



THE NO BULLETIN

Volume 24 Issue 1

June 2004

It's that time again!

Elections... Yes it's that time again. It's hard to believe that two years have flown by so quickly. This year will see some major changes on the executive as most of the sitting members will not be seeking re-election.

This may come to a surprize to many of you, after all it has been over fourteen years with relatively little change on the executive. Sometimes it is too comforting and easy to keep things the same. (If it ain't broke, don't fix it).

Rob and the rest of the executive should be commended for all the hard work and time they have given to the membership. The responsibility of running the Local can be very satisfying, but it can also be very time consuming too. When you give of yourself for so many years it is easy to burn out. By recognizing the need for a change, those in power can see that the leadership of the Local continues to flourish and a new crop of activists is trained to keep up the fight for our members rights.

Over fourteen years ago there was another huge turnover in the executive, and things were started from scratch, a very daunting prospect. This time the transition should be much easier because the members of the executive will still be active in the Union and available to offer assistance and support where needed. We have also amassed a comprehensive history of reference material to refer to. There are a great bunch of stewards and activists in the Park and hopefully some will step forward to take up the gauntlet and lead us forward.

It is vitally important that all the membership attend the upcoming election of stewards held June 29 at the Niagara Falls Golf and Country Club (Our usual meeting place has closed).. I know that we can have a great turn-out to this meeting, you have shown us at the last two ratification votes that turnouts can be in the hundred instead of dozens. Don't let the momentum stop. You will be choosing the leadership of the local. Don't leave such a big decision up to a handfull of people.

This is also a great time to recognize the members of the executive and show them how much we have appreciated the time and effort that they have put into working for us. On behalf of the membership I'd just like to say **Thank You!!**

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"I'm looking for... Workers are from earth
...management is from hell."

Duzn't matt'r

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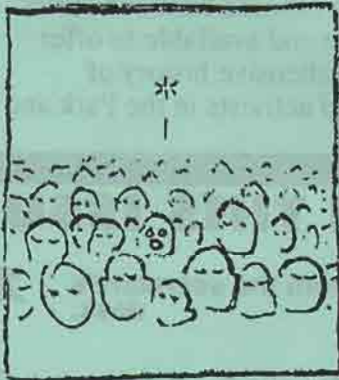
From the Secretary's desk

Negotiations... where do I start? What an experience!!! I would like to thank everyone for their support with the negotiating team's decisions. This was my first time on the negotiating team and I learned a great deal through this experience. It was a very tough set of negotiations this year and the solidarity in our Local certainly came shining through. I feel this shows the strength that each individual member holds within the Local. I have mentioned in previous newsletters that one voice can make a difference, and this is proof of that!! Your voice is important to not only your future but to your family and the future of this Local. Hats off to all of you for standing up and making your voice heard!!

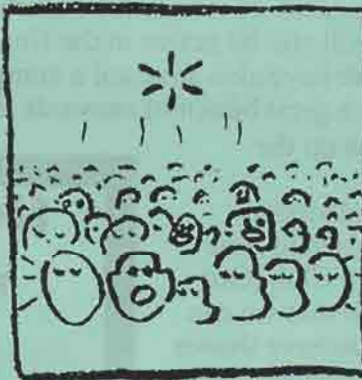
I would like to thank all of the members for the support that I have received representing Local 217 as secretary. I would like to extend a special thank you to the current executive for their personal support and the knowledge that they have all individually shared with me on many occasions.

Due to personal reasons I will not be running for the Executive this year. I will still like to remain as a Union Steward for the Local and will still be as active in the Union as time permits me to be.

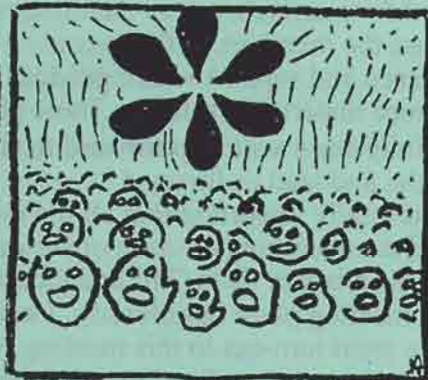
*In solidarity
Shelley Reed*



When one person shouts.



