



THE NO BULLETIN

OPSEU Local 217
The Niagara Parks

Volume 25 Issue 1

August 2004

Executive elections held!

Marie Stokes

Executive elections were held June 29 at the Niagara Falls Golf Club on Garner Road. We received many complaints about the inconvenience of getting out there when you don't have a car. We apologize for the change in venue however we were at loose ends as to where we could hold our meeting. Unfortunately the Firefighters Club had closed its doors and the contact for the Serbian hall was on vacation. We had hoped to find a venue whose price was more in keeping with our budget. The golf club kindly offered us their facility at a reduced rate. We have continued our search for affordable meeting space and we are trying the Legion on Spring St to see if it can satisfy our needs. Hope to see you at the August 29 General membership meeting there.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our old executive for all their hard work and effort in the often thankless job of serving the local. We are fortunate that many of these dedicated individuals will still remain active in the local. Hats off to Rob, Bill, Dino and Shelley and Colleen for a job well done!

I would also like to congratulate and welcome our newest Executive Members of Local 217. I look forward to working with Bill, Ian, Barb and Fred to strengthen our Local and work on the issues on your behalf. I think we have a great team.

In addition to the steward listing in the newsletter we have also included a business card with our names and numbers so you can keep all our numbers with you for reference.

It was nice to see some new faces express interest in becoming involved in the local. We have a few brand new stewards who I am sure will give us fresh ideas on making the local better, as well as many returning stewards who can help us with their strength and experience.

There are many areas with limited steward representation. If you are interested in becoming a steward and were unable to attend the last meeting, please contact one of the executive for information. We are always looking for new stewards because knowledge is power and the more people we can inform about our rights under the contract, the stronger it makes us all.

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Fred West
CALM/010305



"Can't you find something for Jenkins' right foot to do?"

The Public has spoken: keep on the grass!

Ian Mather

The Parks knew they were going to be ducking arrows at the recent Public meetings they conducted to explain why the grass wasn't being cut. Meetings that were scheduled after the NPC was inundated with phone calls, e-mails and articles in the local papers, from residents that live along the 56km parkway and residents that live in Niagara Falls and the surrounding region.

Regeneration, Buffer zones, Bad weather and the lack of money in the budget were the main reasons given by the NPC for the long grass.

Even after an explanation by the NPC and a presentation by the Niagara Conservation Authority, most in attendance were not impressed with the project. Most were upset that the NPC had failed to inform them of the plan, especially those who live along the Parkway.

A very rainy May and budget cuts were two reasons given as to why the areas not a part of the regeneration areas had not been cut. Those two reasons were not widely accepted by those in attendance.

During the meetings it was apparent that the NPC was taken by surprise by how much the residents love their park.

Even with the NPC saying they are doing what they can to catch up, residents asked why they were not hiring more people to take care of the grounds, and to spend money where it is needed getting the Park back into shape, instead of spending it on new projects such as the Gondola.

It was great to hear people in attendance speaking out about what truly is a beautiful stretch of parkland and without a doubt the flagship of Ontario Tourism.

Regeneration along the Parkway will take some time to catch on and in the long term will help along the shoreline. Information and notification certainly would have helped to make the project more acceptable. Hopefully the NPC will keep this in mind for future projects.

I would like to thank everyone for attending the meetings and expressing the need to get the Parks back into shape as a whole. Even though the meetings were to discuss the long grass, residents expressed concern about the entire operation.

I hope the NPC will take what they heard in these meetings to the table and continue from this point on to include both residents and its' staff on future projects

OPSEU Local 217, The Niagara Parks Commission Executive & Steward listing July 2004 - June 2006

