



THE NO BULLETIN

OPSEU Local 217
The Niagara Parks

Volume 4 Issue 1

January 1996

Participate: Make your voice heard!

1996 - Happy New Year!

Now that the Christmas and New Year festivities are over with it is time to think of contract demands. Although it seems like we just finished the last round of bargaining (which we did) we must get right back at it for our 1996 contract.

I encourage all members to get out to our general membership meeting held February 7 at the Stamford Lion's Hall to submit your demands. This is your chance to participate.

All contract demands must be presented and voted on at the meeting. Only those demands that the membership votes in favour of can be brought to the bargaining table. We need your input!

The 1996 bargaining team will also be elected at this meeting. The team consists of the president, two full time and two seasonal members. Any member in good standing can be nominated and run for the position.

The people elected will be representing you at the bargaining table. It is important for you to attend this meeting so that your vote will count and your voice will be heard. There is no voting by proxy at membership meetings.

March 31 marks the end of the social contract and the full time wage freezes. Yes, that's right, we can talk money again! Full timers also can be looking to improve their benefit packages. Everything is now bargained locally.

See you at the meeting

In Solidarity
Rob Atkin

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Sometimes it helps to make waves!

Paul Martin, Chief Steward

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every member, and their families, a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year.

In dealing with the concerns of members, one of the most common phrases I hear is 'I don't want to create waves.' It is understandable that people wish to avoid confrontation in their workplace. However, for an issue to get the proper attention, it is sometimes necessary to create waves, by speaking to your supervisor, or filing a grievance.

There are currently 57 grievances at arbitration, representing a total of 38 members. Four of these are dismissal grievances, with the majority of the remaining being either classification or discrimination/harrassment grievances.

At the present time there are 8 grievances in the preliminary stages. These include cases of improper layoffs, improper rate of pay, harrassment and finally failure to accomodate a person with a disability.

If you need advice on an issue, or clarification on the new collective agreement, please speak to your area steward, or contact me at 684-0346.



Cabinet shuffle in Horticulture.

Workers coming back to Kingsbridge horticulture this spring will see a new face in charge of the troops. Sam Ventresca, the long-time section foreman has retired this winter. The parks has decided to abolish his position and divy up the section, adding to the existing section foremen's workload. Rich Petty, the section I foreman (Fort Erie), will be taking over 'command' of the entire south boulevard. Peter Daniels, the tree Department Foreman, will be overseeing work crews at Dufferin Islands, Kingsbridge Park and the Nursery.

It seems to be open season on foreman positions in the last few years as sections are combined and staff reduced through attrition. There is even talk of combining Oakes Garden Theater with Queen Victoria Park in the future, though no plans are definate yet. This new, leaner horticulture department (which, by the way, just recently added another level of top management) certainly results in slim pickings for those workers in the department who wish to advance.

Powering up with information and education

Marie Stokes

Hope you all have recuperated from the holiday season. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy, healthy 1996.

It won't be long before we are gearing up for another big tourist season. As Rob has already told you we are gearing up for another round of bargaining. Hopefully this years contract can be settled before November. Let's all keep our fingers crossed!

We are looking forward to a large turn out at our demand set meeting. This is where you can have your voice heard. Demand set is democracy in action. The members present at the meeting will be determining what the negotiations team will be trying to get for you. This includes wages, working conditions and benefits.

Your bargaining team will also be elected at this meeting. It is important to remember that

it is not a popularity contest. You should choose your team carefully, after all, they are bargaining for your future.

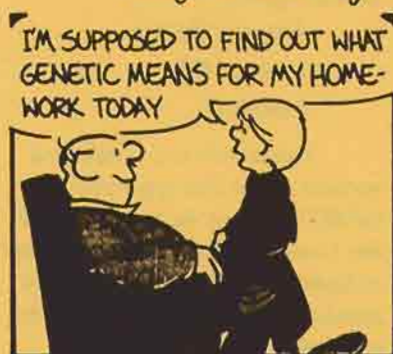
Our hard work is beginning to pay off. People may joke that I have become obsessed with my membership listings, but we are making headway. We have just received notification that our delegate status for convention has been increased to four. We now have over 530 members properly signed up. This gives us an extra vote for convention, which gives us more voice and more importantly it keeps more of our members informed about what is going on in the Park and in the Union. We still have people to sign up as well as addresses to correct for any members that have moved and not let us know. We are not being nosey, we just want the news to reach you.

Last fall I attended a

two part educational on Worker's Compensation with Sean Leitch, a subforeman in QVP Horticulture. The 20 hour course was held over two weekends in October and November. Course facilitators Eric Depoe and Marcia Gillespie did a great job presenting the material. Sean and I have received instruction on your rights and obligations under the act, filling out forms and helping with the appeal process. We don't profess to know everything about the system, but we can try to help those of you with compensation related questions. At the very least we can refer you to experienced caseworkers.

The final level of training is a 40 hour (week long) course dealing more with the appeal process. I am not sure if this course will be offered through OPSEU but I will keep you posted

.... And just for laughs... 'The Born Loser'



Attky 11-30

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What has OPSEU done for me lately?

