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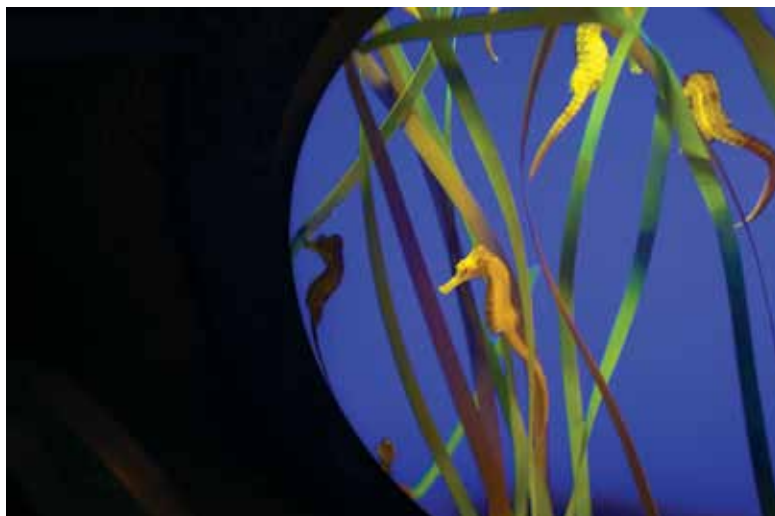


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EDUCATION FORUM 3





# Reflecting on “Gender-neutral washrooms”

I would like to congratulate Tracey Hughes and *Education Forum* on the article “Gender-neutral washrooms” in the Spring 2014 issue. As a teacher who benefits from gender-neutral washrooms in the school where I teach, I know the difference they make in my sense of dignity and belonging. As a transgender teacher I am grateful for the eloquent, sensitive and thoughtful case made by Tracey. I am glad to hear of the all-around support Tracey reports receiving from administrators and our union. But this “support” may also be described as



Rights Code—let’s be very clear about this! Access to bathrooms that are appropriate to the self-identified gender (or lack of gender) of students, staff and faculty is a right. The Ontario Human Rights Code recognizes gender identity, gender expression and sex as protected grounds. This is the law—it’s not optional. As public institutions in Ontario, all schools should be ready to support the rights of all students, staff and faculty including the right to access appropriate washrooms. Single-stall bathrooms should be a given in every school. Restricting anyone’s use of specific washrooms is never acceptable. If anyone else is uncomfortable with human rights, they are welcome to use the single stall bathrooms too.

Kael Sharman, Teacher

OSSTF/FEESO District 9, Greater Essex

## POETRY in VOICE lesVOIXde laPOÉSIE

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TORONTO RECITES “WAR” BY  
LEE MARACLE

Re: “Gender-neutral washrooms”

Coasting on emotional appeal and a selective reference to authority (of a York University professor), Tracey Hughes wants society to sacrifice the comfort of the majority for the comfort of a tiny minority while claiming that we all have a vested interest in guaranteeing such rights. This browbeating happens through the usual euphemisms of gender fluidity, equity and inclusion, propped up by the hyperboles of segregation and discrimination.

I agree with Hughes: a washroom is just a washroom, not a symbol of difference or discrimination. We don’t need to restructure all of society or cause great discomfort to most of its members to accommodate the fluid doubts of a few.

Mirek Lalas

District 16, York Region





# Freedom to read

## Protecting our students' access to books

I began my teaching career as an English teacher in the mid-'90s at Lakefield District Secondary School under the tutelage of a highly respected department head, Robert Buchanan. You may not recognize his name, but in 1976 he did something remarkable that brought television crews from across North America to the sleepy little town of Lakefield. He stood up for the rights of his students.

In February of that year, after much controversy over his teaching of the novel *The Diviners*, Buchanan was told the administration of the Peterborough County Board of Education had dropped the book from the list of approved texts, essentially banning the novel.

At the time Margaret Laurence, the author of the novel, lived in Lakefield. She was good friends with Buchanan and made herself available to his class and to the school. Her presence in the community gave literature a face, and many in the community supported and rallied around the cause.

Eventually, after much media attention, a text-book committee was struck and it decided unanimously that *The Diviners* was fit to teach in classrooms. After a raucous debate at the school board, trustees voted 10 to six in agreement with this decision.

But in 1985 the attacks came again, complaining *The Diviners* was “disgusting” and “morally degrading” and inappropriate for use in the classroom. Once again Robert Buchanan and Margaret Laurence faced the media and fought against the attempt of censorship. This second attack engaged Canadians across the country. A national debate on the banning of books was sparked,

with many writers and political pundits weighing in against censorship. The school board, knowing which way the wind was blowing, continued to support teaching *The Diviners* in the classroom.

Hearing these stories of Buchanan's defence of the novel proudly told to me by many of my senior colleagues instilled in me the responsibility to protect my students' right to read.

If I were teaching  
Grade 9 today,  
I'd be relieved to  
have a class set of  
such a touching  
and useful book.

