

News from the Society of Energy Professionals

SPEA says

"yes" to

Society **M**embers of the Society of Professional Engineers and Associates (SPEA) have approved that organization's affiliation to the Society.



Photo: David Smiley

SPEA President Paul Hnatiuk announces to IFPTE delegates that his union has joined the Society. Then-IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer Dolores Gorzyca was pleased with the news.

In a vote taken July 12th, 77 per cent of those SPEA members who voted approved the affiliation. Upon approval, SPEA became a local of the Society, with all the rights and obligations of any local.

"Our members are strong trade unionists, and we've been independent for over 25 years," SPEA President **Paul Hnatiuk**

told delegates at the IFPTE Convention on Thursday, July 13th. "But looking into the future we realized we can't continue the way we were. AECL is expanding, and we need to service our members better. Through this affiliation the professional engineers and scientists at AECL get the respect and services that they deserve."

"It's pretty exciting—the Society will have the recognition and prestige of representing professionals in a federal crown corporation," said Society President **Andrew Müller**. "It will increase our bargaining power with all our employers, and it's a pretty good demonstration to other professional employees of the value of working together to make a stronger union."

SPEA represents engineers and scientists employed by Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd. in Mississauga, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec, and dozens of others in China, Romania, and other countries with CANDU reactors. The new local brings Society membership to 7,000.

SPEA and the Society entered into a servicing agreement in early 2005 (see *NewsCast* 2004:12), the main purpose of which was to provide SPEA with professional assistance in the negotiation of their most recent renewal collective agreement. SPEA managed to bargain a five-year agreement without going on strike, "the best settlement we've got in ten years," said Hnatiuk.

On signing the agreement, SPEA agreed once bargaining was over to consider full affiliation with the Society. That process is now complete.

Manitoba telecom professionals join IFPTE

The 1,200 professional employees of Manitoba Telecom Services have voted to join the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.

Susan Bilyck, president of the Telecommunication Employees Association of Manitoba, was on hand in Toronto to give the good news to delegates at last week's IFPTE Convention.

"Before we started, the consensus was that our members wouldn't do that," Bilyck said, but "the response was overwhelming."

The vote to join was taken on July 12th, and passed by a majority of 60 per cent. Voting in favour of IFPTE entailed doubling the organization's dues.

TEAM will become Local 161 of IFPTE, the first Canadian local outside Ontario.

Bilyck thanked IFPTE organizers Anna Liu, Brian Lawson, and Bill Fitzpatrick for helping to make TEAM's affiliation drive possible.

In an interview, Society President and IFPTE Canadian Region Vice President **Andrew Müller** gave much credit to the joint organizing efforts of the Society and the IFPTE. "Working together we've increased our membership by almost 2,000 new members, and have broadened our connections across two more provinces."

Society co-hosts IFPTE convention

IFPTE representatives from all over North America were given a Toronto welcome by their Canadian hosts the Society and IFPTE Local 164 from July 10th to July 13th.

Delegates were welcomed by Toronto Mayor David Miller, who invited them to take time out from their busy schedules to explore the wonderful diversity and customs of a great city.

The IFPTE was meeting in its 55th "constitutional convention" at Toronto's Royal York Hotel to consider the direction of the union, to set its dues levels, and to elect

officers. Such conventions are held every three years. The IFPTE last held its convention in Toronto in 1997.

In listing the accomplishments of his union since its 2003 convention,

IFPTE President **Gregory**

Junemann gave special recognition to the members of the Society's Hydro One Local, saying:

We called out every ally and pulled out every stop as 1,000 members of IFPTE Local 160 took on the longest strike in the 88-year history of our union... The strikers endured tyrannical managers, hostile police, angry media, and endless summer heat in taking on this fight. But in the end they endured for four months—they stayed out until we got the contract that our members earned and so richly deserve. I was proud to walk picket lines with these people.

Junemann then led convention in a picket-line chant while he was joined by dozens of members of the Hydro One Local who'd come down to the Royal York on their lunch hour. They then joined Convention in a viewing of a video celebrating the Hydro One Local members and the 2005 strike.