When a few shout.



When we all shout together.

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Thanks for fourteen great years!

Thank you all for a great fourteen years! It has been a pleasure having the honour of representing the members of Local 217. One that I will never forget.

The Local is strong and has many excellent stewards. Now is a good time for change. Now is a good time for me to step aside and prepare for retirement

I would like to stay on as a Steward to help the transition. The Union is in my blood and I would very much like to help during my last three years here

It's up to the members now to pick a new leader. We all must take the time and show up election night to vote for the president and executive that we all feel will lead us into the future.

In parting I would like to say thank you to all the stewards and fellow executive members past and present. It was your hard work and dedication that made this Union.

In solidarity
Rob Atkin



Executive Health and Safety Position Vacant

It is with regret that I must step down from my position as WSIB/Health and Safety Executive.. The Park has refused to recognize my status while my grievance is being heard, even though I am still a member in good standing until the outcome of the grievance is decided. The Park has denied me access to any of the workers or committees, making it impossible to fulfill the duties of the position. It has been very frustrating to put it mildly.

For the upcoming Executive Elections I feel that it is important to try this position once more. Perhaps the new incumbent to the position will have better luck dealing with the Park than I have.

I feel that this is a valuable position to fill. We had been having some success co-ordinating the committees and pinning the Parks down on making some safety improvements. More importantly, we have had good success on behalf of injured workers whose claims the Parks had hoped to get reduced or denied. We have had a number of decisions overturned on appeal. I would like to speak further on the subject on the night of elections.

I wish everybody the best of luck and I thank you for having the faith and confidence to allow me to represent you over the past twelve years as both WSIB/Safety Rep and Treasurer. The Local has proven that it is strong and can stand up to management.

Let's keep up the fight. Thankyou again to the members and all the worker reps for their support. Regardless of the outcome of my grievance I hope to see many of you around the Park.

In solidarity
Colleen McComb-Page

Three cheers for us!

This has been a year of many firsts, some good and some not so good. Being an optimist, I prefer to accentuate the positive.. First I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate our negotiating team for a job well done. Rob Atkin, Shelley Reed, Dino McDonnell, Colin MacKenzie Desiree Constantides and Colleen McComb Page and of course our fabulous staff rep Mark Koten worked wonders under pressure and stood up to the new '*lean mean Park Corporation Machine*'. :Cheer number one.

Cudos to Members of the steward body, strike team and picket captains, as well as those brave souls who staged an information picket in front of Oak Hall at the beginning of

the Commissioners Meeting. With the help of Megan Parks, these people gave our Local the most publicity we have ever had. It certainly made the community sit up and take notice and the concerned calls from hoteliers and operators may have helped put pressure on the Parks to be more fair. Cheer number two.

Cheer number three, by far the loudest, goes out to you the members. The Parks didn't think we could stick together. They figured that we would take whatever scraps and abuse the Parks wanted to offer and say '*Thankyou sir can we have some more*' Imagine their horror and surprize when we stood together

and said '*ENOUGH*. We want a fair settlement' instead..

Way to stick together and support your bargaining team and your Local! It is because of you the team had the backing to push for a better raise. Now lets keep the momentum going, stay involved and we have more power to get better language and protection for you!



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A few words from our Vice-President

We have come through another term, which was both interesting and historic. This is the first time in our local history that we have had to consider a strike vote and prepare for a possible lockout. I would like to thank the other members of the executive and the steward body for all their hard work, interest and support of the members as we worked together to defend the contract

I found it very rewarding chairing the Strike Committee and supporting our negotiating team. Mark Koten and Megan Parks from OPSEU were a great help. Ed Typer of the Niagara Regional Police Department was also helpful in defining the legal aspects of a stike or lockout.

The strong support shown by the members for our negotiations team was essential to achieving a positive resolve to the situation. I feel it is important to keep up this level of interest within the membership. We need a base of determined workers to maintain our momentum. I would like to encourage you all to volunteer working on special committees such as benefits, pensions, human rights, health and safety or become a steward.

I would like to announce that I will not be running for an executive position in the June 29 election. It has been my pleasure to work on behalf of all of you for the past four years as Vice-President but it is now time for others to pick up where this executive has left off. This is an excellent time to speak up and bring new energy and direction to the members. I wish you well!