Years later when I myself was the head of the English Department at another school, I was approached by my principal who offered me the funds to purchase new class sets of novels to replace *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which was being taught in Grade 9. The offer was presented as a way of bringing a fresh new title to a tired old course. However, after some prodding my principal admitted some people at the board office thought it was inappropriate to continue to teach a novel that contained the word “nigger.” I explained that the n-word dilemma was one my department struggled with each year and it was a struggle we shared in careful conversation with our students as well. In response

to my principal insisting I revisit my decision to keep the novel in the course syllabus, I dug up a photocopy of a newspaper article from the 1985 Lakefield debacle and left it on her desk.

As I write this, I am struggling with a new situation of possible censorship. I have been informed that because of a parent's complaint, a school board is now questioning one of our member's use of the graphic novel *Paul Has a Summer Job* by Michel Rabagliati in a Grade 9 classroom.

The story is a *Bildungsroman*; in other words, the main character (in this case a 17-year-old from Montreal) experiences transformative situations that help him grow and mature into a more fully formed person. It's the perfect type of story for young teens and, as a graphic novel, it offers accessibility and appeal to reluctant readers.

I read the book myself, trying to find any content that might be construed as inappropriate for the eyes of a 14-year-old high school student. With the plot revolving around a group of teenagers setting up and running a children's camp in the backwoods of Quebec, Rabagliati creates believable characters with realistic problems who act as normal teens do: swearing, falling in love and yes, having sex. The illustrations are simple and modest, yet truthful and powerful. If I were teaching Grade 9 today, I'd be relieved to have a class set of such a touching and useful book.

Freedom to Read Week takes place from February 22–28, 2015. As education workers we have a responsibility to protect our students' right to access books. I highly recommend you check out their posters and kits available at [www.freedomtoread.ca](http://www.freedomtoread.ca). ☺





# Liberté d'expression

## Protéger l'accès aux livres de nos élèves

**J'AI** commencé ma carrière d'enseignant en tant que professeur d'anglais au milieu des années 1990 à *Lakefield District Secondary School*, sous la tutelle de Robert Buchanan, directeur de département hautement vénéré. Il se peut que vous ne reconnaissiez pas son nom, mais en 1976 il a fait quelque chose de remarquable qui a conduit des équipes de télévision de toute l'Amérique du Nord à se déplacer dans la petite ville tranquille de Lakefield. Il a pris la défense des droits de ses élèves.

Cette année-là, en février, après tant de controverse à propos de son enseignement du roman, *The Diviners*, Robert Buchanan a été avisé que l'administration du conseil scolaire du comté de Peterborough avait retiré le livre de la liste des ouvrages autorisés, au fond il interdisait le roman.

À cette époque-là, Margaret Laurence, auteure du roman, vivait à Lakefield. Elle était amie avec Robert Buchanan et elle s'est libérée pour venir dans sa classe et à son école. Sa présence dans la communauté donnait un visage à la littérature et de nombreuses personnes de la communauté se sont ralliées à la cause.

Finalement, après une grande couverture médiatique, un comité sur les manuels scolaires a été créé et ce dernier a décidé, à l'unanimité, que *The Diviners* était approprié à être enseigné en salle de classe. Après un débat animé au conseil scolaire, les conseillers scolaires ont voté à dix contre six, pour cette décision.

Mais en 1985, les attaques ont recommencé, affirmant que *The Diviners* était « dégoûtant », « moralement dégradant » et inapproprié en salle de classe. Une fois de plus, Robert Buchanan et Margaret

Laurence ont rencontré les médias et se sont battus contre la tentative de censure. Cette deuxième attaque a suscité l'intérêt de Canadiens à travers le pays. Un débat national sur l'interdiction des livres a été lancé avec de nombreux écrivains et spécialistes politiques intervenant contre la censure. Le conseil scolaire, sachant de quel côté soufflait le vent, a continué d'appuyer l'enseignement en salle de classe de *The Diviners*.

Entendre ces histoires sur la défense du livre par Robert Buchanan, racontées fièrement par plusieurs de mes collègues chevronnés, m'a inculqué la responsabilité de protéger le droit de mes élèves de lire.

Des années plus tard, alors que j'étais moi-même directeur du département d'anglais dans une autre école, ma directrice m'a abordé pour m'offrir des fonds en vue d'acheter de nouvelles séries de romans pour la classe et pour remplacer *To Kill a Mockingbird* qui était enseigné en 9<sup>e</sup> année. L'offre était présentée comme une manière d'apporter un titre original pour raviver un cours qui avait fait son temps. Toutefois, après l'avoir poussée un tant soit peu, ma directrice a avoué que certaines personnes au siège social du conseil pensaient qu'il était inapproprié de continuer à enseigner à l'aide d'un roman qui contenait le mot « *nigger* » (nègre). J'ai expliqué que ce terme péjoratif posait chaque année un dilemme aux personnes de mon département et que c'était une épreuve que nous partagions aussi lors de conversations sensées avec nos élèves. Pour répondre au fait que ma directrice insistait que je reconsidère ma décision à garder le roman dans mon plan de cours, j'ai été déniché une photocopie d'un article de journal sur le fiasco de 1985 à Lakefield

et l'ai laissée sur son bureau.