Delegates heard speeches from Ontario Federation of Labour President Wayne Samuelson; John Cartwright, Toronto & York Region Labour Council; International President of the United Steelworkers of America Leo Gérard; Canadian Labour Congress Secretary-Treasurer Hassan Youssef;

IFPTE President Gregory Junemann gave special recognition to the members of the Society's Hydro One Local



Photo: David Smiley

Trouble at the King Eddie—Two hundred IFPTE Convention delegates marched to the King Edward Hotel in Toronto to express their displeasure at the sacking of HERE leader Filomena Canedo (see below). Discrimination against union leaders is wrong, they said ... it's the law!

Anne-Marie Mureau, of the 25-million strong International Metalworkers' Federation; and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who had just returned from a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the run-up to the recent G-8 Conference in St. Petersburg.

When delegates got down to business, they debated and judged a number of policy initiatives, including:

- ◆ Support for the refurbishment of Ontario's CANDU nuclear generating facilities, and the construction of new ones
- ◆ Opposition to the creeping privatization of public health care in Canada, and firm support for health care reform in U.S., in the form of a universal or single-payer system
- ◆ Support for legislation that closes loopholes giving incentives to employers to send work offshore, and

more help for workers displaced by off-shoring

- ◆ Calling for the Executive Council to make use of the IFPTE's Emergency Assistance Fund (projected to be more than USD\$1 million by 2009) to invest in a building to house the union
- ◆ Forgiving a loan of more than USD\$650,000 from the Emergency Assistance Fund to the General Operating Fund, a loan made several years ago when the IFPTE was in a difficult financial position
- ◆ Refusing to consider the possibility of changing the name of the IFPTE to more inclusively reflect its membership
- ◆ Finally, Convention increased the per capita dues rate by \$0.15 per member per month beginning March, 2007; \$0.25 per member per month beginning March, 2008; and USD\$0.15 per member per month beginning March, 2009.

In what many considered the highlight of the week, the Society led two hundred delegates and union staff in a march to Toronto's King Edward Hotel in support of union leader Filomena Canedo, of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 75. Sister Canedo, a HERE steward and member of the union's negotiating team, was terminated unfairly by hotel management over an injury. Last summer, her coworkers and she supported Hydro One strikers by participating in a Society protest at the Toronto Board of Trade, where Hydro One CEO Tom Parkinson had been scheduled to speak.



Photo: David Smiley

New IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer Paul Shearon, of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, IFPTE Local 2001.

Shearon new IFPTE Sec'y-Treasurer Junemann continues as President

Seattleite **Paul Shearon** is the new Secretary-Treasurer of the IFPTE.

He replaces New Jersey's **Dolores Gorzyca**, whose term was up at last week's convention. For personal reasons, she chose not to run for re-election, and plans to return to a staff position at her IFPTE Local.

Shearon is an organizer with the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), engineers who work for Boeing Company in several U.S. states. He was nominated for the position by Society President **Andrew Müller**. In his nominating speech, Müller called attention to the assistance the Society received from Brother Shearon leading up to and during the Hydro One strike of 2005. "He visited us several times, volunteering his help in organizing our communications networks and picketing systems," Müller said. "He was an invaluable friend to our Hydro One local."

Milwaukee's **Gregory Junemann** continues as IFPTE President, having been acclaimed to the position.

Hydro One management well "beyond the pale"

Hydro One management is wasting time, resources, and ratepayers' money attacking its Society-represented employees, say Hydro One Local leaders.

In a communiqué to its members, the Hydro One Local says Hydro One management clearly has its eyes on 2008, the next opportunity the company will have to bargain a renewal agreement, and force the Local out on strike. "Led by Company President and CEO Tom Parkinson, [Management continue] to pursue a highly adversarial and aggressive policy towards the Society and its members in an attempt to undermine our support..."

The Local points to the current grievance load at Hydro One—over 120 filed since the end of last summer's strike, as compared to 10-15 per year on average before—as an indication that managers are ignoring the collective agree-

ment. Grievances are also not being settled—the number of grievances scheduled for arbitration is very high, and continuing to mount. The only thing standing in the way of more being scheduled, says the Local, is Hydro One’s refusal to agree to arbitrators suggested by the Society.