A new activist answers an old question

What has OPSEU done for me lately?

This is a question that is frequently asked and I have heard it far too often. The usual response is 'nothing'!

When I hear that question and that answer, I come to the conclusion that the person who asked the question and the person who answered it have forgotten one significant fact.

They are OPSEU.

Everyone speaks of the union as a separate entity identifiable only unto itself, separate and apart from those persons who are its members. A union cannot be separated from the body of the membership because it is the membership that forms the union.

A union is the one comprised of many, and the many are the one. People

asking and answering this question are only looking at OPSEU from a distance in relation to their own particular circumstances and not from a perspective of unity with their brother and sister members.

Before you ask this question of yourself or others, ask yourself these questions:

*When was the last time I went to a union meeting?

*Have I ever stood for a local committee?

*Have I ever offered to help or assist my local?

OPSEU can only act on the input from its members. If a local has 500 members and the same 25 or 30 are the only ones who attend the meetings, it is obvious that only their voices will be heard.

And what does it take to be heard? Approximately 2 hours of your time every three months. That really doesn't

seem like a high price to pay to put your views and opinions forward in an effort to arrive at better working conditions, salary and benefits for you and the membership as a whole.

In my almost 32 years of employment, only the last two have been with the provincial government. This is the first time I have ever been a member of any union. This union is one of the largest and most powerful in the province. You could say that I am a union activist, albeit a very new one.

My attitude is that for every dollar that is taken from my pay to be a member of OPSEU, I will be giving \$10 worth of my views, input and opinions in return. That is the most valuable contribution I can make on behalf of myself and the other brothers and sisters in OPSEU.

I am certain if every member of OPSEU were to adopt my attitude this question would never be heard again.

Joseph Garrie
Local 102,
London.

This article is a condensed version of one that appeared on OPSEU News in August 1994 and the Local newsletter 'The Informant' in September 1994. The subject is timeless and it applies to all areas and levels of union activity.



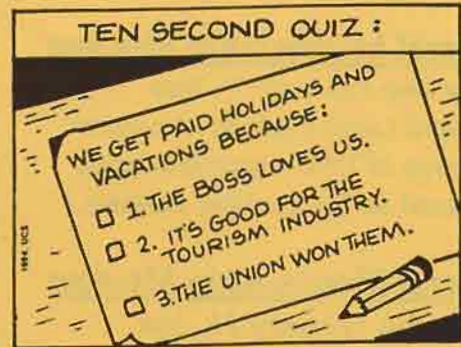
Local 217 Finances

Colleen McCamb-Page, Treasurer

December Bank Balance	\$3721.34
January rebate deposit	\$4947.36
Expenses January 1-24/1996	\$ 0.00

January Bank Balance	\$8668.70

Books have been audited up to January 24, 1996. The books are regularly audited by local trustees. Trustees are elected for two year positions at the same time the local executive is elected. Trustees cannot hold any position on the executive committee. The trustees elected for the current term are Barb Kostenuk (Falls Parking) and Janet Hepworth (People Movers)



Local books in good order!

Dear sisters and brothers;

We would like to take this opportunity to report to the membership on our financial audit of the local.

As usual, we have found the books and accounting to be in precise order.

The books are organized and cross-referenced in a way that makes them very easy to audit. Our treasurer Colleen has been very co-operative with us, answering all of our questions. All financial records are on hand at each audit meeting ~~meeting~~ for us to look over.

There are two issues related to expenses that the membership may want to review at the February 21

General membership meeting. The issues were passed at a prior meeting, but the expenses they have incurred have surpassed the budgeted amount.

The first issue is the presidential 1-800 number. We wonder if this service is really necessary. The bills from Bell Canada for the number seem quite high to us and we do not know if the cost is really worth it.

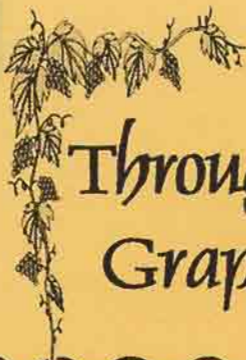
The second issue is the cost of sending alternates to convention. Currently the local covers the same expenses for the alternates that OPSEU covers for the delegates; wages, mileage, shared accomodation rates, meals and child care. Our concern, in the interest of saving money, is wether the

local should be subsidizing the daycare with straight cash when OPSEU offers quality daycare at convention for alternates at no cost to the local.


Perhaps some discussion on these issues is in order so the membership can have some input.


Yours in sister and brotherhood;
Barb Kostenuk
Janet Hepworth


Editor's note: Last years convention daycare, staffed by qualified child care workers, was open from 8:30am to midnight each day. 115 children were enrolled, ranging in age from infant to teenager. Daily events were tailored to each individual age group




Through the Grapevine


 Congratulations are in order for Sean Leitch and Scott Priest. Sean and Scott were the successful applicants for the positions of subforeman of Queen Victoria Park Horticulture.