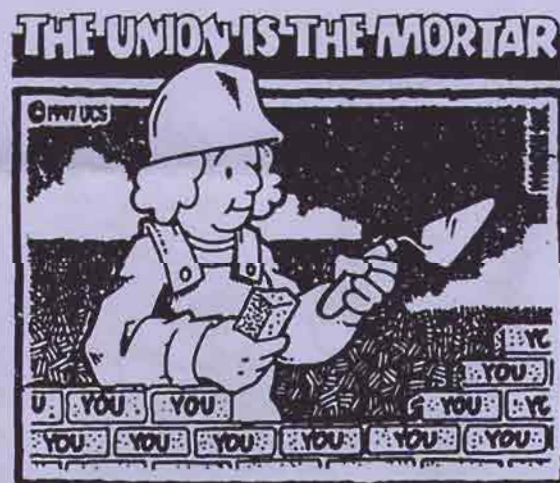
President:	Bill Rudd	382-1958
Vice President:	Ian Mather	356-3967
Chief Steward:	Barb Wilson	357-0094
Secretary:	Fred Hopkins	994-1113
Treasurer:	Marie Stokes	357-4219
WSIB/ Safety:	Vacant	

Steward body: (alphabetically)

Randy Aird	354-8081	(Niagara Glen)
Rob Atkin	871-8078	(Maintenance Ctr)
Penny Berketa	353-8834	(QVP Hort)
Gary Bird	871-4062	
Bill Burns	358-3580	(Maintenance Ctr)
Desire Constantinides	358-5359	(QVP)
Glen Davis	680-0829	(Whirlpool Golf)
Paul Ecker	356-9917	(Queenston Hort)
Fernando Fortino	354-6492	(Queenston Hort)
Dennis Harris	295-1459	(Kingsbridge)
Darlane Johnston	894-0708	(Rapidsview)
Placido Iammarino	374-6054	(Botanical Gdns)
Ed Ketcheson	374-0746	(Clock)
Andrew LaCasse	356-4539	(Fort Erie)
Alan Newstater	984-8821	(Queenston Hts Rest)
Jim O'Loughlin	894-1387	(Peplemover)
Shelley Reed	871-8078	(VPR)
Jen Sanderson	937-6103	(Maid of the Mist)
Anita Simonetti	356-9418	(Table Rock)
Martin Sutch	734-9773	(McFarland)
Mike Temple	994-7620	(Legends)
Bernie Villamil	374-1097	(Oak Hall)
Robin Watson	374-6125	(Oakes Garden)

OPSEU Head Office 1-800-268-7376
OPSEU Region 2 Office 1-800-268-7306

**DON'T JUST STAND BY
AND WATCH, GET
INVOLVED!!**



YOU ARE THE BRICKS

Things that make you go Hmmm!

Marie Stokes

Here's a thought provoking question: When is *good enough* not good enough? In an article in the *Niagara Falls Review*, Debbie Whitehouse was saying budgetary costs resulted in the loss of 18 seasonal positions in Horticulture this year. If you count last year, that figure is much higher. The greenhouse alone lost two fulltime and three seasonal positions. Some crews along the boulevard were decimated, losing more than a third of their crews. Workers are bending over backwards to try to cover all the jobs, Tractor drivers are trying to pick paper and do the grass at the same time. The whole fiasco about the grass cutting shows that its hard to keep up (mind you, if the workers were allowed to cut the grass at the beginning instead of waiting until it was a foot tall, catching up would have been much easier).

If things keep going the way they are, something has got to give. Jobs that are normally done in a timely manner get pushed aside, there are simply not enough people to do the work and those jobs have a way of piling up and can be overwhelming when they are finally addressed (i.e. the grass).

We have gone from a company who prided itself on horticultural excellence in every area to one that says we have lots to do, just make it look 'good enough', the average visitor won't know the difference. I think that's sad...and definately not what the message was in superhost. It is also hard on the morale of the workers who can't do the things the way they think they should be done simply because there isn't enough time. Not to mention the morale of the employees who were not called back. It reminds me of the commercial about the soccer player striving to be number two. Let's strive for mediocracy.

Horticulture may not be considered a revenue generator, but I always hear tourists commenting on the cleanliness of the Park and the fabulous gardens. I have yet to hear someone talk about travelling hours to see a gift shop. But I digress. If the park is complacent about making the Park look *good enough* for the millions of visitors, why is it that the visit of the Canadian Premiers to Oakes Garden Theater required the import of labourers from other areas the week before the brief visit to ensure that everything looked great for the VIPs. They probably didn't spend a dime in the Parks, unlike 'Joe Tourist'. I guess when it comes to impressing the bigwigs *good enough* just *isn't* good enough.