Hydro One has implemented the following measures since last September:

- ◆ More than 200 positions have been removed from Society jurisdiction, most of which had been in the bargaining unit for many years
- ◆ Flexibility provisions for hours of work have been abolished solely for Society-represented employees, not for PWU or management staff
- ◆ For the most part, overtime has been banned for Society-represented employees, at a time when there has been a substantial increase in Hydro One’s work programs, and PWU and Management staff are working extensive overtime hours
- ◆ Many Society-represented employees have been removed from their supervisory roles
- ◆ Many highly-skilled, experienced Society-represented employees have been removed from their pre-strike jobs, banished to lower level jobs in which their skills are underutilized
- ◆ Much Society-level work has been contracted out

The Local notes that Hydro One is attacking its most qualified, skilled employees at a time when all knowledge-

able industry representatives have noted that a major demographic crisis looms. In the near future, the industry will have to bend over backwards to attract employees. Instead, says the Local, Society-represented employees are leaving for companies

where their skills are appreciated, and Hydro One can’t get PWU-represented employees to step up to Society positions—they can see for themselves what’s up.

All this is occurring as Hydro One’s work programs are on the increase. The need for upgrades to the transmission grid is great, and other employees are working vast amounts of overtime.

Many members of the Hydro One Local are contacting their MPPs to advocate that they take action against what they view as a profligate waste of public money and resources in a time of great need. Local leaders are encouraging them to do so, adding, “If allowed to continue, this culture of aggressively oppressing Society members will critically undermine the long term reliability of the electricity transmission and distribution systems.”

Waterloo study: Coal, natural gas, not much difference

The adverse effects of coal-fired electricity generation on Ontario air quality are minimal, says a study undertaken by researchers at the University of Waterloo.

Using “accurate regional chemical transport modelling,” the researchers conclude that with no emission controls at all Ontario Power Generation’s coal-fired generators contribute about three to four per cent of SO₂ and one to two per cent of total NOx emissions in Ontario airsheds. (This is lower than Ontario government estimates of ten to 12 per cent for SO₂ and six to seven per cent for NOx.)

Levels of pollutants are higher closer to the plants, rising to ten and eight per cent within 20 km of Nanticoke.

Using currently available emissions controls, they say, emissions could be reduced to levels where they “could not be distinguished from the regional background at distances of more than a few kilometers from the source.” That is, their levels would be “undetectable” in Ontario totals.

The study was completed by six researchers associated with the Waterloo Centre for Atmospheric Sciences of the

... Hydro One is attacking its most qualified, skilled employees ... at a time when ... a major demographic crisis looms.

Department of Chemistry at the University of Waterloo. It was conducted, they say, in the context of “a long public debate about the contribution to ... pollution of the four coal-burning power plants owned by Ontario Power Generation. Quantification of their emissions, and comparing them to those of similar stations burning natural gas, they say, provides “a context for the costs” of the alternatives under consideration.

Replacing the coal-fired plants with natural gas-fired ones, they say, would only reduce pollutants to further undetectable levels. They don’t say so, but we presume they mean “at a pretty great cost.”

Bajwa wins Unit 5 election

Incumbent Unit Director **Bhupinder Bajwa** has been re-elected in Darlington NGS’s Unit 5.

Bajwa defeated challenger **Darek Kulczynski** in balloting that was re-run on order of the Society’s Executive Board. The Board was dealing with allegations that the first run of balloting had been conducted in a fashion that left the ballots insecure. In order to protect the rights of both candidates, balloting was re-run under the supervision of Executive Vice President Rod Sheppard, with delegate Charles Massey serving as deputy returning officer.

Bajwa received 144 votes to Kulczynski’s 89.

Bruce Power joins Hydrogen Association

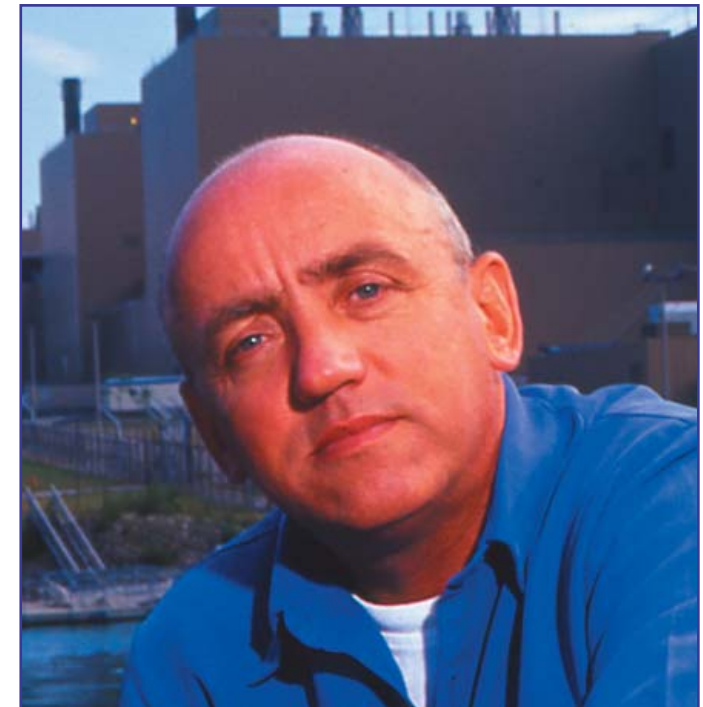
Bruce Power has joined the Canadian Hydrogen Association as a “sustaining member.”