Au moment d'écrire ces lignes, je suis aux prises avec une nouvelle situation de censure potentielle. On m'a dit qu'à cause d'une plainte d'un parent, qu'un conseil scolaire met en doute l'utilisation par l'un de nos membres d'un roman illustré, *Paul a un travail d'été*, de Michel Rabagliati dans une classe de 9<sup>e</sup> année.

C'est un roman initiatique; autrement dit le personnage principal (un jeune de 17 ans de Montréal) vit des situations transformatrices qui l'aident à grandir et à murir pleinement. C'est le genre d'histoire parfaite pour de jeunes adolescents et, en tant que roman illustré, il permet d'être accessible et au goût des lecteurs réticents.

J'ai moi-même lu le livre en essayant de trouver du contenu qui pourrait être analysé comme ne convenant pas aux yeux d'un élève de 14 ans du secondaire. Avec l'intrigue tournant autour d'un groupe d'adolescents qui mettent en place et gèrent un camp destiné aux enfants dans les recoins du Québec, Michel Rabagliati crée des personnages plausibles avec des problèmes concrets qui vivent comme le font des adolescents normaux, qui blasphèment, tombent en amour et oui, qui ont des rapports sexuels. Les illustrations sont simples et discrètes tout en étant véridiques et prenantes. Si j'enseignais aujourd'hui en 9<sup>e</sup> année, je serais soulagé d'avoir en classe une série de livres aussi émouvants et utiles.

La Semaine de la liberté d'expression se tiendra du 22 au 28 février 2015. En tant que travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation, il nous incombe de protéger le droit d'accès des élèves aux livres. Je vous recommande fortement de vérifier leurs affiches et les troupes disponibles à [www.freedomtoread.ca](http://www.freedomtoread.ca). ☺

# Disappeared but not forgotten

A story from Nepal



“**T**hey came at night, way back in June 1999, and took my husband away. I was pregnant at that time. Amit, my only son, is 14 now and often asks where his father is and when he will finally come home. What can I tell the boy?”

Maiya Basnet often breaks into tears when asked these harrowing questions. The 50-year-old farmer from Lamjung district in western Nepal has no clue about the fate of her husband, arrested by an army patrol and never heard of since. She finds it hard to feed her nine children on her own. Neighbours look down on her family, Hindu traditions do not allow her to remarry. Since her husband has not been officially declared dead, she cannot claim possession of their agricultural land. And yet there is no meaningful effort by either the army or the state to trace her husband's whereabouts.

“My children have lost hope of ever seeing their father again. They have asked me for a gun to take revenge!”

This is a typical example of what rural women experienced during Nepal's violent conflict. About 90 per cent of the victims of disappearance were men and 81 per cent were married, so the majority of women, wives of the disappeared like

Maiya, still suffer every day. The National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing (NEFAD) was initiated by Ram Kumar Bhandari, a journalist, co-ordinator of NEFAD and the chair of the Committee for Social Justice, after he noticed the psychological trauma that continues to plague hundreds of families and relatives of the disappeared in Nepal.

Ram's father disappeared in 2001, so he is intimately aware of the difficult and frustrating situation many families face on a daily basis and the social, economic, cultural and psychological challenges. NEFAD is a network of district-based associations of families of the disappeared in Nepal. The national network aims to provide support, advocacy and relief for the families of the disappeared. It is rooted in the families themselves, both in informing the work of the network and in who leads it. The network is independent of any NGO or political party, and looks to work with all organizations that share its aims on a strategic level, where appropriate. The network is directly informed by and serves the needs and wishes of the family members, and all district, regional and national level structures are made up of leaders from families who

work for those families. Families are regularly consulted on what the network does and receive regular feedback on its work.

Nepal's decade-long armed conflict saw thousands of ordinary people become victims of both parties to the conflict, with thousands killed, wounded, tortured and displaced. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of conflict, however, are the missing and the disappeared, whose families still wait for information about the fate of loved ones and for the chance to locate the dead, retrieve their remains and ensure appropriate rituals are made.

However, there is no political will to assist a victim-centric process other than politicizing the whole agenda. Victims' agendas have been hijacked and commodified under different banners. Due to political manipulation, either from state or other actors, victims are never formally addressed. In particular, the Kathmandu-led, top-down process regarding the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord, with provisions for transitional justice mechanisms, demonstrated that basically nothing concrete has happened for the victims.

While the original ceasefire agreement, and many consequent agreements,



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### **Maoists wage war against the state**

Beginning in 1996, Nepal's People's War lasted for 10 years before a peace agreement was signed in 2006. This clash of state and Maoist forces caused extensive damage to the country and inflicted deep psychological trauma on victims and their families. Nepal has already paid heavily for the loss of over 16,000 lives, and the uncertainty over more than 1,400 disappeared. At the height of the conflict from 2001 to 2004, more than 1,400 people fell victim to enforced disappearances by both the state and Maoist forces. Despite the peace agreement and constant pledges by both sides to provide information regarding their loved ones, families continue to wait.

committed to addressing the issue of the disappeared, eight years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord, no progress has been made. For families of the missing, the conflict continues as long as the many impacts of disappearance remain unaddressed. By trying to sweep the dirt of the conflict under the carpet, through a general amnesty and by protecting those accused of war crimes, the state exacerbates the suffering of the families of victims. Unless their grievances are addressed, revenge will fester and there is a danger of another, more virulent conflict.