Yours in Solidarity,
Bill Burns

Things that make you go Hmmm?!

Marie Stokes

The Horticulture Department at the Niagara Parks has gone through some pretty drastic changes, as have many departments in the past year. Sagging sales and poor weather dropped Park revenues so much that we were forced to go through some belt tightening that almost cut off the circulation. Staff at each section was cut for a second consecutive year, some full time positions were to be made seasonal and even more drastic, in the greenhouse, two full time positions were made surplus. Alex retired and Colleen was let go.

Another major change is that we lost John Dick to Brock University this spring. John chose to leave the Parks when Brock offered him a position. Our loss is Brock's gain. Although we didn't always agree on issues, John always tried to be fair and consistent and would listen to suggestions and was open to discussions with anyone. The man earned our respect. He also has a true love of Horticulture and recognized its importance in an era where the bottom line seems to hold the most power. But enough about that, I digress.

I never realized how difficult John's job had become, and how valuable an employee he was. We all like to think we are invaluable to the employer and that the Parks would come shuddering to a halt if we were to leave. Its not

often that you see physical proof of an employee's importance. John did the work of three men. It must be true, why else would the Park take John's old position and divy it up amongst three people. Rick Doyle has been hired as superintendant of Horticulture. Scott Priest has been promoted as Manager of Horticulture and Tom Laviolette has his duties expanded to cover the greenhouse and bedding in the Parks. Count them, that's three people taking on John's responsibilities. I doubt that they are splitting John's salary though.

Perhaps I am being too hasty about job descriptions. There probably are a few differences in the new position(s). There is probably some additional "PR" duties as the department now has to field so many more questions and complaints about the sorry state of the Park. The position also must be able to distinguish the difference between 'natural regeneration' and simply not cutting the grass.

Its interesting that there was enough room in the budget for an extra management position, I guess all those layoffs and cutbacks did save some money after all. (and they wonder why employee morale is not the greatest...)



Questions without answers

Calm

A bus station is where the bus stops. A train station is where the train stops. A workstation is where...

Can atheists get insurance for acts of god?
If Fed Ex and UPS merged, would they call it Fed UP?

Does fuzzy logic tickle?
How come you never hear about grunted employees?

If they arrested the Energizer Bunny, would they charge it with battery?

What hair colour do you put on your licence if you're bald?

If quitters never win and winners never quit, what fool came up with 'Quit while you're ahead'?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

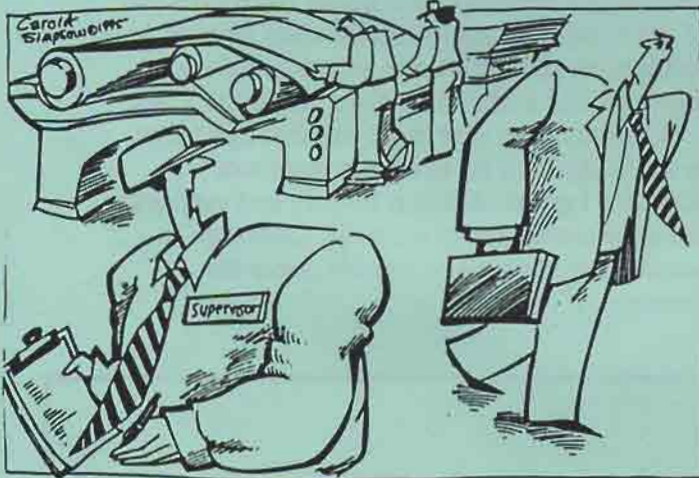
Our Motto (Besides No Bull!)

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 (Editor)
at 6548 Dunn St Niagara Falls. L2G-2R1.
(905) 357-4219

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

Authorized for distribution: *for R. RATKIN*



"Our main problem is excessive absenteeism. You laid off three-quarters of the department."



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Mark these dates!

General Membership Meetings

Tuesday, June 29
Niagara Falls Golf Club
6169 Garner Rd. Niagara Falls
7pm

- *Election of Stewards
- *Election of Union Executive

Come and participate!

