

THE SENTINEL -

STANDING WATCH FOR OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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Mark your calendar:

- Elections for Union officers take place at your Unit meetings in June - be sure to get out and vote.
- Don't forget Mother's Day - May 12th.
- May 20th is National Book Day - take the time to exercise your mind.

*People who matter
are most aware that
everyone else does
too !*

'GREEN POWER' OF A DIFFERENT KIND DISCUSSED AT THE 44TH ANNUAL I.B.E.W. UTILITY CONFERENCE

TORONTO - Delegates from across Canada and the United States gathered together in our provincial capital to discuss the many changes and challenges faced by workers in the Utility industry. This marked the first time in our history that such a conference was hosted by the IBEW First District. With the electricity market in Ontario scheduled to open less than a week later, the timing of the conference could not have been better.

Local Union 636 was well represented as B.M./ F.S. Wacheski was joined by all Staff Reps and Executive Board Representatives **Bill Miller** and **John Thornton**.

International President Hill delivered an inspirational message to the delegates reminding them of the courage of our forefathers in searching for a better way and encouraging us to carry on with this legacy.

Canadian delegates were very pleased to hear that the I.B.E.W. has a strong political ally in Toronto. In his remarks,

Councilor Jack Layton made clear his commitment to working with the labour movement. Hopefully, by working in partnership with him (and other 'Union friendly' elected officials) we can restore dignity and respect for working people in our province.

Not surprisingly, the issue of greatest concern to the forum was that of deregulation in the electricity industry. While relatively new in Canada, this idea has already proven to be a catastrophic failure in the United States, Great Britain and Australia.

The perils along this path were vividly detailed by **S. David Freeman** - Chairman of the California Consumer Power and Conservation Financing Authority; a watchdog agency created by the state in wake of the energy crisis experienced there last summer. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Freeman had been an avid proponent of deregulation.

Contrary to the myths that our government's spin doctors



would like us to believe, Freeman warned Ontarians to be wary of the seduction that competition may present. Instead he suggested that profit maximization is the only motivation for the changes being proposed and that they are being driven by the 'green power' generated on Bay Street.

**SEE 'GREEN POWER' -
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ONTARIO MOVES FROM THE 'COMMON SENSE REVOLUTION' TO THE 'EVES OF DESTRUCTION'

To the disappointment of many - but the surprise of few- Ernie Eves has won a seat at Queen's Park. Some may ask why he has returned to politics at a time when his party is in trouble and Ontario is facing a deficit that may force further cuts to social programs. Well,

consider this: Eves received an \$810,000 lump sum payout when the MPP pension plan was redesigned; got \$78,007 in severance pay **WHEN HE RESIGNED AS AN MPP** in 2001; as Premier is now paid \$148,384 (plus benefits); will get a 3% wage increase in 2003

and; (if re-elected) will get an additional 25% increase in salary. Perhaps this explains why Eves claims that his view of Ontario is *different*.

THE SENTINEL is a publication of Local Union 636 of the IBEW and has been printed by members of OPEIU.

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We welcome your views, comments and (constructive) criticisms. Please let us know what you think - by contacting us via fax (519 - 967 - 9224) OR e-mail

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For help with your questions on issues such as pension, our group insurance plan or labour legislation - check out these web sites:

OMERS - www.omers.com

Ministry of Labour - www.gov.on.ca

Canada Customs & Revenue - www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca

Unity Group Insurance - www.unitygrouponline.com

EUSA - www.eusa.on.ca

Canadian Labour Congress - www.clc-ctc.ca

TABLE TALK

Peterborough Utility Services Inc. & Peterborough Call Center Inc.: Hoping that the opening of the electricity market will provide new opportunities for growth, members in this Unit have agreed to a new one (1) year contract. In addition to a wage increase of 2.1% ATB and improvements to contract language; a profit sharing plan was introduced offering each employee a maximum of up to \$1000.00 Many thanks go out to **Larry Collins, James Dunn, Keith Harris, Wendy Dunford and Elizabeth Mandarano** for a job well done.

