

News from the Society of Energy Professionals

**Minister
shocked!
Lambton
among the
cleanest**



Lambton GS units lean, clean generating machines—Energy Probe

Former Energy Minister Dwight Duncan's plan to replace coal with natural gas suffered a stinging rebuke last week.

Energy Probe, one of Ontario's most respected energy research groups, released a report that lauds Lambton Generating Station's two emission-controlled units as among the cleanest in North America.

"From an environmental point of view," said Energy Probe's Tom Adams, "it makes no sense to shut these down while we're importing large amounts of coal-fired power from our neighbours."

"I should think this just about settles the matter," said Society President **Andrew Müller**. "The only advocates of natural gas left, besides the Minister, are the so-called Ontario Clean Air Alliance and the companies that stand to profit from it."

The Energy Probe report ranks Lambton's Unit 4 as the fourth cleanest of North America's 403 coal-fired generators, and Unit 3 as ninth.

In another stunner, Adams has written Jack Gibbons, Chair of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, advising the Alliance to abandon their support for closing down the two Lambton units. Energy Probe is a member of the Alliance. Adams says:

We believe that cleaner coal—like these two units or better—can achieve emissions, power cost, public safety, and fuel diversity advantages over gas-fired generation, which the OCAA promotes and which the Ontario government is now developing. Furthermore, we believe that shutting down these two units—ranked in the top nine cleanest coal-fired generators in North America—would actually worsen air pollution in Ontario, not improve it. We also urge the OCAA to support new cleaner coal options for meeting most of Ontario's future electricity needs that cannot be served by cost-effective renewable energy alternatives and conservation.

Energy Probe's position on these matters is almost exactly the same as recommendations the Society has been making to the Energy Minister since he took office.

Apparently these criticisms of the provincial government's Clean Air Alliance-driven Coal Replacement Plan had Mr. Duncan's knickers in a bit of a twist. In an interview with



New energy minister Donna Cansfield, MPP, Etobicoke Centre

Canadian Press over last weekend, he called advocates of clean coal "neanderthals." He went on to say that if the Ontario Power Authority were to recommend that Ontario's coal plants not be shut down, he wouldn't listen. "We are moving to close the coal plants, period, full stop."

Copies of the Energy Probe documents can be found at <http://www.energyprobe.org>.

Welcome to new energy minister

No sooner had Dwight Duncan slurred the great majority of electricity industry stakeholders as "neanderthals" than he was off to the Ministry of Finance, replacing the Hon. Greg Sorbara, who was forced to resign under criminal investigation.

Production of the Society Newscast was unavoidably suspended during the Hydro One strike. In this and the next issue, we're bringing readers up to date with everything that's gone on in the last five months.

Mr. Duncan's replacement, Donna Cansfield, has been the Energy Minister's parliamentary assistant since the Liberals won the 2003 election and took office.

Society President **Andrew Müller** sent Ms. Cansfield a letter of congratulations on Wednesday, October 12th, the day she took office, saying the Society hopes "to develop a mutually beneficial working relationship with you as you put your mark on the Ministry." He invited her to visit Society Council, which will be in session on October 24th.

Referring to the former minister's "neanderthal" slur, he added that he hoped she would bring the rhetoric around the [clean coal] issue back into the realm of reasonable debate."

As you know, we represent professional employees, and we are well informed by their expertise in the operation of a very complex electrical system. To demonize us, and those who agree with us, reflect[ed] very badly on the Minister himself.

Mr. Müller reminded Minister Cansfield that even Energy Probe has now broken with the government's coal replacement plan, saying that the Lambton units outfitted with emission controls are "among the cleanest in North America."

[I]t is our firm conviction that the Liberal Government will, of necessity, break its 2003 campaign promise to shut down OPG's coal-fired generating stations. This will be a difficult decision for your government, especially as you have staked so much on the Coal Replacement Plan. We believe, though, if the government changes its focus from an ill-advised concentration on fuel types to a practical effort to reduce emissions you will reach the conclusion that the CRP is a mistake.

The Society has yet to hear from the Minister regarding the invitation.

Board highlights, October 5th

With the October 24th date of Society Council approaching, the Executive Board met Tuesday, October 5th to make the final preparations for Council.

Audit of Strike Expenditures: Executive Vice President Bill Jones informed the Board that measures will need to be taken to replenish the Collective Agreement Renewal Fund. As Hydro One strike had cost \$7.8 million, mostly in strike pay, \$2.8 million had to be borrowed from the Training Fund. The Fund needs to be paid back, and the CAR Fund built back up to its maximum.

Jones noted that the CAR Fund levy of \$3 per week had been triggered during the strike, and would continue in effect for some time into the future.

The Board decided to have an audit conducted of the expenditures undertaken during the Hydro One strike. This will occur before taking any special measures for CAR Fund replenishment.

The Board also confirmed this summer's ad hoc decision to double strike pay after four weeks, and will recommend to Society Council a revision to that effect in the strike pay policy.

Non-dues income: The Board approved a policy on the disposition of non-dues income for presentation to Society Council this month for their approval. If Council **does** approve it, it will officially come into effect.

