



## Troubled Waters

Following the tragic events at Walkerton, the government introduced legislation aimed at ensuring public safety was not compromised again. Included in the Safe Drinking Water Act are requirements for the licensing, testing, accreditation and certification of Waterworks Operators. Similar provisions are outlined for Wastewater Operators in the Ontario Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act. However commendable in principle, these Acts fail to take into account the potential impact on those presently working in this industry.

It is estimated that there are more than 8000 Operators responsible for the treatment and distribution of our water supply. Many of these people could

find themselves unable to continue in their work due to the standards and regulations that have been established.

Together with other unions who share concerns over the consequences of the legislation, Local 636 met with officials from the Ministry of the Environment to explore ways to ensure that our members are not made to pay for the mistakes of others with their own livelihoods.

Our Vice President, Eldon Wallis has been a leading voice in this campaign. He has earned great respect from his peers and will undoubtedly have significant influence in these discussions. We will keep you informed as developments unfold.

## Just for Fun

Realizing he was lost, a man in a balloon shouted to a woman below - Could you please help me? I promised a friend that I would meet him an hour ago but now don't really know where I am.

The woman replied, You are in a hot air balloon hovering at approximately 30 feet above the ground at 33.3 degrees north latitude and 85.5 degrees west longitude

Why you must be an engineer shouted the balloonist.

Indeed I am said the woman. How did you know?

Well, answered the balloonist, everything that you have told me is technically correct, but I really have

no idea what any of that information means and the fact is that I am still lost. Quite frankly, you have really not been much help to me at all

The woman below, without hesitation, looked up and responded, you must be in management

As a matter of fact I am, replied the balloonist, but how did you know?

Easy replied the woman, you don't know where you are or where you are going. You have only risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air; You made a promise that you have no idea how to keep and; you expect people below you to solve all your problems!

## Notes from the Blackboard

-Those interested in purchasing a computer are invited to visit our website for details on an exciting purchase program available to union members through the CLC.

-The Canadian Healthcare Coalition and the CLC are continuing the campaign to protect public Medicare. Be sure to send a message of support to our Premier and the Prime Minister by logging on to: <http://healthcoalition.ca/QN-actionsheet.pdf>. Also, we encourage you, your family and friends to sign the on-line petition in support of the Romanow report - it can be found at: [www.petitiononline.com/romanow](http://www.petitiononline.com/romanow)

-Anyone who is required to wear fire resistant clothing is urged to visit [www.arclash.com/westex/index.html](http://www.arclash.com/westex/index.html)

for an important safety advisory regarding the cleaning of such fabrics.

- Retiring members seeking continued benefit coverage may now be able to take advantage of a program offered by the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC). For details on the benefits available, costs and eligibility requirements, please contact the plan administrator - the Canadian Benefits Consulting Group at: 1-800- 268-0285 or [curc@canben.com](mailto:curc@canben.com)

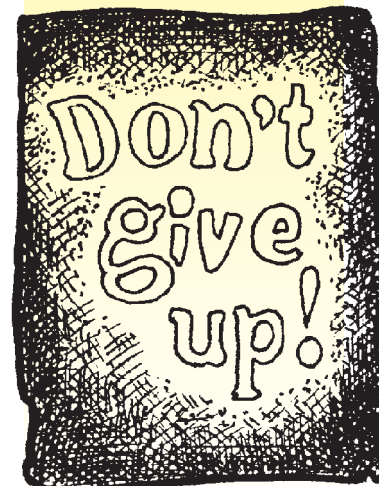
- The efforts to restore a safe and affordable supply of public power continue. Learn more about how you can help make a difference at: [www.publicpower.ca](http://www.publicpower.ca)

Being defeated is most often only a temporary condition.

Giving up is what makes it

permanent

Marilyn vos Savant



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We're on the Web!  
Visit us at:  
<http://ibawlocal636.com>



UNIT CHAIRPERSON SEMINAR  
2002

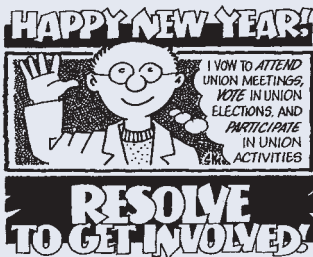


# The Sentinel



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If you find mistakes in this publication please remember that they are there for a reason. We try to publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes!