As part of the deal, Bruce Power CEO Duncan Hawthorne will join the Association’s Board of Directors.

In announcing the development on Tuesday, Hawthorne said:

I see this as an opportunity to help ensure Canada will be a leader when, in the future, the only emissions vehicles produce are a few drops of water. To do this, we need to ensure that long-term strategies to increase generation of clean electricity are aligned with strategies to produce clean hydrogen.

While the move toward the use of hydrogen in producing squeaky-clean power is much anticipated, the source of the vast amounts of hydrogen that will be needed has been unclear. Bruce Power is betting, no doubt wisely, that nuclear reactors will be an important source. Hawthorne noted that hydrogen could be produced using electricity from nuclear plants during off-peak hours. He estimated that once Bruce A Units 1 and 2 are re-started Bruce Power alone could produce enough hydrogen to fuel more than half of the vehicles in Ontario, if they were powered by hydrogen.



Duncan Hawthorne, President and CEO, Bruce Power

Photo: Bruce Power

In this scenario, everyone would be a winner. Bruce Power (and other nuclear generators) could keep running when electricity generation is not needed, switching to the production of hydrogen, and profiting from doing so. Ontarians, meanwhile, will have a source of hydrogen that does not depend on natural gas, with its emissions and price-volatility problems.

Indeed, the ability to produce hydrogen would also mean nuclear generators could become involved in generating “peaking” power. Currently, they cannot do so because they’d have to shut down in non-peak hours, which nuclear generators cannot easily do. If they can be switched to something else, that limitation is resolved.

Society President **Andrew Müller** welcomed the announcement. “Duncan Hawthorne and Bruce Power have shown not only that they can be visionary, but that there’s a lot more we can accomplish with nuclear power.”

Bruce Power and Manitoba Hydro are the only two electricity generating companies that have joined the Hydrogen Association.

(Disclosure note: The Society of Energy Professionals is an investor in Bruce Power, and maintains a close interest in its success.

The Society: membership rewards

Among the priorities on the plate of Society Executive Vice President for Membership **Rod Sheppard** and his staff resources is the Society’s “affinity” deals—discounts offered to Society-represented employees when they join the Society.

Among the programs are:

- ◆ **Canada’s Wonderland:** Society members are entitled to the corporate discount on tickets. Visit the web-site, click on “tickets,” and enter the Society’s “company ID,” available from your delegate

- ◆ **Canadian Automobile Association:** Society members are eligible for group membership, more than \$20 off the regular membership price, including free gifts for new primary memberships. Call 1-800-341-2226 to join.
- ◆ **Great Canadian Hotels:** Society members are eligible for the “rates program” at 30 hotels owned or managed by CHIP hospitality. Visit the web-site for details, or call 1-888-422-6232.
- ◆ **Great cell-phone deals:** Through an arrangement with independent broker Mike Case (905-831-2575, business, or 416-884-2121, cell), fabulous deals are offered to Society members. Mike works with Bell and Rogers plans. (The deals available will change from time to time. Call Mike for current pricing.)
- ◆ **Moore’s Clothing for Men VIP card:** All Society members have been issued this card, which gives the bearer a ten per cent discount on Moore’s clothing. An additional benefit: you can get union-made clothes at Moore’s; check for the “made in Canada” or union label
- ◆ **Homeservice Club:** Society membership includes membership in the Homeservice Club, a savings of \$48—the regular membership price. Unfortunately, the Club only operates in the Toronto-Hamilton area. The Club provides for its members access to discounted, guaranteed home repairs and other discounts. Membership can be activated through an online form, or by calling (416) 925-1111.
- ◆ **The Personal (Insurance):** Society members are eligible for discount auto and home insurance rates through the Personal. Call 1-888 476-8737 for a quote. Those who call for a quote before December 31st, 2006 are automatically entered in a contest to win \$1,000 per week for a year, tax free.
- ◆ **Wild Water Kingdom:** Society members are eligible for the corporate discount (\$7.00 plus for an adult day pass) through the WWK web-site. Obtain the coupon code from your delegate.
- ◆ **Ontario Place:** Society members are eligible for special deals and group sales through the Ontario

Place web-site. Obtain the username and password from your delegate. Current attractions include the Chinese Lantern Festival.

