

NEWS

By Jamie McGuigan
Reporter

Veteran's Affairs Canada Joins Striking PSAC Workers

2004 continues to be the year of the strike. Aliant, NHL, Iraq and thousands of Public Sector Alliance of Canada employees have been among those to set up picket lines this year. And as of Tuesday, Veteran's Affairs Canada (VAC) joined the 125,000 of public sector workers already striking across Canada. This effect is felt no harder than here in Charlottetown, which is home to VAC's Head Office and approximately 1,200 employees.

The conflict revolves around an increase in wages. The union wants 9%, while the government is set to offer 6%. The union felt the best way to reach a prompt and proper resolution of

the stand-off was a walk out. So, Tuesday morning, hundreds of VAC employees lined Kent St. and Queen St. with picket signs and began what will hopefully be a short strike. Non-Union workers - including students - attempting to cross the line, were admitted into the building one at a time, every 5 minutes.

The resolve on the picket line is strong. Having experienced crossing into the job site first hand, I can say that all the strikers are unified towards their end goal. Most are hoping for a quick resolution but are prepared for the worst, and are ready to do whatever it takes to see themselves back on the job. That being said, union heads

refused to comment on the progress of negotiations.

Right now a quick resolution may not be in sight. Things looked optimistic for a quick end when at 2 am Friday morning a tentative deal was struck to get the workers back on the job. However, the government's final offers appears as though it is about to be rejected. This could send worker's out on the line once again. A long term VAC strike does not benefit anyone, especially not all the clients across the country and around the world. Hopefully a fair compromise is just around the corner.

By Matt Campbell
Reporter

Kerry slams Bush on Issues

Those of you who tuned into at least one of the three US Presidential debates had a chance to really see what both John Kerry and George W. Bush were all about. Both revealed their political platforms and personal views on several economic and fundamental issues. There was a clear window onto the candidates in which Americans could select the man for the job.

However, directly after the final American Presidential Debate, Peter Jennings of NBC had asked Rudy Giuliani on his feelings on the debate. Giuliani (formerly mayor of New York during 9/11) believed, perhaps wrongfully, that the two questions that won the debate were questions in which Bush appeared to show more compassion towards 1) his religion and 2) the women in his life, than his opponent Senator Kerry.

The question emanating from this comment is how can both journalists and voters virtually ignore important economic and international issues, while giving significant weight to witty responses to these absurd and arguably unimportant questions?

Early in the debate President Bush suggested that younger, healthier citizens opt not to get a flu shot this year so the state would have sufficient vaccines for the sick and elderly. How can voters settle for these political bombshells? The government should never let such a situation take place. Ironically, in efforts to resolve the shortage Bush suggested buying flu vaccines from Canada, after denying the right of Americans to purchase medications from the same country. Still, we see that some Americans are so superficial that they don't care about those issues, and



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would rather choose the confident candidate with broken promises over the relaxed liberal with innovative new ideas.

During the debate Kerry attacked Bush, claiming that he gave up on his search for Osama bin Laden. Kerry then drew reference to Bush, quoting him as saying "I'm not really concerned about him."

The President, on stage, denied the comment saying "I don't believe I was never worried about Osama, it's kind of one of those exaggerations..."

Immediately following the debate several networks forged the original clip where Bush spoke at a press conference in 2002 saying, "I dunno (sic) where he is, I I truly am not that concerned about him."

It's these kinds of inconsistencies voters are choosing to ignore. Why can't news networks focus on these issues. There seems to be this bubble that protecting the President even if he makes terrible decisions, while we see our Prime Ministers being chewed up and spit out by the end of their terms. Maybe Bush deserves a good chew or two before getting his chance for a second term.