



THE NO BULLETIN

OPSEU Local 217
The Niagara Parks Commission
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What's up in the Parks

Our last newsletter I discussed the rights of seasonal employees in Horticulture, Engineering, Golf, Administration, Finance, and Transportation. These employees SHALL be covered by terms of this collective agreement and, not be limited to part B—Seasonal Employees, if they work longer than 9 months or are reemployed with less than a 3 month layoff. What this language means is that, if this is you, your employer has agreed to pay you more money and give you benefits. Nowhere does it state that you shall be laid off, in fact our contract states students and junior employees must be laid off first.

Why would an employer that just agreed to this negotiated language not live up to an AGREEMENT between the commission and its unionized employees. If you are in this position stand up and ask for your appropriate compensation. It is sad to think that many of you may not because you are afraid of retaliation from your full-time, benefit receiving boss. It seems management will not allow you to be treated equally even if you may have worked for this employer for 30 or 40 years.

The rationale that is used by the industrial relations department is this is just an example of management rights. That means that as crown employees, our government controlled commission wants to exercise their rights to treat seasonal employees unfairly.

The added income that comes from the new agreement from Hornblower should be used to increase the workforce that cleans, beautifies and maintains our park. Instead, it seems that it has only increased the desire to rent out more of our park and give up control of how our visitors are treated. This additional income was not due to our leadership's good negotiations skills. This financial boost came from the citizens of Niagara standing up and demanding integrity in how we rent out NPC lands. The people of Ontario own this park and will take control again if management continues to treat their neighbours unfairly.

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Thumbs Up To The Province Thumbs Down To The NPC

Recently The NPC handed out certificates of service to eligible employees. Some with upwards of 35 years of service. It was a 'big tado' in the park and it would have been if the recognition came from the NPC. However it was the province that recognized our service. When asked why it was the province and not the NPC that recognized our service the response was a blank stare. I think it is great that the years of service is and was recognized but you would think it would be the employer first to do so, or at least align itself with the province to also acknowledge the achievement and dedication. Although it was the province that gave us the recognition we are not much more than a database of names and numbers, there is no real connection to the province. With this in mind I guess as long term dedicated employees that take pride in the work we aren't much more than that in the parks eyes either. Well at least the province took note to say thanks.

In Solidarity
Ian Mather

Things that make you go Hmmm

We had assurances from upper management that more emphasis was to be placed on getting the job done right in Horticulture. Spring rolls around and where is our staff? Still laid off, many coming back weeks after their start date the previous year. Granted the weather was a bit sketchy in the spring. Fast forward through a busy, profitable summer season for the parks. Now it is time for fall clean up. Many were expecting to snag a few extra weeks to make up for their late call backs... after all there was still a ton of work to do to prepare our Park for the winter months, including a new bigger better park directed festival of lights. Our workers were surprised (to put it mildly) that their layoff notices were issued just as early if not earlier than expected, our staff would be starting to leave prior to any real start of the fall cleanup. It is so hard to read a layoff notice that cites the layoff reason as lack of work when you look at how much work is actually out there that should be getting done. But to add insult to injury, we have willing able bodied workers sitting on layoff while they are scheduling overtime for management, lead hands and the few remaining workers. In a mad scramble to try and get the work done on time. Never mind being unfair and disrespectful to a loyal workforce, is this fiscally responsible? How much money did they actually save by doing this? Not to mention the impact on staff morale. It is all good to talk the talk, but its time to actually walk the walk and follow through on some of these grand promises that we hear in our town hall meetings.



"IF YOU CAN'T SUPPORT A FAMILY BY WHAT I PAY YOU NOW...
... THEN ANOTHER PAY CUT SHOULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE."

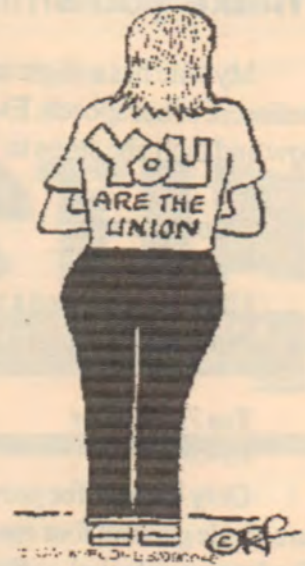
New Webmaster in town

For those of you that have been visiting our website, you may have noticed a few changes. The Website was the original brainchild of Colin McKenzie. Colin spent a lot of time creating and producing an excellent page, with useful information and relevant links. In these tech. days it was a great way to reach a number of our Union brothers and sisters without the added cost of postage, or the tediousness of phone trees. This kind of excellence is very time consuming, and as time went on Colin had less time to dedicate to the site. Activity decreased as a result. A new Union Brother has stepped up to the plate and using his computer skills, has taken over the reins of the website. It is always nice to see some new brothers and sisters get involved! (there is always room for more...)

