

News from the Society of Energy Professionals

Board strikes anti- offshoring team



Executive VP Bill Jones and Inergi Local VP Elaina De Luca (see lead article) on Labour Day. The banners on the truck trailer were provided by The Personal, a home and auto insurance provider with whom the Society partners for member benefits.

An anti-offshoring task team will spearhead the Society's effort to keep Society work in Canada.

"Our employer has already moved 20 per cent of our work to India," said Inergi Local VP **Elaina De Luca**. "The same threat is facing other locals, and we need to get our message to the new Minister of Energy."

Ms. De Luca's employer, Inergi, is owned by Capgemini, as is New Horizon System Solutions. Each consists of IT and other services spun off from Hydro One and OPG, respectively. Vertex Outsourcing, Inc. is a customer-care spin-off from Hydro One, and is also under the offshoring microscope. While they have sole-source client agreements with the companies from which their employees were spun off, those agreements are up for re-negotiation beginning in 2010. It is expected that they will be opened to competition.

"Offshore labour markets are hot right now," said President **Rod Sheppard**, "but it's not inevitable that our work has to go there. Our members provide a highly professional product; shipping their work to the lowest bidder is just accepting mediocrity as a business practice."

The team consists of Society President (pro-tem) Sheppard, and Local VPs De Luca, **Tracy Miller** (Vertex), **Joseph Sarick** (New Horizon), **Lanny Totton** (OPG), and **Keith Rattai** (Hydro One).

During the recent provincial election, De Luca and Society staff ran an e-mail campaign utilizing the Society web-site to bring the offshoring issue to the attention of candidates for the legislature. "It helped us a lot," De Luca said. "We got a fair amount of attention, especially given how busy all the candidates were. We'll be trying to build on that with the new government."

The Executive Board agreed that the work of the Team would be seen as an "integral part of Society campaigning on electricity-industry issues."

The Team will present a strategic plan to the January meeting of the Executive Board.

Council passes policy flurry

While much of Society Council's time on October 29th was taken [REDACTED] [REDACTED] representatives also spent some time considering a number of policies. The policies had been formulated under the direction of Executive VP **Leslie Forge**, and had been recommended to Council by the Executive Board.

Strategic Planning Policy and Procedure: Council adopted a policy and procedure for strategic planning designed to ensure that Society plans and programs are "purposeful and deliberate," and based on "continuous analysis of the external and internal environment." In each fiscal year (FY), the Executive Board will commence planning for the next FY in September, developing a "strategic planning framework" for Council, and in October Council will identify priority objectives. When the next FY begins, the strategic plan will be ready for implementation.

Human Rights and Harassment Policies and Procedures: The Society began work mid-2006 on a comprehensive human rights and harassment policy. Work arose out a number of intra-local, member-to-member harassment complaints with which the Society found itself ill-equipped to deal. The project was spearheaded by Society Staff Officers **Lynda Crichton** and **Matthew Kellway**, with legal assistance from counsel Victoria Reaume (of Cavaluzzo Hayes Shilton McIntyre & Cornish). It resulted in a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to deal with the Society's responsibilities as trade union with members to represent, and as an employer whose employees have the right to a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. The elements are:

- ◆ General complaints policy and procedure (accompanied by Constitutional changes, adds to and revises current Constitution Article 24: Compliance and Discipline)

- ◆ Internal harassment policy and procedure (staff-to-member interactions)
- ◆ Member-to-member harassment in the employer's workplace policy and procedure

These human rights policies will be given full effect if the required changes to the Constitution are approved in a membership referendum being prepared at time of writing.

Code of Conduct/Ethics: Council considered a draft code of conduct for Society officials, members, and staff. It includes a section on conflicts of interest [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and expected behaviour and processes to deal with them. It was approved in principle subject to two caveats: consultation with the Society Staff Union, and a legal opinion on the sections dealing with conflicts.

Editorial Policy: Though the Society's Editorial Board has been following an editorial policy since 2002, it has never been considered for approval by Council. The Executive Board submitted it—along with some recent revisions—to Council for final approval. It covers Society publications, including *Newscasts* and the Society web-site. It sets out the goal that Society publications will be newsworthy and timely, and the duty of the Editorial Board "to report on events and situations that may have an effect—positive or negative—on the fortunes of the Society and/or its members."

These policies can all be found on the Society's web-site. Viewing them is restricted to Society members and pensioners with web-site accounts.

Constitutional Interpretation Committee (CIC): The CIC is a body appointed by Council to "arbitrate any disagreements arising out of interpretation of the Constitution." As all members of the FY2007-8 CIC had had to leave for one reason or another, Council made new appointments. Serving will be **Jim Bristow** (OPG, who has served since earlier this year in an interim position), **Ali Aghvami** (OPG), **Ken Martin** (Bruce Power), **Vincent Tume** (SPEA), and **Trevor Gibbs** (OPG).

Council thanked outgoing CIC members **Lynn Andrews** (Hydro One) and **Shirley Hayes** (Bruce Power) for their service.

