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Tourists lament ferry service shutdown

By [DON PEAT](#), SUN MEDIA

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A quick ferry hop to Toronto Island was out of the question yesterday as the strike shut down the city's ferry service.

Tourists trying to get to the island were politely turned away from Toronto's ferry fleet, moored for the first day of the civic workers' strike.

That was bad news for British tourist Jill Kelsey-Smith and her husband who was hoping to hit the island yesterday as part of her four-week cross-Canada trip.

Instead, the Welwyn Garden City native got a crash course in the labour strife of Canada's largest city. In town since Saturday, she doubted she'd see a resolution to the strike by tomorrow when the couple leaves for Montreal.

"I was just saying to my husband I'm pleased we're leaving sooner rather than later," Kelsey-Smith said. "We were looking forward to a trip over there."

Water taxis in the harbour were doing brisk business, offering trips for \$10 each way. Although that was too rich for Kelsey-Smith's travel budget, many were forking out the cash to cross the water.

One taxi skipper said business had picked up a bit on the first day of the strike. If the weather stayed sunny, he expected a lot more business this weekend.

Vincenta Soare came from Woodbridge on her day off with her son, Christian, and relatives from Romania. She had bought a family pass for Centreville.

"We need to make it there," Soare said.

"The tourism will suffer because of this."

A message on the park's website explained Centreville couldn't function during a work stoppage.

"Without these workers, the city can't operate the ferries or maintain the park in a safe manner," officials stated. "This strike has put over 400 Centreville seasonal employees out of work."

"We hope that the city and the union will come to a swift conclusion."

Centreville will reopen the first full day workers are back on the job.

Island residents and students of the Island Public and Natural Science School were being transported by private boats.

DON.PEAT@SUNMEDIA.CA