Meanwhile, known perpetrators of war crimes openly walk the streets and pose for TV cameras in the company of senior government ministers, completely discrediting the peace process. The party of rebels that unleashed the bloodshed sits in power and does its best to ensure general amnesty through the acquiescence of its erstwhile enemies. It is hard to imagine the kidnappings, disappearances, extrajudicial killings, rape and torture will ever

be thoroughly investigated. Under intense international pressure, two commissions on truth and disappearances are being set up, but there are still loopholes that will allow the guilty to get away. Truth is not possible without justice, and there will be no reconciliation without accountability.

Among the victims, the plight of those whose relatives disappeared continues to linger. They live in limbo, continue to be ignored and their tears have never dried. Their patience is wearing thin and frustration is giving way to a desire for vengeance. But this is not the only serious human-rights issue with which Nepal's society is beset.

Since the establishment of a Hindu kingdom by the Shah dynasty in the 16th century, lower-caste groups—single or widowed women, Dalits and Madhesi, along with Janajati, Nepal's indigenous peoples—have been excluded from social and political life. Their disillusionment was one of the driving forces behind the 10-year armed conflict. Issues of exclusion, land distribution, poverty, community rights and equal distribution of local resources continue to fuel dissent and conflict in various parts of the country, with no apparent political solutions on the horizon. ☞

**Roger Langen**, retired former member of the OSSTF/FEESO Human Rights Committee, travelled to Nepal in November 2013 to trek the Himalayas and meet with human-rights activist Ram Kumar Bhandari. Their meeting in Kathmandu led to an OSSTF/FEESO International Assistance Grant for Mr. Bhandari's organization, the National Network of the Families of the Disappeared and Missing in Nepal.





## Back to school Refresher

LD@school

**I'**D like to introduce a homegrown educational resource I rediscovered this summer. LD@school is a project of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, a non-profit organization funded by the Ministry of Education. It was launched in December 2013, but I was reintroduced to its many treasures this summer at the First Annual Educators' Institute on Demystifying Learning Disabilities (LDs) in the Classroom, held on August 27 in Mississauga.

LD@school is more than just another special-education website. These bilingual resources are intended for any individual in education who works with or may work with students with LDs. Much of the material is created for the classroom teacher and support staff, not just for those with Special Education designations.

The resources are being developed, or have previously been developed, by a variety of individuals. Submissions have come—and continue to be requested—from teachers, SERTs, school psychologists and others at a school board level across

## Programme de mise à jour des connaissances

TA@l'école

**J'**aimerais vous présenter une ressource pédagogique canadienne avec laquelle j'ai refait connaissance cet été. TA@l'école est un projet de l'Association ontarienne des troubles d'apprentissage, organisme sans but lucratif financé par le ministère de l'Éducation. Il a été lancé en décembre 2013, mais ses nombreux trésors m'ont été montrés à nouveau cet été dans le cadre du premier colloque estival destiné aux professionnels de l'enseignement intitulé *La démystification des troubles d'apprentissage dans la salle de classe* qui s'est tenu à Mississauga le 27 août.

TA@l'école est bien plus qu'un autre site Web sur l'éducation de l'enfance en difficulté. Ses ressources bilingues sont destinées à toute personne dans le domaine de l'enseignement qui œuvre avec, ou qui est susceptible de travailler avec, des élèves ayant des troubles d'apprentissage (TA). Une grande partie des documents sont créés pour le personnel enseignant en salle de classe et le personnel de soutien, pas uniquement pour ceux qui possèdent la désignation « enfance en difficulté ». Le site Web est accessible

the province. As well, resources are being developed by Canadian researchers and their graduate students, and focus on evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies, which have been proven to help support students with LDs. They also have both an English and French Educational Consultant, recently retired educators who are creating some of the resources such as practice-informed summaries.

I've personally found the website easy to navigate as it addresses many of our own learning modalities. In other words, it is an intuitive tool that doesn't require a Ph.D. in technology. Start by exploring the Professional Learning tab. Here you will find some excellent background information regarding LDs and the impact they can have on learning in the realms of literacy, numeracy, social and emotional development, executive functioning and self-regulation. It is a quick go-to for practical strategies and interventions as well as current videos, podcasts and online resource links. One of my favourite areas is the success stories written by students and their parents. I like to share these with my own students and their parents, as well as with non-teaching staff who visit my Care and Treatment classroom from time to time, to help educate them and give their assumptions about LDs another perspective, another "face."