Board Highlights: October-November, 2007

The Society's Executive Board met on Tuesday, October 2nd; Wednesday, October 24th; Thursday, October 25th; Sunday, October 28th, and Tuesday, November 6th.

[REDACTED]

IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer **Paul Shearon** visited the Executive Board on both October 25th and November 6th, and IFPTE President **Gregory Junemann** visited on the 6th. They congratulated the Society for steering through a very tough time, and expressed their desire that all differences could be reconciled.

Recognition: The Board recognized:

- ◆ Society Communications Officer **Brian Robinson** for his quick work in getting the web-site's campaign module up and running. As the recent provincial election was underway, the Society ran a campaign opposing the off-shoring of work performed by members of the Inergi, New Horizon, and Vertex locals.
- ◆ All members and others who attended the rally and barbeque hosted by the Inergi Local on September 18th (see the Society's web-site galleries for photos of the event), and their support for the Inergi Local's anti-offshoring campaign.
- ◆ President (pro-tem) **Rod Sheppard** for stepping up and filling the position of President as the Society prepares for an election for the position

- ◆ **Rob Stanley** and **Bob Wells** (both of Bruce Power) for help supporting New Horizon members with project work at Bruce Power
- ◆ **Cheri Funston**, who has been serving as the Board Secretary, for the improvements she has made to the functioning of the Board
- ◆ The Society's administrative staff—**Cheri Funston, Elena Medina, Laura Langmaid, Irene McDines,** and **Lisa Van Camp**—for their contribution to the smooth running of Society Council
- ◆ All Council representatives who participated in Council on October 29th, for dealing with a very difficult topic courageously and respectfully

Business arising from Council: The Principal Officers and Staff Manager **Dan Kellar** reported on the transition activities undertaken since [REDACTED]. Notice of the change had been sent to Society contacts and stakeholders. An anti-nepotism policy had been drafted, and would be presented to the Executive Board at the earliest opportunity.

[REDACTED]

The Board passed a motion recognizing the "urgent need to support all locals, in particular smaller locals under siege, IFPTE, the OEB, and the Society's currently approved work programs as a sign of solidarity moving into the future."

After some debate, the question of the requirements and strategy around calling an election for President was assigned to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee was directed to bring a plan to the December Board meeting. In addition to the anti-nepotism policy, a number of other election-related policies are being prepared.

One of the first requirements is to recruit and appoint a Chief Returning Officer to conduct the election. The office is currently open.



photo: John Peever

On November 10th, the Bruce Power Local presented cheques for \$5,000 each to Saugeen Shores Minor Hockey and the Saugeen Shores Winterhawks, a senior AA team in the league. On the left, Bruce Power unit director Ken Martin presents a cheque to Grant Lamont, GM of the Winterhawks, who's taking it. To Martin's right are (l to r) Bruce Power UDs Bob Wells and Ray Lavallee, and Bruce Power Local VP Rob Stanley. They are joined by some kids who felt they needed to be in the photo.

Executive Committee: Due to elections at the SPEA Local, Executive Committee member **Paul Hnatiuk** was no longer the SPEA president (the SPEA equivalent to a Society Local VP). As the Constitution requires that the position in question be filled by a Local VP, the Board determined that an election was necessary. **Tracy Miller**, Vertex Local VP, was elected.

Financial: Executive VP **Bill Jones** reported that changes had had to be made to the plan for the renovation of the Society office at the AECL complex in Mississauga. The Executive Board authorized a further \$20,000 for the project, bringing the total to \$120,000.

Audit Committee: **Ken Martin** (Bruce Power) and **Muhammad Qureshi** (OPG) have volunteered to serve on

the Audit Committee, pending the coming into effect of the changes to the Constitution required to implement a new audit committee, as set out in the Society's Audit Action Plan (AAP). In the meantime, the Committee still requires two Board members to serve. **Michael Ivanco** (SPEA) and **Bob Wells** (Bruce Power) volunteered to do so, and were appointed.

Finance Committee: **Bill Jones**, Vice President Finance, has received no new nominations of members to serve on the Finance Committee, so he noted that Society Council would need to appoint some. (The AAP calls for at least two members of the Finance Committee to be non-Board members.) Board members **Joe Fierro** (OPG), **Rob Stanley** (Bruce Power), and **John Cameron** (Hydro One) are currently serving.

Outreach: The Board authorized the attendance of two Society officials at a policy conference of the Winnipeg Labour Council. President Sheppard explained that it was a good opportunity to support the movement and meet with some potential Society members.

An international symposium of engineering students will take place in Edmonton early next year. The Board authorized up to two Society-represented engineers to be sponsored to attend, as a good way to make contact with future engineers. The Society's organizing policy includes a strategy of reaching out to colleges and universities.

Election Investigation: Subsequent to last Fall's election of principal officers, six candidates submitted an official complaint about what they alleged were "irregularities" in some of the winning campaigns. The Board appointed a sub-team to investigate the complaints and make recommendations if appropriate. Serving will be: **Joe Fierro** (OPG), **Dennis Minello** (OPG), **Joe Sarick** (New Horizon), and **Brian Robinson** (SSU representative).