Whats up with the Parks? *cont.*

The Ontario Government has now put a premium on benefits of retirees of \$1500 a year for families and \$800 for singles. This premium, that is supposed to offset the cost of retirement benefits, must be paid by every Ontario government employee that retires after Dec. 1 2016, including Niagara Parks workers. In the past, benefits after retirement have acted as an incentive to entice workers to work to retirement within the public service. This will affect Niagara Parks retirees that go after this date. The rest of the Park will be affected because it will cause a mass retirement in 2016 that needs planning now. Succession planning has not been our strength, an example would be elevator mechanic position that we now contract out at a huge cost. We need to use these senior workers to pass on their years of experience before it is too late.

In Solidarity
Bill Rudd



Looking for a few good men (and women)

Marie Stokes

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the union has the right to appoint the worker representatives who sit on the Health and Safety Committee. This ensures that there is a strong workers voice in workplace safety. Management cannot choose who sits on the employees side of the table. This was enacted so that management could not simply put their own 'yes men' in place to rubber stamp policies and shoddy workplace safety in the name of budgets.

I feel this is important in any workplace! The key to a good health and safety committee are employees that care and want to make their workplace safer for all. We are always looking for people who are interested in Health and Safety. If you are such an individual, please contact Bill Rudd or a member of the executive and let them know you are interested in sitting on a committee. There are 6 different committees, loosely based on locations and departments. Police, Engineering, Culinary, Retail, Administration, Parks and Golf. The commitment involves 4 individual committee meetings per year and usually 2 all committee meetings where members from all of the committees meet together to discuss issues within the park. This opens lines of communication within the parks, Sharing the issues with other groups helps to better identify hazards and sometimes provides unique solutions to problems.

The other committee responsibility is the monthly workplace inspections that must be done. Health Safety and Environment is looking at a new system to document workplace inspection that may make it much quicker and easier to do. The use of an Ipad makes it all possible. We are looking forward to seeing this move forward from the two test groups that are currently testing with the new system.

All health and safety work is done on Park time, so it essentially means you get paid to do it. Family and home time are not compromised. Training, both in certification and inspections is also available, so don't let a lack of experience deter you.

If you think this sounds interesting, and you would like to get involved, get in touch with your local executive and ask to be considered for serving on one of the committees. Spaces are always opening up. Currently one of our own, Dan Johnson, will be retiring in 2 weeks from the Botanical Gardens and Butterfly Conservatory leaving an opening in the Parks and Golf Joint Health and Safety Committee. (Horticulture). I would like to take this opportunity both as Worker co-chair of this Committee and as a union sister, to thank Dan for all his hard work and years of service in Health and Safety. All the best Dan! Enjoy retirement! (I am kinda jealous as my date is still a few years off)

Quotes to make you smile.

My wife has a slight impediment in her speech. Every now and then she stops to breathe.

Jimmy Durante



I have never hated a man enough to give his diamonds back.

Zsa Zsa Gabor



Only Irish coffee provides in a single glass all four essential food groups: alcohol, caffeine, sugar and fat.

Alex Levine



My luck is so bad that if I bought a cemetery, people would stop dying.

Rodney Dangerfield



Money can't buy you happiness But it does bring you a more pleasant form of misery.

Spike Milligan



Until I was thirteen, I thought my name was SHUT UP-

Joe Namath



Mark these dates!
General Membership Meeting
Thursday November 20th
 7PM
 Branch 479 Legion (Spring St)
 * Updates

Come and participate!

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

Authorized for distribution:

M. Stokes per B. Rudd.

Help us go green!

In order to go green in a bigger way, we need more of our members to give us their E-mail addresses. Remember, not only will it help reduce our postage costs and save a few trees, it will also help organize our members faster for ant events or emergency meetings. Send your info to your local executive or steward.