Richmond Hill Hydro (Inside

& Outside): Congratulations are in order for the three (3) year agreement negotiated with the assistance of **Mike Beggs and Nicki Charbonneau**. Highlights include: ATB wage increases of 3% (1st yr.) 3% (2nd yr.) and 3.5 % (3rd yr.); recognition of Easter Monday



as a paid holiday; increased orthodontic coverage (to \$2000.00 lifetime); increase in boot allowance (now \$150.00) and increased 'on-call' premiums.

EnWin Utilities: Thanks to the persistence of the negotiating team (**Nancy Tata, Larry Sterling, Angelo Tiseo and Sid Coates**), this bargaining unit will enjoy the security of a 45 month agreement that offers: annual ATB wage increases of 3%; language improvements and; retiree benefit protection. Good work!

LUNCH BOX LAW

Did you Know ? That the Emergency Leave provisions of the Employment Standards Act may not apply to Unionized workers who have negotiated paid time off? The Tories amended the Act to provide workers with a total of 10 days of unpaid leave per year to attend to urgent matters that concern the employee and/or

members of their family (as identified by the legislation). This should be a good thing-right? For some it is. However, in yet another assault on organized labour, for those who have negotiated paid time off for such purposes as: illness, bereavement or personal leave - such provisions are deemed to provide a 'greater right or

benefit' to the employee. Therefore, the employer is not obliged to honour the requests of employees seeking emergency leave. Remember this the next time you're given an opportunity to vote!

STATE OF THE UNION

From the desk of J.R. (Rick) Wachski, BM/FS - By the time you read this, the Ontario electricity market will have been opened to competition. Only time will tell how this will affect our members and the residents of our province.

Although a court decision prevented the Tories from selling the assets of Hydro One - the government intends to proceed with this venture by appealing the decision and changing the

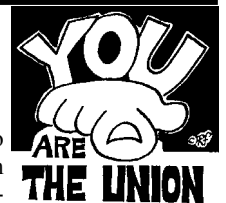
law.

Several major municipalities - including Toronto and Windsor - have already indicated that they will continue to fight the actions of the government. As requested, Local 636 will be part of this unexpected alliance.

At the same time, we will be joining others in the labour movement in the campaign to save our national healthcare system.

In order to succeed in these efforts, we call upon each of you to join us.

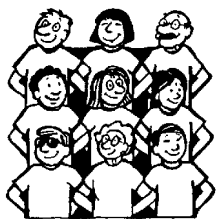
The time for political action is now. Without it what will be left for our children ?



FRONT LINE NEWS

After many years of dedicated service to the labour movement **Vice President Ross Laughren** has retired. We thank him for his unending commitment to improving the lives of our members and the many contributions he made to the success of our Local Union. While Ross will be missed, he will not be forgotten. We wish him much happiness as he embarks on a well deserved permanent vacation.

The employees at St. Thomas Energy recently held a fundraiser for Jesse's Journey. More than \$4000.00 was raised when **Judy Van Patter** agreed to have her 50 inch tresses cut so



that her hair could be used to make 2 wigs for cancer patients. By her actions Judy has shown us what it means to be 'the Union of Hearts & Minds'.

It was with great sadness that the members at Unit 18 (in Kingston) said their final good-byes to **Ron Price**. He was a strong and knowledgeable advocate who worked tirelessly on behalf of those he represented as both a Unit Chair and Executive Board Representa-

tive. Ron will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his family.

While the Maple Leafs, Canadiens and Senators battle for the Stanley Cup, our members from **Ottawa Hydro** will be on the ice chasing glory of their own as they head to Montreal to compete in the Can-Am Hockey Tournament. We offer them good luck in their quest for the gold.

THE STREET CORNER PSYCHOLOGIST

Just after giving his staff training on how to be more 'customer friendly', the manger overheard one of his customer service representative say- "No sir we haven't had any for quite some time now"

Moving in quickly, and glaring at the employee, the manger intervened and responded - "Please just wait a moment and

I'll have someone check to see if we have any in stock-otherwise, I will be sure to order it for you."