Training: Grievance training for delegates were to take place November 17th to 19th. Training of the OEB Local's bargaining team was to take place on November 23rd.

New Minister: President Sheppard will invite the Hon. Gerry Phillips, the new Minister of Energy, to address the

Executive Board in the near future.

TEAM members reject "last offer"

MTS's "last offer" is no offer worth accepting, say members of the Telecommunications Employees Association of Manitoba (TEAM, IFPTE Local 161).

An "unprecedented" turnout of 85 per cent of TEAM members voted in a "clear majority" to reject the offer. This gives the Bargaining Committee "a mandate to return to the bargaining table," TEAM said in a communiqué to its members.

"Member involvement in our Canadian locals is tremendous," said IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer **Paul Shearon**. "This sends a loud and clear message to management."

Bargaining with TEAM was interrupted on September 19th, when management tabled a "final offer." Key to rejection was their wage offer (two percent per year in each of three years, with increases delayed from February to May in each of the last two years) and the phasing out of MTS's defined benefit pension plan in favour of defined contributions.

MTS plans to introduce the defined contribution plan by implementing a "two-tier" system: all new employees would be put on defined contribution. The company plans to force the new system on the three unions that represent employees at the company. Officials of the local International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 435 and Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers' Union, Local 7 joined TEAM President Misty Hughes-Newman in September in a joint letter expressing their opposition.

There was little to attract TEAM members to vote in favour. TEAM noted that there was nothing on health benefits, nothing to limit MTS's sole discretion in lay-offs, and nothing to limit MTS's use of contractors.

The vote to reject the MTS offer was conducted over three weeks, and included nine information sessions and seven voting sessions in Winnipeg and Brandon. Members

in other regions voted by mail. Then-Executive VP **Rod Sheppard** and Society Staff Officer **Richard Long**—who were in Manitoba attending a meeting of the Canadian Council of Professionals—attended the vote at Brandon.

TEAM says they have no intention of holding a strike vote, and also says MTS has said they have no plans to lock TEAM out.

The three MTS unions and MTS retirees have filed a \$100 million lawsuit against the Company, alleging their pension fund's surplus was misused. Their right to participate in pension fund governance was removed when the Manitoba government (under Conservative Gary Filmon) privatized the company in 1996.

More information on TEAM can be found at <http://www.mfl.mb.ca/team-mts.shtml>, <http://teamunion.mb.ca/>, and <http://www.mtsallstreamwatch.info/>.

Toronto Hydro Local settles new contract

The Society's Toronto Hydro Local has entered into a new agreement.

"We got pretty much everything we were looking for," said Local VP **Geetha Daniell**. "It's a good deal, with some stability built in."

The settlement will be in effect for 4.5 years. It provides for a 1.75 per cent increase for 2007, retroactive to January 1st, a 2.5 per cent increase for 2008, and increases of 2.75 per cent per year in 2009-2011. The performance bonus was increased to eight per cent, from six, effective 2008.

A cost-of-living-allowance goes into operation in 2009. Wages will be adjusted upward one per cent for each full percentage point by which inflation exceeds the 2.75 per cent wage increases.

Improvements to benefits include an increase in the allowance for annual fitness club membership to \$750 (from \$350), and a \$200.00 annual personal health spending

account for each employee. The services of registered massage therapists, psychologists, naturopaths, speech therapists and dieticians can now be "bundled" into an \$850 per year overall allowance. Previously, each type of therapy was covered individually by a \$300 limit.

Bargaining began in June, and settlement was reached on August 9th. It was ratified in a secret ballot on August 16th.

The Toronto Hydro Local's bargaining team consisted of Daniell, **Ben Sheng**, and Society Staff Officer **Terry Fitzpatrick**.

SPEA Elections

The Society of Professional Engineers and Associates has a new Executive Committee.

President: Peter White

Vice President: Michael Ivanco

Secretary: Gordon Brown

Treasurer: Paul Hnatiuk

Membership Chair: Val Aleyaseen

Members at Large:

Sheridan Park, Mississauga: Abdul Tahir, Vincent Tume, Marius Vartolomei, Laszlo Zsidai, Yannick Trottier, Enrique Vivas, Asmae Elalami, Melanie Sachar, and Brian Smith

Montreal: Noémie Duvivier

Bruce Power: Cole Stark

Saint John, N.B.: Michael Briggs

All were acclaimed to their positions.

The election took place as SPEA undertakes a transition between its old Constitution and its recently adopted bylaws. The SPEA bylaws bring the Local into conformity with the Constitution of the Society of Energy Professionals. The current Executive Committee will serve until March, 2009. At that point, the SPEA Local's elections will line up with the rest of the Society.

SPEA represents the engineers and scientists at Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd., with members in Mississauga;

Montreal; Bruce Power; St. John, NB; Romania; and China.

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