

The Canadian Champion

138
SERVING MILTON FOR
YEARS

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Be our guest

Organizer Carol Brooks (left) and historic homeowner Tosca Corradetti eagerly await this Saturday's United Way Christmas House Tour. Tickets are available through several downtown businesses including A Country Mile, Feminine Way and Royal LePage.

Hospital support staff may stage illegal strike

By KAREN SMITH

The Champion

Unionized support staff at Milton District Hospital — among 50,000 such employees province-wide — may conduct an illegal strike.

The hospital cleaners, lab technicians and various support staff — members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local 1065 — will take strike votes over the next two weeks.

"I don't think anything can happen until the end of November," said CUPE spokesperson Robert Lamoureux.

Contract talks between the union and the

Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) — the bargaining agent for the province's hospitals — broke off late last month and were headed to arbitration.

The OHA has offered workers a five-year deal with no raises for the first two years and a one per cent increase in each of the last three years.

Hospitals also want contract language allowing greater flexibility to contract out some of the work done by unionized workers.

"We put what we thought was a fair and reasonable offer on the table," said OHA spokesperson Stephen Orsini.

He said hospitals have contingency plans in place in case of a strike, but he has "faith that employees will put patients' needs first."

Hospital workers lost the right to strike in the 1960s when they were declared essential employees, but staged a brief, illegal walkout in 1981.

No talks between the two sides have been scheduled.

At Farm Museum

Former staff face fraud charges

Two former employees of the Ontario Agricultural Museum face conspiracy, theft, fraud and breach of trust charges following a lengthy OPP investigation.

Inspector Dennis Herdman of the OPP's anti-rackets section said an anonymous letter was sent to the then deputy minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs complaining of a possible misuse of public assets at the museum totalling \$30,000.

In September, 1996, information was received that was similar to the complaints contained in the anonymous letter, he said.

The OPP investigation began in October, 1996. The previously provincial government-operated Tremaine Road museum, now operated by a group of citizens and renamed the Farm Museum, closed that year.

A 47-year-old Guelph man, a former museum construction manager, is charged with fraud over \$5,000, theft over \$5,000, conspiracy to defraud the Ontario government, nine counts of breach of trust, and five each of fraud over \$5,000 and theft under \$5,000.

A 67-year-old Syer Drive man, who retired from the museum as its financial manager in 1996, faces a charge of conspiracy to defraud the government of Ontario.

The charges surround the theft of money and property from the museum, Insp. Herdman said.

The men will appear in court Nov. 30.

NEWSLINES

Drivers needed

The local Canadian Red Cross Society chapter is in need of volunteer drivers.

Due to their expanded service, which now includes all of north Halton, the agency finds itself with a significant shortage of drivers in all three coverage areas.

Drivers are reimbursed for their mileage expenses.

To volunteer or for more information, call Ann of the Red Cross at 878-6323.

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In The
Big Red
Box?

Come help Mrs. Claus
open the box on
Saturday, November 14th at
10:00 am