



THE NO BULLETIN

OPSEU Local 217
The Niagara Parks

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Let's send a message!

Rob Atkin

Christmas and New Years have passed which means 2003 OPSEU Convention time is here. This year we are allowed to send three delegates and two alternates to Toronto for the convention April 3-5. These individuals will also have to attend the Regional Conference held March 8, at the Sheraton Fallsview in the Falls. If you are intending to run, please make sure that you are available for both dates. Check those calenders!

Locally we are in the process of reviewing all of the seasonal positions that have been extended past their layoff date. We are hoping to have some of these positions deemed full-time and have them posted. If your position has been extended, please notify your steward, We don't want to leave any jobs off of our list.

The local executive has also challenged all of the so-called "temporary assignments" that don't seem to ever end, or be posted again. We believe that many of these long term positions should be made permanent positions and a proper posting and filling be done. We have a list of positions but again, please let us know if you are in a temporary position in case our list is incomplete

At this time I would also like to remind everyone that our current contract ends October 31, 2003. (that's only nine months away). Start thinking about the improvements you'd like to see in the contract. All of our members need to get involved. We must show the employer that we are a strong united local. We can do this by coming out to meetings. To get big improvements we need big turnouts! Management often quotes our meeting numbers. If turnout is low, perhaps we don't have the support to back up our demands. Don't kid yourself, management is watching, and it does matter. Help send them a message: We are determined and we will stick together. It is the best way to help get a stronger contract.

Get Involved!!!

See you at the February meeting!

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Things that make you go HMMMMMM

Marie Stokes

I came across some interesting reading while I was checking out an old grievance decision. The statement refers to the clauses that dictate the length of time seasonal employees can work. The decision states " *The Employer submits that the purpose of articles 1.03(d) and 24.03(d) is to prevent abuse by the Employer of a practise of using seasonal employees instead of regular employees if the Employer has sufficient work available for a regular employee.*" This statement seems very clear and I don't feel that isolating it changes its meaning.

When I see all the cases of seasonal employees being extended, sometimes for years on end, as has been the case in some positions, it makes me wonder how the Parks can continue to keep the status quo. I'll tell you why... It's because we let them

Our compliment review committee never seemed to get going. Getting documentation was like pulling teeth... Our computer department is swamped and other areas like payroll take precedence... We were still feeling the effects of 911 and money was tight. Once we finally get a list then the workell audit was top priority, then vacations conflicted and then sick time... Yes, I should have pushed harder for movement, I am sorry to say that I just got swamped and tired of feeling like I was beating my head on another brick wall. As a result, I gave up one wall to concentrate on another, the safety wall.

My apologies to the membership as I have heard that I am being named as the reason that all Hell broke loose in the fall. I can shoulder the blame for not pushing harder, but I'd like to remind management that they know when and where I work and have called me at home for various issues when it was in their interest. Perhaps if they were truly operating in good faith, I would have heard from them. The phone works both ways. Anyways, now that I have had my rant, I just want to say that I am confident that you are in good hands. Jody Cant is the new Committee chair and first alternate Colleen Page now sits on the committee. Good luck guys! At least now you have their attention.



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Negotiations coming! What's a local to do?

Dino McDonnell

As we get closer to another round of Bargaining this November, I try to imagine which way our members wish this local to proceed. Personally I feel that the company has room for growth in the full time compliment. (An investment, if you will, into the most important resource this company has: its employees) Or contract language has areas where a little fine tuning would help a lot as well. I truly feel that these areas will be more important as time passes and the company continues its ongoing management and department reforms.

A case in point which was brought to my attention is the overhaul of the Commission's retirement policy Under this new reform it allows people over 65 to come back and work as casual workers under 24 hours a week. (Ed note: please refer to the article on retirement pg4). This could affect the trades area, where there could be a skills shortage. A concern was expressed that this may result in reduced call-in opportunities for Union Members. The policy does not address wages so this casual worker (who is non-Union and pays no dues) could potentially make a higher rate than our members for the same work. Taken a step further it could potentially affect the time of any seasonal bargaining unit employee. These are the kinds of issues that we need to address before we negotiate our next contract. Please come out to the next General Membership meeting (Feb 6, at the Firefighters club) not only with your problems but also some suggestions for solutions

Are they really committed?

Colleen McComb-Page

Season's greetings, I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday.

As you probably heard, The Parks passed the workwell audit. I was disappointed with the outcome as I felt it was not a true accounting of our health and safety. Don't get me wrong, We have come far since Bill Poole took over the safety helm but we still have a way to go.

I had several concerns about the way the audit was handled, including closed door meetings with management that the worker representatives were not privy to. I witnessed some basic and long-standing safety problems during my hazard assessment that 'magically' disappeared on the day of the audit (ie filled in and up to date inspection checks that were badly outdated the week before) or worse yet, ignored (poorly stocked first aid.) Another issue that came up was that some kitchen and janitorial staff were unaware of their need for safety footwear or that they are eligible for money back on their steel toes upon submission of receipt. Is it not the supervisor's responsibility to make sure their workers are trained and informed prior to starting the job?