## Getting Back to Basics

in what has become a Local 636 tradition, members from across the province recently gathered in Toronto for our annual Unit Chairpersons Seminar.

Those in attendance were able to see our Executive Board in action, exchange ideas and increase their awareness of the issues challenging both workers and unions. We thank each of them for the sacrifices made as they answer their call to service.

This year, the educational focus was on Stewardship 101. In a series of workshops these front line representatives discussed such topics as: membership rights and responsibilities; the role of the Steward; preparation and presentation of

grievances; the and labour & the law. The Local 636 Steward Toolkit was also presented to assist these

participants in the political arena and show their support for the social justice movement. With an election looming, the time is right for working men and women to end the toy reign of terror.

In an equally passionate delivery, Julie Neilson reminded representatives of the evils brought about by Bill 99 - that changed Workers Compensation to Workplace Insurance.



Business Manager/ Financial Secretary J. R. Wacheski and Ontario NDP leader Howard Hampton

Sharing handshakes, smiles and e-mail addresses, participants went home confident in the knowledge that standing together, we can and will make a difference.

advocates in their daily duties. In an inspiring message delivered by Howard Hampton, members were encouraged to become active

## Food for Thought

Did you know?

- ...that the I.B.E.W. presently represents more than 750,000 members or;
- ...that the Canadian membership is just over 55,00 or;
- ...that the first Canadian Local of the I.B.E.W. was organized in 1899
- ...that Joe Fashion (BM/FS of Local 353 - Toronto) was recently appointed to represent the First District (Canada) on the I.B.E.W. International Executive Committee or;
- ...that the minimum wage in Ontario is \$6.85 and has not been increased since 1995 or;

- ...that there are only 8 statutory holidays recognized under the Employment Standards Act or;
- ...that there is no law providing workers coffee breaks or
- ...that an employer must give employees an (unpaid) eating period of at least 30 minutes after working no more than 5 consecutive hours) or;
- ...that unionized workers may not be entitled to Emergency Leave or
- ...that more than 30,000 toy industry workers have lost their jobs due to a shift in manufacturing out of North America.



# SHOP TALK

## -NEWS AND VIEWS FROM ACROSS LOCAL 636:

**BARRIE & DISTRICT ASSOCIATION FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS** - Members were pleased to learn that the government has released much needed funding to assist in maintaining the pay equity plan in this program. Such recognition for work of this dedicated and hard working group is long overdue.

**ADT CAMBRIDGE, HAMILTON, LONDON & OTTAWA** - As competition increases in the ever-changing electronic security industry, the employer has turned more and more to contractors to meet customer demands. This is an alarming development that seems to be facing units in all industries. Grievances have been filed challenging the actions of this employer and we will continue in our efforts to protect the work of the bargaining unit - more to follow.

**HYDRO OTTAWA** - During the restructuring of this utility, several new subsidiaries were established under a central holding company. In order to better protect the interests of bargaining unit members, the Union is seeking representation rights for the employees of these divisions based on the notion that there is a common employer. A hearing before the Ontario Labour Relations Board is scheduled for February 3rd.

**ENWIN POWERLINES** - Touched by the Christmas spirit - and sprinkled with some friendly competition - members collected donations of approximately \$12,000 for a local campaign that provides food baskets for needy families in the area. We thank everyone who contributed to the success of this effort.

**WINDSOR UTILITIES COMMISSION** - Despite objections by the Union, the employer recently introduced a conflict of interest policy that could adversely impact our members. Our legal counsel is presently reviewing the policy and will advise us how to proceed.

**ESSEX POWER** - More than 2 years after amalgamation, members are hopeful that their much anticipated new service centre will finally be ready in January. This will be the

next important step in bringing this unit closer together.

**HYDRO ONE BRAMPTON**- Members of this unit were pleased to receive their first payout under an Incentive Plan that was introduced in 2002. Each member received \$900.00 and we hope that they will continue to share in the success of the corporation.

