



Spring's early arrival doesn't upset these fellas a bit

While many are residents basked in the mild Spring-like weather last weekend, this group of youngsters were trying hard to hold on to Old Man Winter. (From left to right) Robin Cameron, Ryan Cameron, Chris Ealey, Raymond Buttineau and Roy Buttineau of Penetang were cramming in a few last games of road hockey on Sunday before those Spring showers bring on the May flowers.

Union wants job stress recognized

by MURRAY MOORE

Attendants employed in Oak Ridge should be retired automatically after 25 years of work in the maximum security psychiatric hospital, with a pension, the elected leader of the 220 members of OPSEU Local 307, Garry Lenehan, says.

Lenehan recently received his copy of a \$22,000 study prepared for the Ontario Provincial Service Employees Union (OPSEU). The study was prepared by U.S. Columbia University School of Public Health staff.

OPSEU will use the study as ammunition in argument with the Ministry of Health for official recognition that Oak Ridge attendants, and other OPSEU members in Ontario, suffer unusual stress, and become burned out, because of the nature of their jobs.

Lenehan compares the psychiatric patient attendants' situation to the situation of asbestos workers who couldn't get government to agree that their health problems were job-related.

The asbestos workers gained the recognition they wanted, after commissioning a health study, Lenehan said. OPSEU has hopes for the same result.

Lenehan says, in his case, he won't be able to retire until the year 2014, or after 41 years. He isn't quite half way, having working 16 years.

Society worries and makes an effort about long term serving prisoners becoming institutionalized. Societies exist to help released convicts, and mental patients. "Where is the help for their guardians?" Lenehan asks.

Oak Ridge attendants work under the stress of being charged any day by a patient, being suspended, and perhaps losing their job, he said.

Last December six Local 327 members were suspended for 21 days, through Christmas and New Year's Day, with pay, while the Ontario Provincial Police investigated charges against them.

Lenehan called the accusations against the

six attendants questionable. The six men were not charged and never officially learned of what they were accused. After the OPP investigation concluded, they returned to their jobs.

Although stress is a greater than normal problem for Local 327 members, the maximum number of sick days allowed in a year is six days, Lenehan said. But if an attendant takes too much sick time, he is in danger of losing his job.

According to Lenehan, most of the Oak Ridge patients feel that they are the victims, although some of them are placed in Oak Ridge because of violent actions. "They play games to get back at the system."

In previous interviews Lenehan said that Oak Ridge patients will make trouble, in the hope of trying the patience of the staff and administration, to the extent that they are transferred, or released.

Lenehan compared working in Oak Ridge to working under a magnifying glass.

The Columbia University study concludes that working conditions in provincial in-

stitutions are a likely cause of burnout among "direct care providers," OPSEU says. The study covered OPSEU members working in Oak Ridge, the Syl Apps Juveniles Detention Centre, the Don Jail and Niagara Detention Centre, the North Bay Psychiatric Hospital, and the Huronia Regional Centre.

Lenehan is waiting for a breakdown of the results for Oak Ridge.

In the university study's introduction, the study's authors say, "The data presented here clearly shows that there are job-related health problems among members of the Ontario Provincial Service Employees Union, particularly those involved in the direct care of institutionalized patients and inmates."

OPSEU wants the provincial government to "reduce hazards on the job, increase staff levels, and raise wages so the facilities can keep experienced staff."

They could be out on the picket line

Psychiatric doctors from Ontario's 10 mental health hospitals, including the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre, are to vote today on whether or not to take strike action.

The 200 doctors from across the province, are to meet this morning in Toronto to decide on their action.

If the doctors, who are disgruntled over the Ontario governments refusal of binding arbitration in the contract dispute, vote in favour of the strike,

they are reportedly going to set a day to start the walk out.

Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre doctors are among the four main institutions in the battle, along with doctors from Whitby, Hamilton and Toronto.

As of presstime yesterday, Dr. Robert Call of the MHC was unavailable for comment.

The 22 doctors at the MHC have been participating in "study sessions" to show the government their dissatisfaction

Insurance snag casts problem on Hunt

The fourth annual Great Rotary Club Fish Hunt has come up against a snag this year.

As in years gone by, the Penetanguishene Club will not be handing out the four grand prizes of \$25,000 each because the organization can not get anyone to insure the hunt, according to Rotary member Larry Bellisle.

This year the club has hooked up with the Labatt / Budweiser National Fish Tournament, with the overall winner of the local fish hunt making their way to the Labatt's Draw Championship being held in Owen Sound in October.

Anglers in the 32-day hunt will have better odds of winning a prize

with every fish being weighed in, making the participant eligible for a daily prize.

Bellisle said the grand prizes will be awarded twice with the contest taking place in two draws.

The first half of the hunt will run from June 28 to July 15 with the sportsman catching the largest bass pocketing \$1,500 cash, \$1,000 for

the heaviest pike, and \$500 for the perch that tips the scales the most.

The same three prizes will be given to the winners of the second heap that will run from July 16 through to the closing of the contest on Aug. 2.

Between \$16,000 and \$18,000 worth of cash and prizes will be awarded to the anglers in the hunt.

According to Bellisle, \$8,000 from the club, usually paid out for an insurance premium on the tagged fish, and the prizes from Labatt's and Budweiser will make the chances of winning for each angler much greater.

The daily draw winner will win prizes with a retail value between \$75 and \$100 says Bellisle.