Speaking of training, many of you have attended session 'A', and possibly 'B' and 'C'. You are told that you must sign a sheet to confirm that you are trained. In my opinion these are not training sessions, they are merely awareness sessions. Take session 'B'. They want you to sign off that you recieved training on defibrillators. *Do you see the equipment? Are you instructed in its operation? Are you given a chance to familiarize yourself with the equipment? No!* You were *not* trained in its use you were only told that the Parks has them. **Do Not** sign the sheets unless you truly understand what is being said. If you require the information in another language so you can understand it fully...it is your right to have it provided in that language...Don't be afraid to ask or call me and I will ask for you!

Our President has repeatedly asked that the executive Health and Safety position be recognized by the Park so we can work together to make our workplace safer. The response to our last letter was "*The Commission is legally obligated to work directly with and through the individual committees and unfortunately, it is not within our authority to operate in any alternate manner*". (Translation: no) I have requested to the Ministry of Labour that the Central Committee be reinstated to co-ordinate with the sattelite committees and make the system work more consistantly. A win-win situation. The Ministry has said that the Employer must be the one to make the request. The Employer is not interested. Again this shows the Park's "commitment" to working together. There is a way we can make it work. The ministry has the power to order the employer to re-instate a central committee. Sec 9(3.1) We must document any infractions of the act and failure of the employer to deal with issues. It will help prove the need for a central committee.

A reminder to committee members to make sure your monthly inspections are getting done. Certified members, remember your extra duties. If an issue is not dealt with after an inspection notation, it should appear on every inspection until it is. I will be calling a Health and Safety meeting in March before the season gears up. We will discuss ways to ensure our workers know their rights and the hazards of their job.

We must all feel safe at work. We all want to go home after our shift. Make sure your co-workers are also working safely. What they do can affect you too. Make sure that you go to your representatives if you have any concerns or problems. That's what they are there for. It would also be nice to give them a pat on the back once in a while as it is *your* safety that they are looking out for and it can be a really thankless job.



Parks policy on retirement is expanded

Bill Burns

The corporate policy on retirement used to be a short paragraph dictating that mandatory retirement was essentially at age 65. The Commission has now expanded policy CPM 05-16. I thought that you may find the changes interesting.

The policy states that retirees between the ages of 65 and 60 may be re-employed at the sole discretion of The Commission in accordance with its own needs and requirements, and subject to the following conditions:

1) retirees must re-apply annually. Consideration for re-employment will be on the basis of qualifications, skill, experience, ability to perform the duties of the position, and previous job performance. Employment contracts shall not extend beyond December 31 of the year

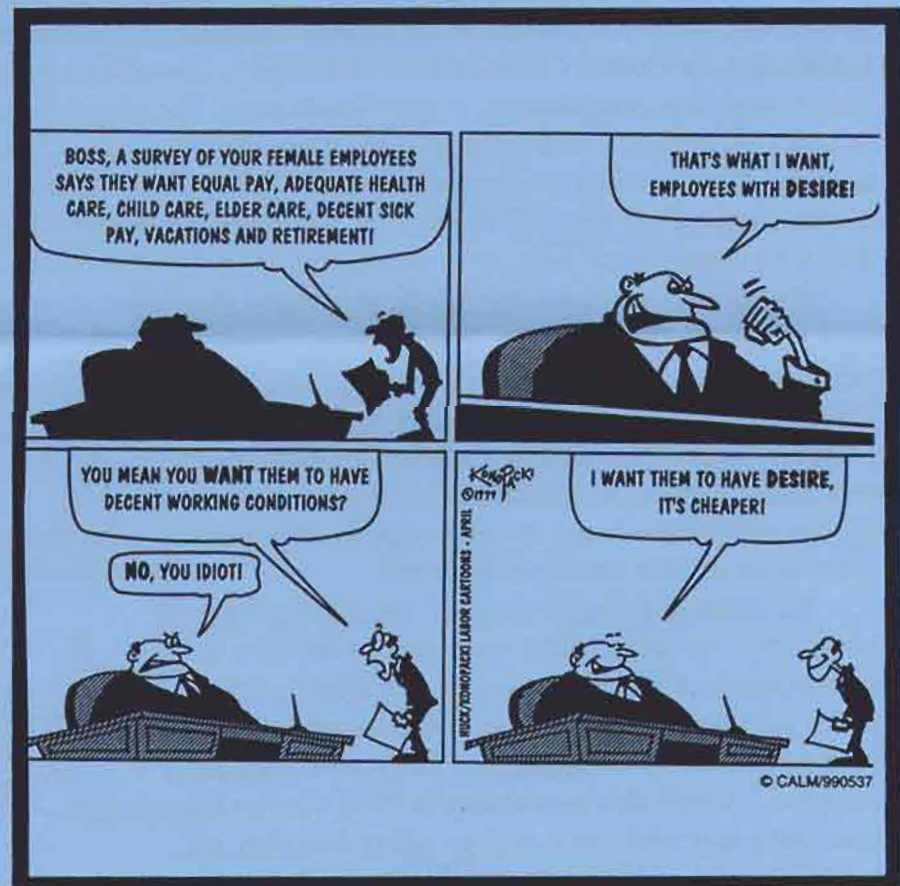
2) Opportunities for re-employment will be on a casual or as needed basis only as determined by the Senoir Director to assist with special events or assignments from time to time or as the result of temporary resource needs or skills shortages. There shall be no guarantee of any days or hours of work, however in all cases, assignment will not exceed 24 hours in any one week. *(Ed note: This keeps them out of the Union)*