From the secretary's desk

I would like to thank all the members for this opportunity to serve this local. I look forward for any opportunity to guide or inform any member of their rights as an employee of the NPC.

Through the knowledge that is available from any one of our Union Stewards, you can relieve the burden of frustration and intimidation. I know how difficult it may seem at times to take the next step to correct whatever issue is troubling you or your workplace, but I can honestly tell all members to *not* be alarmed and to get an educated and informed opinion from a steward or board member before giving up or just ignoring the issues that may arise. Please do not listen to co-workers who are negative, contact the appropriate Union Members and we will all do our best to resolve any issue.

Please inform me if you have a change of address, if someone has left your department or if you are not receiving the newsletters

In Solidarity
Fred Hopkins

This budget will be presented and voted on at the next General Membership Meeting. Amendments can be made to the budget in the form of a motion that will be voted on by the membership. If you are interested in how we will spend your local monies, I suggest you attend the upcoming meeting

Proposed Budget for 2004-2005

Budget breakdown	<u>03-04 Actual</u>	<u>04-05 Proposed</u>
Item or description		
Income: Rebates	\$15,635.50	\$18,000.00
Expenses		
Meetings: GMM, Exec & Stewards	\$3,969.35	\$2,000.00
Educationals	\$0.00	\$0.00
Alternate costs (Convention)	\$1,400.00	\$1,500.00
Bank Charges	\$60.26	\$65.00
Postage	\$3,827.73	\$2,000.00
Office supplies and printing	\$2,228.72	\$2,000.00
E-mail/ internet	\$726.29	\$1000.00
Other meetings	\$579.25	\$300.00
Executive expenses	\$8,833.46	\$9,000.00
Sponsorships: Wreath	\$63.00	\$65.00
Misc (CALM & Labour Council membership)	\$110.00	\$210.00
Total Expenses	\$20,198.06	\$18,140.00
Balance Remaining (defecit)	(\$4,562.56)	(\$140.00)

Key to budget notations

1. Lower rebate reflects layoffs and reduced hours, June rebate not received until July
2. 4 General Membership, 4 Executive, 7 Stewards & 2 ratification meetings were held.
3. Awaiting claim form to determine true amount, amount listed is a good estimate.
4. High due to late billing by the Parks for two mailings (\$1000), also 5 mailouts done
5. Higher due to additional photocopying for mailouts (JJE and ratification).
6. 3 Constitution Cmte, 3 Seasonal JJE Cmte, 1 Health and Safety and 1 Audit meeting
7. Lower due to the month early resignation of the WSIB Executive Member.
8. Allowance made to re-join the Labour Council
9. Events out of our control caused a large deficit, however it was covered by monies from when we were under budget in previous years
10. Balance statement as of July 01, 2004: \$5,856.61 (outstanding cheques: \$1,975). This year we run a potential deficit of \$140.00. A more manageable amount, and I don't foresee any major cost expenditures like ratification votes and extra mailouts (and meetings they entailed) which cost in excess of \$2,000.00

Job Jargon

Geen Gold News/CALM

Duties will vary: Anyone with more seniority can boss you around.

Seeking candidates with a wide variety of experience: You'll need it to replace three people who just left us.

Problem solving skills a must: You're walking into a company in perpetual chaos.

Competative salary: We remain competitive by paying less than our competitors.

Some overtime required: Some time each night, some time each weekend.

Self-motivated: Management won't answer questions.

Competitive environment: We have a lot of turnover

Good Communication skills: Management communicates, you listen, figure out what they want you to do.

Ability to handle a heavy workload: You whine, you're fired.

Flexible hours: Work 55 hours; get paid for 37.5.

Career minded: We expect you will want to work until you're 70.



FLEXIBILITY LAND!

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:

Marie Stokes (Editor)
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: *[Signature]*
per Bill Rucold



Mark these dates!

General Membership Meeting
Thursday August 26
 The Spring Street Legion
 Between Ferry St and North St off
 Temperence St
 7P.M.

- * Presentation and voting on the budget
- * Updates, meet the new Executive of Local 217

Come and participate!