

## Society Newscast 2005:01

This is the Society Newscast for Monday, April 25, 2005



### Turnout heavy in Hydro One "final offer" vote

Voting began on Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> in the "final offer" vote imposed on the Hydro One Local by CEO Tom Parkinson.

Polling is being conducted at a total of 27 polling stations from Dryden to Ottawa, and at various times. Voting ends today at Hydro One headquarters at Trinity Square in Toronto. All indications are that turnout is very heavy, and may well exceed the 92 per cent turnout for last month's strike vote.

Many Society members have taken extraordinary steps to make sure they were able to vote.

- ◆ One member who was scheduled to fly out of the country on vacation came in to vote, and then had to rush to get to the airport
- ◆ Two members on vacation in Florida called to see if they needed to make arrangements to return early on Friday so they could vote, but were relieved to find they could vote today
- ◆ One member voted while suffering from appendicitis, and on a waiting list for treatment
- ◆ One member voted at a polling station last week, though s/he had been assigned to vote today at Trinity, because "something could happen to me on the weekend, and keep me from voting."

At station after station, Society scrutineers reported intense interest in the vote, with most members not concealing their dislike of the "final offer" and their intention to vote against it. But whatever



Photo: Ron Chen

*Society-represented employees line up to vote at Richview TS on Friday.*

er our members' opinions of Hydro One's "final offer," which shall be known soon, they were most anxious to vote.

The vote will be counted this afternoon, and will be reported in a NewsFLASH as soon as possible after.

## **Actions on both sides of border support Hydro One Local**

An exclamation point was added to last Monday's very successful and inspiring rally in support of the Hydro One Local when IFPTE staffers distributed flyers at a business meeting in Washington, D.C. attended by Premier McGuinty.

On Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, professional employees emerged from Hydro One headquarters in Toronto to spend their lunch hour with pizza and solidarity. Emceed by **Lyla Garzouzi** and **Anshul Mathur**, who have been employed between them less than a year, rallyers were entertained with words from fellow Hydro One employees **Jim Botari**, **Michelle Byck Johnston**, **Tom Kydd**, **Lynn Andrews**; and Society President **Andrew Müller**.

Also bringing promises of moral and material support were Amalgamated Transit Workers President Bob Kinnear (Toronto Transit Commission), Toronto and York Region Labour Council President John Cartwright, and Ontario Federation of Labour President Wayne Samuelson. Kinnear told the crowd:

*The men and women I represent are subway, bus, and streetcar operators. They're mechanics, fare collectors, janitors, and clerks. The men and women the Society represents are engineers, scientists, accountants, and many other professions. I would bet that most people would say that our two unions do not have a lot in common. But that is not true. Our unions have a great deal in common... We both provide vital public services. If it were not for all of you, we would all be living in the dark ages. Literally. And if it were not for us, Toronto would be a nothing city that no one would want to live in.*



**Anshul Mathur explains why two-tier working conditions don't appeal to him. With him is Lyla Garzouzi.**

Meanwhile, Premier McGuinty was in Washington, D.C., at a meeting of the Canadian American Business Council, in an effort to make sure the Canada-U.S. border is closed to terrorism but open for business. IFPTE staffers Andy Banks and Faraz Khan managed to get in, and distributed flyers pointing out that the Premier wants to lock out the very professionals who helped get the lights back on in August, 2003, saving Canadian and American businesses billions of dollars.

On Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, Society President Andrew Müller distributed leaflets at a health care centre in Brighton, Ontario, where Premier McGuinty was making an announcement. Society members also leafleted an appearance at the University of Toronto by Hydro One board member Bob Rae, a former premier of Ontario, who is in the running to become president of that university.

Society locals have been calling membership meetings to organize support for the Hydro One Local. In one recent example, OPGN VP **Olaf Heilandt**, Society Executive Vice President **Rod Sheppard**, and Society President Andrew Müller spoke to 200 members at the Pickering NGS info centre on April 11<sup>th</sup>. "We have to unite behind this local," said Sheppard. "We need to help in whatever way we can."

Said Müller, "This is the crisis we were talking about a couple of years ago, when we talked to you about how we needed to restructure ourselves to meet the challenges."