**NOVATRONICS** - Our members in this unit have been especially hard hit by the events of September 11th. With business down, they continue to face uncertainty. To their credit, this group has been very receptive to looking at ways to ease the sting of such developments. With their support, the union and employer have agreed to participate in a government sponsored program that will result in a 4 day work week with the 5th day paid through the Employment Insurance Commission. Obviously, this was a tough choice - but one that puts the needs of the many ahead of the needs of a few. We salute them for reminding us all that this is really what the union movement is all about.

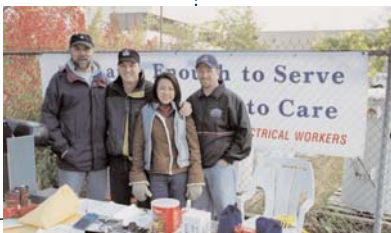
**CITY OF KITCHENER** - An issue first raised some time ago is causing renewed concern among our members in this unit. The employer has indicated its desire to have all Gas Servicemen licensed as Air Conditioning Servicemen. On paper, such a proposal is possible. The real question is how the employer will provide the training necessary for our members to satisfy the requirements of this trade - which in itself has an established apprenticeship program. If we are unable to come up with an answer, this may have to be discussed at the bargaining table.

**ORILLIA POWER**- We are pleased to report that a member whose neck was broken when the pole he was working on suddenly snapped off is doing well and is expected make a full recovery. This is a frightening example of the many hazards faced by Linemen everyday.

**NAPANEE WATER** - Much to the disappointment of the Union and our members, the employer has decided to introduce a new payroll system. The reason for our concern is that employees will have 4 days pay withheld in order to facilitate the changeover. The employer seemed unsympathetic to our appeal for consideration of the financial burden on our members. Unfortunately, arbitration rulings in similar cases support the right of the employer to proceed.



Members from EnWin Powerlines enjoy the competition at the Firefighters Challenge in Windsor



Members from Cambridge Hydro donate their time to help raise funds for the United Way

**Yes to public Medicare**

## Hometown Hero Honoured

In his campaign to preserve public power, Maurice Millan has experienced first hand the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Through it all he has remained committed to protecting the rights of consumers against the evils of deregulation. Recently, his efforts were rewarded as Maurice was named Orillia's Citizen of the Year for 2002.

During his 35 year career with Orillia Power, Maurice has earned a reputation as a person who is not afraid to stand up for his beliefs. Recognizing the dangers of privatization, he set out on a mission to let the public hear the truth. This included organizing meetings, public protests (at city hall and the office of his local MPP), writing letters to the editor on a regular basis,

actively working against the Tories in a by-election and using every opportunity and resource available to him to help ensure that an affordable and reliable supply of public power was maintained. As a result, the residents in his community had a greater level of understanding on this issue than most others in the province. We salute his spirit, courage and perseverance.

As we all know, the Eves government has pulled the plug on privatization - at least for now. Thanks to activists like Maurice, we have all learned that ordinary people can often do extraordinary things. Congratulations Maurice on earning this prestigious honour.



## OMERS Contribution Holiday Ends

As testimony to the wisdom of the plan's investment strategies, OMERS was able to build a surplus that has allowed its members to enjoy a contribution holiday for the past four years. However, like all good things, this too has now come to an end.

Beginning with the first full pay period in 2003, members and employers renewed their investment in the future. For some, this was the first time that such deductions had been made. For others, it meant that we would again be asked to tighten our belts in order to provide income security upon retirement. In either case, we must remember that the long term benefits of the plan far outweigh any short term burdens.

Plan contributions will be phased in, starting at a reduced rate (of 2.1% up to the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings, set by the Canada Pension Plan at \$39,900 for 2003 and 2.6% on any earnings over the YMPE) with full rates expected to return in 2004. The early retirement window remains open through to 2004 for anyone who may be considering the virtues of a permanent vacation.

There are some other changes that

have been introduced that are worthy of note, including:

- the deduction of contributions from safety clothing/ safety shoe allowance - if they are non-accountable (i.e. a cheque is issued but no receipt is required)
- the addition of life insurance provided by the employer as a taxable benefit
- calculation of service by the day - not by the month. Previously employees off work on unpaid leaves for up to 15 days/month received credit for the whole month - with no contribution requirements. Now, for every day an employee is absent from work on an unpaid leave, they must elect to buy back both their portion and the employers portion of OMERS contributions to have the full month of services recognized.