While the great majority of the Society's year-to-year resources are derived from dues collected from members, other sources of income include payments made under purchased services (in lieu of dues that would be paid if the work involved were being done by members), interest and dividends from investments, profit distributions from the Society's ownership position in Bruce Power, and other such things.

The Policy will operate with the following principles:

- ♦ Such income will only be used for purposes that benefit all Society-represented employees
- ♦ It can be used to support some Society costs, such as repayment of expenses required to acquire the source of income (for example, legal expenses required for setting up the trust fund into which Bruce Power distributions are placed); meeting a capital call made with respect to an equity investment; maintaining the Operating Reserve, the CAR Fund, and the Training Fund at required levels; and others
- ♦ Decisions on priorities for such expenditures will be made by the Executive Committee, and will be reported quarterly to the Board
- ♦ It can also be used for the establishment of a Special Events Trust Account, a restricted-use fund to be disbursed in a manner that will raise the profile of the Society
- ♦ The Society may consider accumulating such income for the purpose of purchasing real estate in lieu of renting.

A copy of the non-dues income policy can be found on the Society web-site (when logged on, find "resources," then "governing documents.") It will be considered by Council on October 24th.

Clean Affordable Energy Alliance: The Board heard a presentation from Lambton delegate **Dale Lane**, representing the Clean Affordable Energy Alliance. The alliance opposes replacing Ontario's coal-fired generating stations with stations that burn natural gas (see *Newscast* 2005:03).

Environmental law: The Board considered a comprehensive report from Staff Officer Matthew Kellway, Executive Vice President Leslie Forge, Executive Vice President Bill Jones, and President Müller on the Society's activities over the past few months to ensure that proposals arising out of the Provincial Government's Coal Replacement Plan (CRP) are in conformity with the *Environmental Assessment Act* (see *Newscast* 2005:03).

The Society has challenged the provincial government for its failure to submit the CRP to an environmental assess-

ment in accordance with the Act. Also, the Society has requested that the approvals processes for the two natural gas-fired projects in the Sarnia-Lambton area be elevated to full environmental assessments.

They reported that the campaign is valuable and had seen some successes—the St. Clair Town Council recently passed a resolution rejecting the building of a natural gas-fired generator there.

The Board agreed that the Society should also assist the campaign of the Clean Affordable Energy Alliance (see above).

OPG locals begin to bargain

Bargaining for a renewal collective agreement has commenced with Ontario Power Generation.

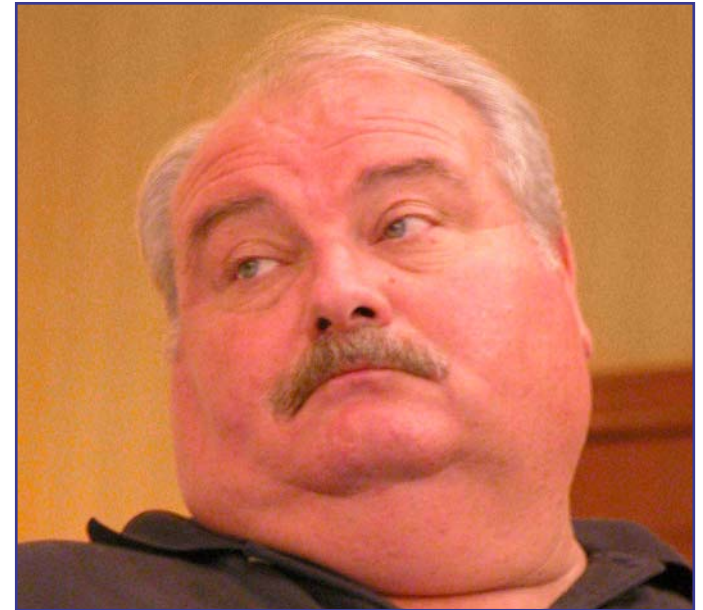
The Society's bargaining team met with OPG's team to get things going on October 11th. Bargaining will continue through October 21st. If no settlement is reached, mediation/arbitration will take place in late November.

The Society's bargaining team consists of **Olaf Heilandt**, OPGN Local Vice President; **Lanny Totton**, OPGI Local Vice President; **Joe Fierro** and **Pat Ramcharitar**, OPGI Unit Directors; and **Peter Tien** and **Michael Lohse**, OPGN Unit Directors. **Tony Kokus**, of the Nanticoke GS, serves as an alternate OPGI member.

The Society staff officers assisting the bargaining team are **Blaine Donais**, **André Kolompar**, and **Joe Lesperance**.

Line becomes ESA VP

The Society's Electrical Safety Authority local has a new Vice President.



Grant Line, new Local Vice President, Electrical Safety Authority

On the promotion of former VP Lucy Impera, the Local acclaimed **Grant Line** its new VP. Grant assumed his duties in April, serving the ESA's 32-employee unit.

Grant is a technical advisor, working out of the Barrie office and serving the ESA's line inspectors. He's worked for the ESA and Ontario Hydro for 21 years. His trial by fire in the VP position was shepherding an office-relocation (Mississauga to Cambridge) JRPT (Joint Redeployment Planning Team) through the process, assisted by Society Staff Officer **Terry Fitzpatrick**. All employees were satisfactorily placed.