- ◆ **Marineland, African Lion Safari:** Discount coupons are available from your delegate.
- ◆ **Canadian National Exhibition (CNE):** Society members receive special group rates through the CNE web-site. The access code will be available from your delegate as of Monday, July 27th. Until September 4th, online ticket customers will also receive a coupon good for a 15 per cent discount on purchases of \$20 or more at CNE gift shops.

The URLs for the web-sites mentioned above are embedded in the text.

Because the *Newscast* is available to the public, access codes and user info could not be included in this article. See your delegate if you need further information.

American unions protest loss of representation rights

More than 1,000 union members blockaded the offices of the U.S. National Labor Relations Board last Wednesday, in a protest against decisions expected in the near future that will erode workers' rights to join unions.

Packing the sidewalks outside NLRB headquarters and spilling into the streets for more than two hours, workers such as nurse Herman Brown said they were sending a message to the NLRB. "I'm concerned about what's happening in this country," Brown said. "The Bush administration wants to take away our right to organize. We've had enough."

The NLRB is expected to rule before the end of summer in three cases referred to as the "Kentucky River" cases. They center on the test for whether an employee is a "supervisor," and therefore not eligible to join a union. The Board is apparently considering whether nurses are

"supervisors," because they have some responsibilities for directing the work of others, for instance, Practical Nurses. According to the NLRB, the test is whether the employee involved exercises "independent judgement."

The nurses involved apparently have no power to hire or fire, don't set schedules, and can't mete out discipline. If the NLRB rules as expected, they would be considered "management" anyway.

AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff estimates 300,000 nurses could be affected by the rulings, and up to 1.5 million other workers. "Team leaders and gang leaders in ports, lead men in mines, lead men in docks at manufacturing facilities and warehouses, engineers, people who oversee apprentices in trades ... almost every senior worker does this to some extent."



Union members rally at the headquarters of the United Steelworkers of America in Pittsburgh on July 12th. They are worried that the National Labor Relations Board of the U.S. will rule against their right to be members of a union.

Photo: AP, Keith Srakotic

Acuff also says the NLRB has deferred judgement on over 120 other cases involving union “elections” (the equivalent to Ontario’s “certification votes”), in the expectation that many will turn out to have been ineligible to vote.

The NLRB says it is constrained by rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court, which has overturned previous NLRB rulings for not giving enough weight to the “independent judgement” criterion, and mis-defining it.

U.S. labour leaders complain that both the Supreme Court and the NLRB are irretrievably stacked with the appointees of one George W. Bush, not known to be a friend of labour.

The AFL-CIO scheduled protests across the U.S. during the week of July 11th, and thousands marched in more than 21 U.S. cities.

Earlier this week, Comedy Central’s Stephen Coulter did a satirical report on the situation. On their web-site, look for “Solidarity.”

Tabuns: Toronto Hydro great, Liberal government not

On June 21st, while MPPs debated the merits of a \$60 electricity rebate to low-income Ontarians, NDP MPP

Peter Tabuns was busy lambasting the Liberal government for raising hydro rates and favouring nuclear power. As an aside, however, he praised Toronto Hydro’s efforts to reduce electricity demand, saying:

Toronto Hydro has been able to put in place a program that is reducing the demand for electricity in Toronto by 250 megawatts at \$40 million. I would say that \$40 million to reduce the demand in this city by 250 megawatts is far more cost-effective than anything that this province has put forward; anything.

... Toronto Hydro [is] able to start up standby generators in office buildings and hospitals around Toronto to offset demand for peak power... We’re talking about practical measures that can be taken today to cut the cost of electricity.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Tabuns gave no credit to the government for the programs that have been set up to encourage municipal electrical utilities to engage in such efforts.

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