3) Any re-employed retiree who is collecting a pension from the Ontario Pension Board or Ontario Pension Trust will be subject to the requirements term and conditions of the applicable pension plan.

4) Where a regular full time employee reaches mandatory retirement age and is involved in work that, if not completed by that employee, could cause hardship for the employer or jeopardize the assignment, the General Manager may approve his/her continued employment until the completion of this assignment. At that time, the

employee will be required to retire and may then re-apply in accordance with the provisions outlined above in this policy.

I have a few concerns with the policy as I read it, and these concerns are felt by those executive members that have had a chance to see it. This new policy is hot off the press and due to vacation and schedules and the newsletter printing deadline, all of the executive has not had a chance to see this policy. *(Ed note: Please refer to the negotiations article by Dino McDonnell for more commentary on this issue)*



Budget for 2002-2003

Budget breakdown	<u>01-02 Actual</u>	<u>02-23 Budget</u>
Item or description		
Income: Rebates	\$19,731.68	\$18,400.00
Expenses		
Meetings: GMM, Exec & Stewards	\$1,726.66	\$1,800.00
Educationals	0	\$300.00
Alternate costs (Convention)	\$692.45	\$1,700.00
Bank Charges	\$72.00	\$75.00
Postage	\$565.09	\$1,700.00
Office supplies and printing	\$2,637.92	\$1,600.00
E-mail/ internet	\$640.40	\$1000.00
Other meetings	\$594.65	\$400.00
Telephone	0	0
Executive expenses	\$7,875.00	\$9,000.00
Sponsorships: Wreath, Curling, United Way	\$260.00	\$65.00
Social: Golf Tournee	\$1,500.00	0
Children's Christmas Party	\$1,000.00	0
Misc (CALM & Info membership)	\$110.00	\$210.00
Total Expenses	\$17,673.76	\$17,850.00
Balance Remaining	\$2,057.92	\$550.00

The low-down on the Budget

Two General membership meetings were held in an attempt to pass the current budget. Sadly we did not achieve quorum at either meeting, even though some radically different proposals were published in the *July No Bulletin*. Apparently the potential cancellation of social events like the Golf Tournament, Kids Christmas party and charity sponsorships did not matter to the membership.

We decided to follow the OPSEU constitution by taking the unpassed budget to the executive board for final determination

Kudos to those members that did want to make their voice heard in how the local spends your money. We could not have a real vote on the issue as we have had in past years. However the will of the members of the local in attendance was noted by the executive and it would be followed when the budget came to the executive for final approval. The result is the 'Business first' budget above that concentrates all funds on the service end of the spectrum. Social aspects like funding parties and sponsoring charities were discontinued for this year. Fortunately the Parks continued to follow through in a modified way on the events we had already tentatively planned. I am not sure if this will be the case next year. If you disagree with how the spending was determined this year, I would suggest that you make a point of attending the general membership meeting where the budget is set. (Usually in early summer of each year)

Answer to riddle on last page:

The commonest letter in the english language, E, does not appear at all in the paragraph



"Ms. Watkins...we're a little short handed. Would you mind typing up your lay-off notice?"

What up with this paragraph?

Brainteasers and mindbenders

This is an unusual day, and so is this paragraph. How quickly can you find out what is so uncommon about it? It looks so ordinary that you may think nothing is odd about it until you match it with most paragraphs this long. If you put your mind to it, and study it, you will find out, but nobody may assist you. Do it without any coaching. Go to work and try your skill at figuring it out. Par on it is about half an hour. Good Luck!

(answer on Budget page)

CALM Canadian Association of Labour Media
ACPS Association canadienne de la presse syndicale

Our Motto (Besides No Bull!)

The *No Bulletin* is published 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:

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 at 6548 Dunn St NFO L2G-2R1.
 (357-4219)

We welcome your comments and suggestions and we reserve the right to edit for length and content.

Authorized for distribution: *NS per R. Atkinson*

Mark these dates!

General Membership Meeting
Thursday February 6, 2003
 The Firefighters Club
 7pm

- * Corner of Dixon and Orchard St. NFO
- * Election of delegates and alternates for convention
- * Resolutions & Constitutional amendments
- * Committee updates

Regional Meeting

- * Sat, March 8, 2003
- * Sheraton Fallsview

Annual Convention

- * April 3-5, 2003
- * Sheraton Center, Toronto

Come and participate!