Much to his dismay, the customer smiled at the customer service representative, burst out in laughter, and walked away.

Finally, the manager turned to the employee and asked -"Just

what did that man say to you anyway?"

"Well" replied the customer service representative, "he said that we haven't had any rain lately"

Obviously, the manager needs some training of his own!

NOTES FROM THE BLACKBOARD

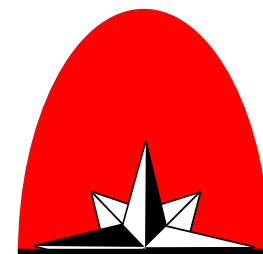
KEYS TO EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING:

- Involve others in making decisions whenever possible.
- Set deadlines for information gathering – and stick to them.
- Don't confuse symptoms with problems.
- Delegate decision-making whenever possible

- Remain focused on the issue don't veer off the path.
- Do not make premature or uninformed judgments.
- Rely on others to generate a free flow of ideas and alternatives.
- Avoid procrastinating when searching for solutions to a problem.
- Remain objective - emo-

tions or personal preferences must not interfere with the process.

- Establish realistic and attainable time frames for reaching your decision.
- Always keep those affected informed of your decision.



Every person who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first from their teachers and ; the second, more personal and important , from themselves.

- Adapted from

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of Electrical Workers
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OFF THE CLOCK

While the rest of us continue to buy lottery tickets, we wish these members who have now retired much health and happiness in their new lives of leisure:

Shirley Belkwell (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Joe Brayshaw (Cambridge & North Dumfries)

Margaret Cameron (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Janet Carr (Windsor Regional Hospital)

Robert Clark (Nexans Canada)

Valerie Coe (Peterborough Utility Services)

Donna Farrow (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Peggy Frank (Waterloo North Hydro)

Jim Jackson (Cambridge & North Dumfries)

Rosemarie King (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Anne Livingstone (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Pat McIlvenna (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Brenda McMahon (Enersource Hydro Missis-

sauga)

Frank Ramroop (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Ronald Ross (Woodstock Hydro Services)

Helen Skibicki (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Miriam Weicker (Christie Digital Systems Inc.)

Hats off to **Peter Wirag** (Windsor Utilities Commission) who has organized a Retirees Club in his area. This is a great way to keep in touch with each other and the Union. Why not think about it in your Unit?



LARGE ENOUGH TO SERVE AND SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE

**'GREEN POWER' OF A DIFFERENT KIND
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)**

Like Ontario, California once had surplus electrical supplies. However, we must not forget that electricity is unique and unlike any other commodity in the market. Unfortunately the basic laws of supply and demand will still apply. Once 'Utilities' become 'Electric Companies' - there is no longer any responsibility or obligation to deliver a steady stream of reliable power to the public at an affordable price. The result for California residents was a 40% increase in rates. For industry, the bills there rose by an average of 70%. Mr. Freeman predicted similar effects here - but conceded that it may take a few years to occur. The lag would be the result of government intervention aimed at stabilizing the market until

public opinion had been swayed. Delegates listened in horror as **John Ingram of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union of Australia** echoed the warnings issued by Mr. Freeman. Prior to deregulation in Australia, Mr. Ingram's organization represented more than 27,000 in the Utility industry. Today, that number stands at less than 4,000. Those who remain find themselves: forced to do more with less; regularly placed in unsafe circumstances and dealing with employers who have no desire in promoting a harmonious working relationship. For the citizens there, reliability has gone down, prices have gone up and they are now held hostage by power companies that

are all owned by offshore investors. Premier Eves was invited to join Messrs. Freeman and Ingram in a public debate hosted by the I.B.E.W. Instead, he chose to hold his own press conference to announce his government's intentions to proceed with the sell off of Hydro One. Unlike the Power Workers Union who supports such action, **the I.B.E.W.** remains committed to protecting this public asset and will continue in our fight to make sure that the Tories don't pull the plug on the power in Ontario.