## **Society gets set to observe Workers' Day of Mourning**

Each year, more than one million occupational injuries are reported in Canada, and around 800 working people are killed on the job—more than two per day.

In Ontario in 2004, 328 deaths of workers have been recorded so far, while 128 fatality claims await decisions from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board as to whether they were work-related. Occupational diseases now account for more than 60 per cent of all fatality claims.

According to a study by Dr. Annalee Yassi, if all occupational diseases were included in the fatality figures, over 6,000 worker deaths would be recorded in Ontario every year.

In 1984, the Canadian Labour Congress declared April 28<sup>th</sup> an annual day of remembrance for workers killed and injured on the job. The Parliament of Canada officially recognized the Day in legislation passed in 1991. In the US, the AFL-CIO has adopted April 28<sup>th</sup> as the Worker's Memorial.

The Society, the Power Workers Union, and our various employers will observe Workers' Day of Mourning in various ways. Here are some examples:

**Hydro One:** As per Hydro One tradition, ceremonies will be held at Richview TS and the Hydro One headquarters at Trinity Square in Toronto. The Society's **Brian Davidge** is scheduled to speak at Richview, and Unit Director **Lee Collins** at Trinity. Since Hydro One CEO Tom Parkinson has said he will lock out all Society-represented employees on Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> if his unacceptable "final offer" is not accepted today, both ceremonies are subject to some uncertainty.

**Kinectrics:** A building-wide PA system announcement will be presented on the Day of Mourning, and a minute of silence will be observed following the message. A three-party e-mail message about worker safety will be distributed to all staff prior to the event.

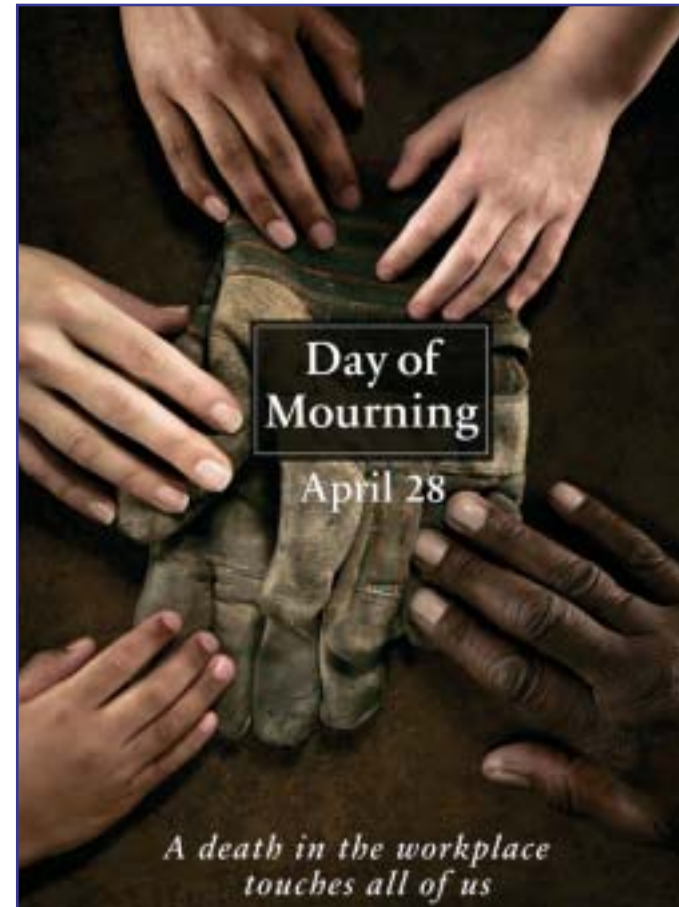
**Ontario Power Generation:** Ceremonies will be held at various locations large and small. Society participants include OPGN Local VP **Olaf Heilandt**, Unit Director **Victor Chetcuti**, and Health and Safety Co-Chair **Alan Wadham**. For employees who can't attend one of the ceremonies, a video has been produced, with Society Executive Vice President **Bill Jones** speaking on behalf of the Society. The video is available on the OPG intranet.

