the Free the Servants campaign of 1974 through to the OPS strike of 2002. A long-time steward in Local 708, the Thunder Bay Correctional Centre, he took part in the 1979 illegal corrections strike, and the later legal strikes.

Elections would find him campaigning for his NDP candidate, although, like many others, he tore up his membership card in protest over the Rae government's Social Contract.

"Terry had an understanding and respect for members of the union in all of its many and diverse workplaces," said President Leah Casselman. "With his passing, OPSEU has lost a staunch supporter and an important part of its history." ▲



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Savings Office privatization scares seniors

Many seniors who bank at the Province of Ontario Savings Office (POSO) are scared and angry about the proposed sale to a private bank, staff say.

The POSO serves many Ontario communities with more than 100,000 accounts and \$2.8 billion on deposit.

The province of Ontario now guarantees all POSO deposits. But under the terms of the POSO sale legislation, federal deposit insurance coverage will cover only \$60,000 on deposit.

OPSEU and POSO customers are teaming up to fight the privatization. In some areas, POSO is the only financial institution for hundreds of miles. In others, it is the only alternative to the chartered banks. ▲



OPSEU retiree Phil Dunbar and Province of Ontario Savings Office customer Howard Clynick collected 1,500 signatures from southwestern Ontario on a petition opposing the POSO sale.

Drinking Water Act falls short of the mark

Ontario's new Drinking Water Act does not cover several key elements of Commissioner O'Connor's Part II Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, OPSEU told a Legislative committee. The government promised to implement the entire report, and it has not done so, said OPSEU General Counsel Tim Hadwen.

One of the most important aspects of clean water is making sure the source is clean, Hadwen said. O'Connor made 17 recommendations on source protection, but the government

CP photo: A. Kennedy



Ian Farion of the Ontario Clean Water Agency tests water purity for all of us.

has only addressed nutrient management. This ignores other forms of pollution and

broader environmental protection.

O'Connor also recommended that the Ministry of the Environment take the lead on drinking water, "developing and implementing the source-to-tap Drinking Water Policy."

The act also fails to address internal Ministry organization. The Tories slashed the Ministry of the Environment, downsizing the inspectorate and the technical and scientific staff that support inspectors. It also severely cut training and equipment budgets. ▲

By-elections bring three newcomers to union board

CP photo: B. Boughner



Gino Franche

By-elections in Regions 1, 6 and 7 have added new faces to the Executive Board.

In Region 1, Gino Franche, president of Local 130, has been elected to replace Marie Thomson. Marie's seat became vacant when her workplace ceased to be represented by OPSEU. Gino is a probation and parole officer, working in the Ontario Public Service.

CP photo: G. Donato



Linda Aho

In Region 6, Linda Aho, president of Local 668, replaces Will Presley. Will resigned from the board when he applied for a position on the union staff as a regional grievance officer, and was the successful candidate. Linda works for the Sudbury Manitoulin Children's Aid Society and is an active participant in the CAS sector.

CP photo: J. Smith



Joe Catroppa

In Region 7, Joe Catroppa, president of Local 736, was elected to fill the vacancy created by the death of Terry Connolly. Joe is a member of the OPS and has served on several provincial bargaining teams. ▲

Private superjail COs choose OPSEU

Correctional officers at Canada's first privatized adult correctional facility have voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining OPSEU.

Correctional officers at the Central North Correctional Centre, a 1,200-bed facility in Penetanguishene operated by the American-based Management and Training Corporation (MTC), voted to join the union in September. OPSEU represents 5,000 correctional officers in Ontario's publicly-run jails.

Sid Brown, who worked on the union organizing drive, said the decision was an historic day for staff at the jail. "For almost a year, we have tried to address with the employer issues such as staffing levels and workload, to no avail. Our people do an excellent job, but the pressures are enormous. Now we can work to solve these problems as a united group, with the resources of a union that is familiar with the work we do." ▲

Ontario's Mental Health System isn't working

A new report makes it clear that Ontario must stop closing beds in psychiatric hospitals.

Reality, Ontario's Mental Health System Isn't Working contains a litany of pain, anguish and death caused by cuts to psychiatric services.

Researcher Janet Solberg worked with OPSEU members who provide psychiatric care and union staff to survey the plight of Ontario citizens afflicted by mental illness.

Through newspaper reports, recommendations of coroners' inquests and discussions with front line staff, *Reality* spells out a crisis facing vulnerable people. The report is available on the OPSEU website: www.opseu.org. ▲

Rebuilding strike fund a priority

OPSEU Convention 2002 delegates confirmed a commitment to rebuilding OPSEU's depleted strike fund after the OPS strike. At the start of the OPS strike, the fund sat at \$27 million. The strike drained it.

Convention delegates voted for a temporary dues levy of 0.2 per cent, going directly to the strike fund. A change to the OPSEU Constitution sets in place an automatic temporary levy whenever the strike fund dips below \$30 million. It is expected to reach that level by 2005, barring a large strike. ▲