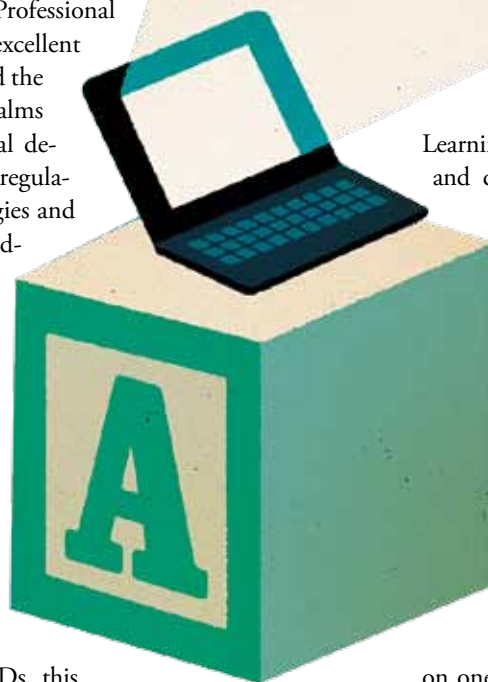
If you've ever found yourself overwhelmed by material and resources on education as it pertains to students with LDs, this website should be bookmarked as one of your favourites to explore tried and true ways to move forward. If you have material to share or comments to assist the authors in making the website more useful, they are always looking for ideas and new material. You can send them an e-mail at [info@LDatSchool.ca](mailto:info@LDatSchool.ca).

The First Annual Educators' Institute was a refreshing, gentle dip of my toes back into classroom mode. Think the opposite of the ubiquitous ALS Ice Bucket Challenge! Opening comments and keynote addresses were provided in two locations to accommodate a personalized experience in either French or English. The day continued with strands that also addressed the language and educational culture of both groups.

The day began with Matthew Cote, who contributed his perspective on thinking differently about students with LDs. He struggled in elementary school but, with assistance, came to understand his learning profile and accommodations as he went through secondary school. He recently graduated as an Ontario Scholar and is beginning university this year. His advice—to "push our students a bit harder to achieve their absolute best" and to "celebrate, at home and at school, each success, no matter how small"—was an important reminder of how we can keep students connected and engaged in their learning.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Nancy Mather from the University

If you've ever found yourself overwhelmed by material and resources on education as it pertains to students with LDs, this website should be bookmarked as one of your favourites.



of Arizona, left me with poignant thoughts and reflections to take into this school year.

Learning disabilities have been identified and described, along with strategies, interventions and accommodations we still discuss today—since 1902, although the terminology may have changed to reflect the times. Dr. Mather shared some eye-opening facts and information that caused many of us in the room to question why we haven't made more progress from these lessons from history. Her talk included, among many other interesting points, the importance of highly trained teachers, systematic instruction, the emotional impact

on one's self-esteem, the need for high-interest reading materials, recognizing the varied levels and abilities in a classroom and teaching to the students and their learning profiles, and the need for diagnosis to assist the development of an individual educational plan, although there isn't just one diagnosis and one treatment plan. She quoted the French novelist and Nobel Prize-winner André Gide who said, "Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens we have to keep going back and beginning all over again."

She went on to discuss the merits of concepts such as "fair does not equal the same" and that to be fair, everyone gets what they need. The most enabling environment should be the guideline for our lesson planning. With accommodation comes remediation and learning for all of our students, with or without learning disabilities. Again, speaking for myself, this was not an exercise in "Heard it all before, been there, done that" but a renewed sense of what drew me into a teaching career, as well as suggestions for fine-tuning my own practice in the upcoming year.

In the summer of 2015, LD@school will host the Second Annual Educators' Institute as a two-day bilingual event with even more sessions to choose from. Information will be posted on the website as it becomes available. ☺

Amy Shannon is a Section 23 teacher at St. Joseph's Hospital.





en anglais à l'adresse [www.LDatSchool.ca](http://www.LDatSchool.ca) ou en français à [www.TAaLecole.ca](http://www.TAaLecole.ca).

Diverses personnes sont en voie d'élaborer des ressources ou l'ont fait précédemment. Des propositions ont été soumises par le personnel enseignant, le personnel enseignant-ressource en enfance en difficulté, les psychologues scolaires et d'autres personnes des conseils scolaires à l'échelle de la province (et sont toujours demandées). De plus, des chercheurs canadiens et leurs étudiants du cycle supérieur sont à élaborer des ressources et se concentrent sur des stratégies fondées sur des données factuelles et probantes qui se sont avérées efficaces pour aider les élèves ayant des TA. Il y a des conseillers pédagogiques francophone et anglophone, des éducateurs récemment retraités, qui créent des ressources comme des résumés éclairés par la pratique.