In other news, we have been advised by our Liaison at the Board - Peter Rutliff - that a proposal for autonomy/self governance has been prepared and submitted to the government for review. Hopefully, this will bring us one step closer to independence. Stay tuned for more!

To anyone with kids of any age, or anyone who has ever been a kid, here's some advice Bill Gates recently dished out at a high school speech about 11 things they did not and will not learn in school.

- Rule 1: Life is not fair - get used to it.
- Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.
- Rule 3: You will NOT make \$40,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.
- Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough ... wait till you get a boss.
- Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping they called it opportunity.
- Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes ... learn from them.
- Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and ... listening to you talk about how cool you are. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parents' generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.
- Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers ... but life has not. In some schools they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as many times as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.
- Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you find yourself. Do that on your own time.
- Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.
- Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

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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](http://www.omers.com)

Ministry of Labour [www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca)

Canada Customs & Revenue [www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca](http://www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca)

Unity Group Insurance [www.unitygrouponline.com](http://www.unitygrouponline.com)

E&USA [www.eusa.on.ca](http://www.eusa.on.ca)

Canadian Labour Congress - [www.clc-ctc.ca](http://www.clc-ctc.ca)

## Table Talk

**WASAGA ENERGY SERVICES** - With the support of our members and the assistance of a Conciliation Officer, we were able to reach a 3 year deal that will provide ATB wage increases of 3% in each year. In addition to several improvements in contract language, members will also enjoy enhanced benefit coverage that includes a vision allowance of \$100/24 months - for the first time. Many thanks to Paul Capes and Charlie Adams for a job well done.

**CITY OF ORILLIA (OPERATIONS)** - Patience and persistence paid off in the form of a 2 year collective agreement. Members will enjoy ATB wage increases of 3% in each year. In addition, Pumping Station Operators, WWTC Operators and Subforemen will receive a classification adjustment of \$.25/hr while WFP Operators and the Environmental Officer will receive \$.45/hr more each year. There were a number of changes in both the monetary and non-monetary terms of the agreement but most notable was the inclusion of an early retirement benefit that will continue drug coverage for a maximum of 10 years.

Congratulations go out to Eldon Wallis, Dale Cleaveley, Randy Armstrong and Jim Gover for their outstanding efforts at the table.

**SUTHERLAND - SCHULTZ** - Members were pleased with the efforts of their negotiating team and have ratified a 2 year deal that will provide an ATB wage increase of 2.5% in each year. Other notable monetary changes will see meal allowance increase to \$10.00; vision coverage move up to \$175/24mths an \$8.00 cap on dispensing fees and 9 mth dental recall. The agreement also includes language improvements that will expand Union representation rights in cases of suspension and/or discharge and remove reprimands from an employees personnel file

**CONCILIATION:** The Union will be turning to third party assistance in resolving the outstanding issues at: COUNTERFORCE; ESSEX POWER and; CHATHAM- KENT HYDRO (INSIDE & OUTSIDE) - more to follow.

## State of the Union -

Reflections from the desk of Business

Manager/ Financial Secretary J.R. (Rick) Wacheski:

With a new year comes renewed hope that all workers will be treated fairly with dignity and respect. Much progress has been made but there is still more to be done as we work towards this goal. On behalf of Local 636, I would like to thank each of you for your continuing support of the efforts to promote and protect the interests of our union and our members.

On the heels of some very busy and exciting times for our Local, we don't expect things to slow down in 2003.

At the bargaining table, our Staff will be working to settle some 21 collective agreements for units across our Regions. Negotiations may be particularly challenging in the Utility industry where employers continue to look at ways of dealing with the financial strains brought about by the governments failed attempts at deregulation of the electricity.

The Executive Board has completed their training and can now turn their attention to Committee work, policy review and implementation of our strategic plan. This will be an integral part of our success in growth and development to better serve the current

and future needs of our members.

Education will continue to be a key focus for our Local this year. We heartily encourage each of you to learn more about who we are, what we do and how you can help us improve by participating in a seminar in your area.

In the months ahead we will be closely monitoring developments in the political arena and our workplaces to bring you the latest information on the issues and events affecting workers. Be sure to attend your next unit meeting for all the details.

STAY STRONG, STAND UNITED, BE UNION PROUD!