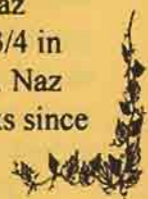
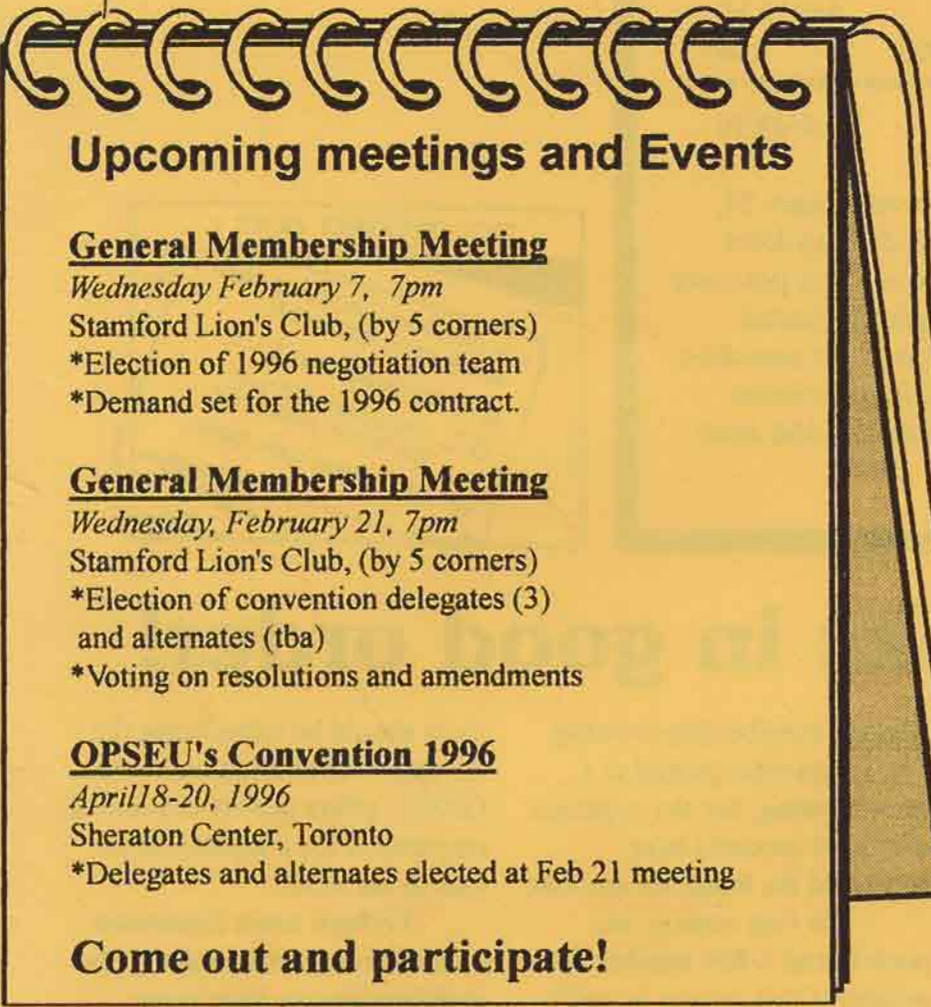
 Congratulations go to Bruce MacDonald, the new Subforeman at the Parks Greenhouse. Bruce fills the position vacated by Scott Priest, who has transferred outside.

 Congratulations to Jody Cant, Don Ede, Bob Climenhage and Howard Sullivan. These guys have worked very hard obtaining both their commercial and residential painting papers and have each won a full time posting. Patience pays off, all of our new full time painters have worked seasonally for at least 10 years. In fact Don Ede has been with the Parks since 1978.

 Congratulations to Mario Vetrone and his wife Lina, who became proud grandparents again. A bouncing baby girl, Julia Christina arrived early December 22. A little sister for Jordan.

 All the best for a happy retirement to Ralph Rivabella. Ralph worked as a labourer 3/4 in QVP Horticulture for 11 years. We're going to miss you Ralph!

 Happy Retirement to Nazzareno Felicetti. Naz Worked as a labourer 3/4 in Section 2 (Queenston). Naz had been with the Parks since 1985.

Upcoming meetings and Events

General Membership Meeting
Wednesday February 7, 7pm
 Stamford Lion's Club, (by 5 corners)
 *Election of 1996 negotiation team
 *Demand set for the 1996 contract.

General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, February 21, 7pm
 Stamford Lion's Club, (by 5 corners)
 *Election of convention delegates (3) and alternates (tba)
 *Voting on resolutions and amendments

OPSEU's Convention 1996
April 18-20, 1996
 Sheraton Center, Toronto
 *Delegates and alternates elected at Feb 21 meeting

Come out and participate!

The No Bulletin is published Quarterly and mailed to all signed in members.

The No Bulletin is your newsletter. If you have any related articles, jokes or cartoons please give them to Marie Stokes 6480 Dorchester Rd NFO L2G-5T5 (357-4219)r
We reserve the right to edit for length and content

We welcome your comments and suggestions

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