Personnellement, j'ai trouvé que le site Web était facile à naviguer, parce qu'il aborde plusieurs de nos modes d'apprentissage constituant ainsi un outil plus intuitif qui ne nécessite pas un doctorat en technologie. Commençons par examiner l'onglet Apprentissage professionnel. Vous trouverez là d'excellents renseignements généraux portant sur les TA et leurs répercussions sur l'apprentissage dans les domaines de la littératie, de la numératie, du développement socioaffectif, des fonctions exécutives et des autorégulations. On trouve rapidement des stratégies pratiques et des interventions de même que des vidéos d'actualités, des balados et des liens à des ressources en ligne. Une de mes sections préférées regroupe des histoires de succès écrites par des élèves et leurs parents. J'aime bien les partager avec mes élèves et leurs parents ainsi qu'avec le personnel non enseignant qui visitent de temps à autre ma classe de soins et de traitement afin de contribuer à les renseigner et à donner à leurs suppositions sur les TA une autre perspective, un nouveau « visage ».

Si vous vous êtes déjà senti dépassé par les documents et les ressources sur l'éducation et les élèves ayant des TA, vous devriez donc ajouter ce site Web dans vos signets favoris pour explorer ce qui a été étudié et éprouvé. Si vous souhaitez partager des documents ou des commentaires dans le but d'aider les auteurs à rendre ce site plus utile, ils sont toujours à la recherche d'idées et de nouveaux documents. Vous pouvez leur envoyer un courriel à [info@TAaLecole.ca](mailto:info@TAaLecole.ca).

Le premier colloque annuel des professionnels de l'enseignement organisé cette année a été pour moi inspirant et une agréable aventure de retour en salle de classe. Les discours d'ouverture et les conférences se sont déroulés dans deux endroits afin de faciliter une expérience unique en français ou en anglais. La journée s'est poursuivie avec des thèmes qui ont abordé le langage et la culture éducative des deux groupes.

Ma journée a commencé avec Matthew Cote qui a donné son point de vue sur une perception différente des élèves ayant des TA. Il s'est débrouillé tant bien que mal à l'école élémentaire, mais avec de l'aide, il en est venu à comprendre son profil d'apprentissage et les adaptations alors qu'il était à l'école secondaire. Il a récemment obtenu son diplôme de lauréat du Mérite scolaire de l'Ontario et il entreprend l'université cette année. Ses conseils « Donner envie à nos élèves de se dépasser

pour réaliser leur plein potentiel » et « Souligner (à la maison et à l'école) chaque réussite, aussi modeste soit-elle » nous rappellent l'importance pour nous de pouvoir à la fois créer chez nos élèves un lien et un engagement à leur apprentissage.

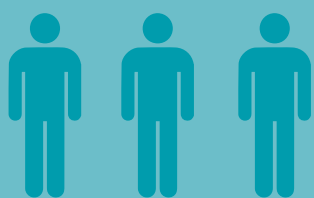
Dre Nancy Mather, de l'Université d'Arizona, et conférencière principale, a provoqué chez moi des pensées et des réflexions émotivantes à méditer durant la présente année scolaire. Depuis 1902, les troubles d'apprentissage, les stratégies de même que les interventions et adaptations, qui ont été identifiés et décrits, sont encore discutés aujourd'hui bien que la terminologie ait peut-être changé pour tenir compte de l'époque. La docteure Mather a partagé des faits et des renseignements évocateurs qui ont amené plusieurs d'entre nous à nous interroger sur le peu de progrès tiré des leçons de l'histoire. Ses commentaires variaient de l'importance d'enseignants hautement formés, de l'enseignement systématique, de conséquences émotionnelles sur l'image de soi, de la nécessité de documentation écrite de plus grand intérêt, de la reconnaissance des divers niveaux et des capacités dans une salle de classe et d'enseigner aux élèves selon leurs profils d'apprentissage, de la nécessité d'un diagnostic afin d'aider à la création d'un plan éducatif individuel de sorte qu'il n'y ait pas seulement un diagnostic et un plan de traitement... et bien d'autres. Elle a cité André Gide, romancier français et lauréat du prix Nobel, qui a déclaré : « Tout a été dit, mais comme personne n'écoute, il faut toujours répéter. » Elle a ensuite échangé sur des notions comme : « l'égalité ne veut pas dire la même chose » et que pour être équitable, chacun obtient ce dont il a besoin. Le milieu le plus favorable devrait être la ligne directrice de notre plan de leçon. Les correctifs et l'apprentissage pour tous nos élèves, avec ou sans troubles d'apprentissage, entrent en jeu avec les adaptations. À mon avis, ce n'était pas que « du réchauffé, du déjà vu, du déjà fait », mais une impression très nette de ce qui m'a attirée dans ma carrière d'enseignante et des suggestions pour peaufiner ma propre pratique au cours de la prochaine année.