**Vertex Customer Management:** Vertex posts a message on its internal website, and puts up posters in the workplace.

## Pensioners' Chapter gets going

The Society's Pensioners' Chapter will hold its first General Meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Pensioners' Chapter was created as part of the changes made to the Society's organizational structure in 2002. Membership in the Chapter is open to any pensioner who has been member of a Society-



Source: Workers Compensation Board of Alberta

represented bargaining unit. The Chapter's main focus will be to keep Society pensioners updated on the status of their pension funds and benefits, and to have a means of raising concerns and lobby for changes.

"It's important to protect the pensions and benefits we've worked hard for," says **Ian Elder**, a New Horizon retiree who is currently serving as Acting President of the Chapter. "Since they're subject to negotiation between employers and unions, the pensioners need to have their own voice."

The position of President and the other officers of the Chapter will be open to election at the AGM. The Chapter President has a non-voting position on the Society's Board of Directors, and the Chapter also has two non-voting seats on Society Council.

Annual dues for membership is currently set at \$24. Retirees wishing to attend the AGM can pay their membership dues at the door.

The AGM will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Canadian Legion, 2 Spring Garden Avenue in Toronto (two blocks north of Sheppard, east off Yonge Street).

## **Bruce Power Local Council approves first Society local operating plan**

The Bruce Power Local has passed an operating plan that mirrors the Society workplan.

The Local Council met on April 7<sup>th</sup> to consider the draft plan, which was drawn up by Local Vice President Rob Stanley, and recommended to the Local Council for approval by the Local Executive Committee.

Emulating the Society's workplan was no accident, says Stanley.

*When we became a Local, local autonomy was one of the big objectives of the Society—the autonomy to negotiate our own contracts, and so on. So it leaves it up to us to be responsible, and put work programs in place to demonstrate that our operations are consistent with Society objectives. What drives the Society's programs also must drive the Local programs. I think it's really important, and so does our Local, that we demonstrate to the Society central that we can run with this autonomy.*

The Bruce operating plan sets out the work for the Local, and provides an auditing process carried out at the end of the fiscal year by members of Local Council independent of the Local Committee. "The audit process will assess whether the Local met its objectives as set out in the Operating Plan," says Stanley.



*Bruce Power Local Vice President Rob Stanley presents a draft operating plan to the Local Council. The meeting took place at the Lido Gardens restaurant in Port Elgin.*

Local Council passed the plan unanimously. It sets out the following work programs:

- ◆ External Relations, including "when the Local's interests are compromised due to Corporate Society policies and strategic direction"
- ◆ Communications, which calls for a comprehensive local communications plan to be produced for Local Council by June 30<sup>th</sup>
- ◆ Negotiations
- ◆ Health, Safety & Wellness
- ◆ Grievances
- ◆ Purchased Services
- ◆ Membership Services.
- ◆ Equity & Diversity
- ◆ Pension and Benefits

Local operating plans such as his local's, says Stanley, feed into the Society's overall budget. "When the master budget is approved," he says, "we'll know to what extent our work programs can be executed."

## OPGN Local Council holds first meeting

The OPGN Local Council held its first annual meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Kicking off the Council meeting were three guest speakers:

- ◆ Society President **Andrew Müller** welcomed the members of Council to an historic first meeting
- ◆ Executive Vice President **Rod Sheppard** briefed Council on the campaign to amend Bill 100, and the current potential strike/lockout at Hydro One.
- ◆ OPG Chief Nuclear Officer Pierre Charlebois briefed Council on OPG's current challenges, its new Board, and OPG's lack of direction from the Government on its role and structure, which should be corrected by May

OPGN Local Vice President **Olaf Heilandt**, Unit Director **Adam Habayeb**, and Unit Director **Michael Lohse** participated in a comprehensive report on the activities and successes of the Local over the past year. Highlights include:

- ◆ The negotiation of a new Letter of Understanding has resulted in more than 160 new hirings (Heilandt: "OPG is growing.")
- ◆ Contract negotiations had had a distinctly different flavour from those of 2003, indicating that the Local is successfully rebuilding its relationship with the Employer
- ◆ Implementation of the move to Pickering from 700 University Avenue in Toronto had resulted in significant improvements to relocation benefits over the language in the agreement
- ◆ The backlog of rights grievances had been reduced by 90 per cent
- ◆ The PINO (Performance Improvement Nuclear Operations) redeployment was successful, and all employees had been placed

This year is another bargaining year, said Heilandt. "Last time we were bargaining in a situation of political and economic instability, so we had to concentrate on language issues. This year we've got a more stable environment, so we'll be able to focus on economic ones."