"Our lives revolve around our computers," Grant says, "so there's upgrading issues all the time, and lots to do." The ESA Local's current collective agreement runs till 2006.

Ms. Impera has become the General Manager for contractor licensing. The Society congratulates her and sends her best wishes on her career advance.

Popovic new VP of NSS Local

Bojan Popovic has become the new Vice President of the Nuclear Safety Solutions local.

He replaces **Jeremy McEachern**, who decided not to run for another term of office.

Bojan is a senior engineer at NSS, working in the thermal hydraulics department. He worked originally for OPG at the Pickering NGS from 1999, joining NSS in 2003. The VP position is his first as a Society official. "I'm learning as I go," he says, "but I'm happy the members had faith in me to represent them."

Originally from the former Yugoslavia, he has created a new life for himself in Canada since 1994. He lives with wife Luisa and their two boys, ages six and sixteen months.



Bojan Popovic, Local Vice President, Nuclear Safety Solutions

Nuclear Association launching new ad campaign

President **Andrew Müller** was in New Brunswick last week for a meeting of the Executive Board of the Canadian Nuclear Association.

President Müller is the Society's representative on the CNA's Executive Board.

"The Nuclear Association is very active in promoting nuclear energy as a strong part of the electricity mix," he says, "and we reviewed the results of an advertising campaign they embarked on. Polling associated with the campaign indicates that public support for nuclear power is increasing, close to an all-time high."

The CNA is considering the possibility of assessing a one-time payment from its members to help fund a bigger advertising campaign.

It's a valuable forum for the Society, says Müller. "It's a very positive connection, an area where we can work with our employers on something outside our bargaining relationship, where there's a lot of common ground to promote what all our employers do."

Society solidarity at Royal York

A couple of dozen Society members arrived at the Royal York Hotel last week to provide a show of solidarity for the workers there.

Members of Unite-HERE (the amalgamated Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees), employees at the hotel have voted 79 per cent in favour of strike action to press their concerns in bargaining. Chief among those concerns is the number of hotel rooms they must clean



Society members enroute to the Royal York Hotel. Leading the way are (l to r) Kevin Roulston, Andrew Müller, Michelle Duncan, and Vicki Power.

each shift, as the furnishings involved get more luxurious, complicated, and heavy.

The event was organized by the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, highlighting the beginning of a North America-wide Unite-HERE push to improve working conditions in hotels, with Toronto as the pilot location. John Wilhelm, President of the Hospitality Division of Unite-HERE, made a presentation on their campaign.

Society President **Andrew Müller** said he was proud of the number of Society members who showed up, especially given the steady drizzle.

In conjunction with the rally, IFPTE President **Gregory Junemann** informed hotel management that if Unite-HERE's collective agreement were not settled favourably, the IFPTE would be changing the location for its 2006 Convention—currently planned for the Royal York.

"It's to let hotel management know that their employees are not alone, that they have our support," said Müller. "We got a lot of support from the rest of the labour movement during the Hydro One strike, and it's time to pay that back."

Judge blocks Bush work rules

A U.S. judge has put another barrier in the way of the Bush administration's attempt to wipe out union representation for the 160,000 employees of the Department of Homeland Security.

The Bush administration had asked U.S. District Judge Rosemary M. Collyer to narrow an earlier ruling that blocked new DHS rules that would have virtually eliminated employees' bargaining and workplace rights, and ended civil service pay scales. If implemented, the rules would allow the Homeland Security secretary to eliminate any provision in a collective agreement simply by issuing a department-wide directive. Collyer accepted the unions' argument that the rules essentially would eliminate the collective bargaining process.

In her August ruling, the judge said a system that allows "the unilateral repudiation of agreements by one party" is not collective bargaining. "A contract that is not mutually binding is not a contract."

After DHS issued the rules in January, the American Federation of Government Employees and four other unions filed suit, arguing that significant parts of the proposed personnel system would violate the *Homeland Security Act*.

These rulings are of great importance to the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, who are fighting the imposition of similar rules in the U.S. Defense Department. IFPTE President **Greg Junemann** welcomed the ruling, saying, "Judge Collyer has con-

firmed what we in the labor community have been correctly claiming.... Simply put, the proposed DHS personnel system is illegal...."

Members advised to cease hardship donations

The Hydro One strike is over; so hardship donations can cease, says Executive Vice President **Bill Jones**.

"Our thanks go out to all who donated to the fund in support of those who fought for fair and reasonable pay and benefits," said Jones. "Donations are no longer

required. You can turn off automatic deductions and stop sending cheques."

Now that the Hydro One strikers are back at work, and have by now received their first post-strike paycheques, there is no further call on the Fund. Jones reports that the Fund was a godsend to three dozen members that the strike put in significant financial difficulty.

The residual money in the fund will remain segregated in the Society's accounts, ready for future needs. Jones says one possible use for it would be to serve as a base for donations to other unions with hardship needs, noting that "much of our fund comes from other unions' donations."

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