Au cours de l'été 2015, TA@l'école présentera son deuxième colloque annuel des professionnels de l'enseignement, activité bilingue de deux jours avec encore plus de choix de conférences! Les renseignements seront affichés sur le site Web dans les prochaines semaines, au fur et à mesure qu'ils seront disponibles. ☺

**Amy Shannon** est enseignante article 23, au St. Joseph's Hospital.

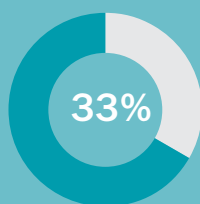


# DROW

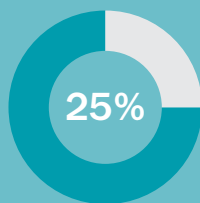


## 2 OUT OF 5 MEMBERS

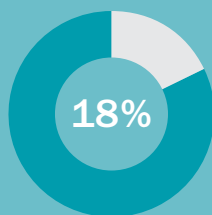
facilitate,  
coach or lead  
**3 OR MORE**  
extracurricular  
activities



extracurricular  
activities are  
**SPORTS-RELATED**



members work  
on **COMMITTEES**



help with  
**FUNDRAISERS &  
CAMPAIGNS**



# WINNING IN EXTRA WORK?

Results of the Workload and Volunteerism of Educators (WAVE) survey

By Anna Johnston-Gibbins

The well-worn adage “A teacher’s work is never done” is one that many of us have muttered to ourselves, laughingly shouted to each other in the halls and sometimes bellowed in our homes, surrounded by stacks of weekend marking. Yet the results of the Workload and Volunteerism of Educators (WAVE) survey make it clear that this is the case for most education workers, not just teachers. Over 7,500 members from every OSSTF/FEESO Bargaining Unit and district responded to the survey to share their stories, experiences, grievances and challenges of being an educator in Ontario today. Here are the top nine things you need to know.



Over **90%** of members reported they take their work home



**92%** of teachers volunteer their time to run and support extracurriculars



### 1. Volunteer bonanza

Whether coaching a sports team, planning school events or running an after-school club, educators are dedicated to extra-curricular activities. Over 80 per cent of members are involved in extracurriculars. One-third of those members spend more than five hours each week and 13 per cent spend over 10 hours each week volunteering their time. When looking at the data by Bargaining Unit, readers will not be surprised to learn that 92 per cent of the Teacher Bargaining Unit volunteer their time; however, administrative staff, school counsellors, caretakers and others also facilitate a wide array of extracurriculars. In fact, 60 per cent of the Plant Support Staff respondents volunteer with fine arts programs, student council, community service clubs and more.

### 2. Not one, not two but three or more!

When it comes to extracurriculars, members do not stop at one activity. Two out of every five members facilitate, coach or lead three or more extracurricular activities. No wonder they spend so much extra time each week on these duties. In fact, members reported they take part in over 18,000 extracurricular activities. One-third of these are sports-related extracurriculars while 25 per cent of members facilitate graduation and awards committees and over 18 per cent help with fundraisers and campaigns.

### 3. Can you? Won't you?

The level of volunteerism among educators makes it clear they are keen to create well-rounded learning communities and share their time and talents with students. Yet there is a dark side to these extracurriculars. Over half the members reported their involvement in extracurriculars is voluntary but they also reported there are often expectations and social pressure from administration, colleagues, parents and students to take part. Members from small schools; athletics, technology, fine arts, guidance and special-education teachers; and newly hired, part-time and occasional teachers shoulder the heaviest amount of pressure and coercion. Unfortunately, many newly hired educators and supply teachers shared disconcerting stories of jobs being offered and, in some cases, lost based on their willingness to take on an extracurricular activity.

### 4. Over, above and beyond

When you are a salaried employee, it can be difficult to draw the line and say, "I will spend this much amount of time on work and that is all." For educators, this is a particularly difficult task. Students, parents and colleagues depend on us. A student in distress cannot be placed in an in-box to be dealt with in the morning,

taking part in board or Ministry-directed programs account for an increase in over one-half of members' workloads. Correspondingly, over 70 per cent of members have experienced an increase in their level of stress. This situation becomes glaringly unfair when viewed from the position of members who are not salaried employees, such as Early Childhood Educators and

**OVER 90% OF MEMBERS  
REPORTED THEY TAKE  
THEIR WORK HOME**



Over 40 per cent of members spend at least 10 hours each week completing work that is above and beyond the expectations of their positions. Much of this time is spent communicating with parents, collaborating with colleagues and attending meetings.

### 5. More work + less time = stress

Workloads have increased for everyone, and most educators have considerably more work to complete than they have time. Administrative requests, assessing students, computer-based work and

other support staff. They are expected to prepare, organize and assess but are given little or no time to carry out these duties. As one ECE commented, "I have no time allotted to plan, prepare for or assess my program. I stay after school and after my allotted hours to plan with my co-teacher as I have no entitlement to planning time." Adult/Continuing Education instructors, office or clerical staff and Professional Support Services personnel were the bargaining units who reported the most significant increases in workload.