The Society is actively involved in supporting OPG's licences in Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission hearings, he said. The Local is also pushing OPG to implement corrective plans to improve the results of the 2004 survey carried out by Hewitt Associates, in which it was found that Society-represented employees suffered from a significant amount of "disengagement" from OPG's operations and leadership. "We've been telling management this for a long time," said Heilandt, so the Hewitt results had proved to be a great deal of assistance.

## Kinectrics parent AEA Technologies in crisis

Share prices plummeted and the CEO quit in early April as Kinectrics parent AEA Technologies issued its second profit warning of the year.

Blaming structural problems in its railway business, the U.K.-based Company announced that profits would be "well short" of previous predictions, and that its CEO, Peter Watson, would be replaced by Andrew McCree, a managing director with 13 years at AEA.

Kinectrics itself is doing fine, said President and CEO David Harris.

McCree announced that he intends to bring a "sharper commercial focus" to the business, as well as sharply reduce costs. Two hundred jobs will be cut, said McCree. He added, "There are also going to have to be some disposals."

AEA Technologies was created by privatizing the commercial operations of the U.K.'s Atomic Energy Authority in 1996. It has a rail division, which makes equipment that monitors and controls train and track performance; an environment division that provides air pollution monitoring for the U.K. government; and a subsidiary that makes high-durability batteries.

AEA is carrying a £60m debt and a £120m pension fund deficit. Soon after privatization its stock traded at £10, but a series of profit warnings in 2000 and 2001 brought it down to earth. After its latest announcement, the share value sunk from £1.3 to £0.93.

U.K. media have speculated that the batteries division would go, as well as its QSA radioactive science operation.

AEA Technologies is also the owner of Kinectrics, the former research division of Ontario Hydro.

Harris announced to Kinectrics employees that both Kinectrics and AEA Tech's environment division—in which Kinectrics resides—had had excellent years. In Kinectrics's case, revenues were up nine per cent, income up 390 per cent, and cash flow was strong. In recognition of Kinectrics's strength, he said, Kinectrics has been moved out of AEA's environment division as a stand-alone business, and will report directly to McCree.

"[T]his is an opportunity to demonstrate our full management and technical capability," said Harris.

(£1 = C\$2.38)



## Hardship fund donation process set

*By Bill Jones, Executive Vice President Finance*

In anticipation of a Hydro One lockout on or soon after April 27th, a Hardship Fund has been set up to deal with colleagues in exceptional financial circumstances due to strikes or lockouts. A request form and process with acceptance criteria have been developed. A small committee will confidentially assess each case and recommend payment as appropriate.

The fund is a segregated account within the Society financial system, subject to all its normal financial controls.

The Principal Officers have each pledged one-sixth of their take-home salaries for the duration of any lockout. Some Society employees have also made pledges. A call for support was sent to members of other Locals that included a suggested minimum pledge of \$1 per week; a number have already been faxed back to the Society at (416) 979-5794.

There are two methods of fulfilling a pledge to the Hardship Fund:

- ♦ Cheque payable to "Society of Energy Professionals" with "Hardship Fund" on the memo line, sent to the Society at 425 Bloor Street East, Suite 300, Toronto ON M4W 3R4
- ♦ Donation "tree" at Society sites: Individuals designated by LVP/UD will collect smaller donations in a secure envelope and maintain a sign-in sheet. Periodically, the money collected and the corresponding sign-in sheet shall be sent to David Russell at the Society in a secure manner. (Cheques can also be sent to the Society with the cash.)

Thank you in anticipation of your support. Pre-paid pledges gratefully received.

*And that is the Society Newscast for Monday, April 25, 2005.*

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*Members can hear the current Newscast by calling (416) 979-2709 x.2035.*

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