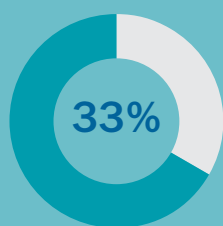


## 6. Taking your work home

Educators' work does not end when they exit the school or office doors, so it is not surprising to learn that over 90 per cent of members reported they take their work home. However, you may be surprised to learn that over one-third of them spend at least five hours each week and over one-fifth (1,615 of the 7,500

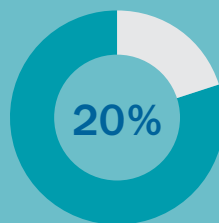
members spend more than 10 extra hours each week working at home, school or in other locations. Let's do the math. If 3,000 members<sup>1</sup> spend 11 extra hours each week on work, the result is 33,000 additional hours each week and 1.25 million extra hours each school year (38 weeks). What about the over 4,400 members who spend five to 10 extra hours working each week?

asked about Ministry and board-directed programs, policies and initiatives. Over a third thought these policies and programs are of little or no benefit and only a quarter thought they are somewhat beneficial. In addition, over three-quarters of members thought their time could be better used in other pursuits, particularly self-directed professional development. Members overwhelmingly appealed for the Ministry and board to be more connected and in sync with the realities and challenges of schools and classrooms. Many of the programs and policies look great on paper but fall apart when they are put to the test.



OVER **33%** OF THEM SPEND AT  
LEAST **5 HOURS** EACH WEEK  
**AND**

OVER **20%** SPEND OVER **10 HOURS**  
EACH WEEK WORKING AT HOME



**1,615 MEMBERS SPEND OVER  
16,000 HOURS EACH WEEK ON  
EXTRA WORK AT HOME**

NOT INCLUDING TIME SPENT ON EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## 9. With some exceptions

Although many Ministry and board-directed initiatives, programs and activities were considered unrealistic, many educators made sure to highlight a few they consider beneficial and absolutely necessary. Those include programs and policies concerning mental-health promotion and suicide prevention; restorative justice; and First Nations, Métis and Inuit education. Educators also resoundingly called for a move towards staff-created and subject-specific professional development. Educators crave the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and share their expertise and passion.

The results of the WAVE survey were equal parts enlightening, inspiring, infuriating and frustrating. Educators clearly struggle each day with a long list of challenges and problems, yet the majority must manage their frustration and smile for the students. Is this a surprise? No. The surprises in the WAVE survey were the sheer number of members who go above and beyond to create community, support students and share their talents and passion.

The thousands of comments included throughout the survey reflect the reality of education workers: stressed out, overwhelmed, under-resourced and stretched thinner than a plant-cell membrane. Yet educators are resilient, motivated and, most of all, driven to create opportunities and learning for secondary students across Ontario. Reading the WAVE survey results as a newly qualified teacher was, at times, frightening. I kept asking myself, "What am I getting into?" But interwoven

survey respondents) spend over 10 hours each week working at home. To put these figures into perspective, those 1,615 members spend over 16,000 hours each week on extra work at home. And this figure does not include the amount of time spent on extra work at school, other locations or the time spent on extracurricular activities.

Those members spend 22,000 to 44,000 additional hours each week and between 830,000 and 1.67 million extra hours each school year. Combined, these extra hours translate into one full year's work of 1,000 to 1,400 full-time employees.<sup>2</sup> And the governments of Ontario and Canada think there should be more cuts to education staff. Think again!

## 7. The case against cutting jobs

Astounded by those 16,000-plus hours? Don't pick your chins up off the floor just yet. Over 3,000 of the responding

## 8. Misguided ministry directives

Members truly had and have a lot to say! They included over 1,500 impassioned comments, suggestions and advice when





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throughout the thousands of comments were stories and anecdotes that made this writer proud to join the motley crew of artists, eccentrics, enthusiasts, inventors and innovators without whom the future would be incredibly bleak. ☺

Anna Johnston-Gibbins is a recent OISE grad, a Visual Arts and Social Science educator, a sociocultural anthropologist and an active social-justice advocate.

#### Endnotes

1. Members had the opportunity to select "More than 10 hours" or "5-10 hours" for each of the three separate locations (at school, at home and other locations). This is the reason the number of members discussed in this item appears high.
2. Calculations of hours are:  $1,250,000 + 830,000 = 2,080,000$ ;  $1,250,000 + 1,670,000 = 2,920,000$ . There are 2,080 annual hours worked by a full-time employee ( $40 \text{ hours/week} \times 52 \text{ weeks/year} = 2,080 \text{ hours}$ ).  $2,080,000/2,080 = 1,000 \text{ employees}$ ;  $2,920,000/2,080 = 1,403.8$ .

#### Educational Services Workshops

#### Ateliers des services éducatifs

2014–2015

## GROWTH & OPPORTUNITY

### Professional Development Workshops

OSSTF/FEESO remains committed to building the capacity of educators by continuing to offer high quality professional growth opportunities created by members, for members. Please go to [bit.ly/YT7wRm](http://bit.ly/YT7wRm) for more detailed information.

Workshops are subject to availability and require at least one month of lead time. A refundable deposit of \$250.00 is required with each workshop request. All workshops require a minimum of 20 participants.

Please contact Suzette Clark at 416-751-8300 or toll free 1-800-267-7867 for more information or to request any OSSTF/FEESO Educational Services workshop.



2014–2015

## CROISSANCE & POSSIBILITÉS

### Ateliers de perfectionnement professionnel

OSSTF/FEESO s'engage toujours à renforcer la capacité du personnel enseignant en continuant d'offrir des possibilités d'épanouissement professionnel de haute qualité, créées par ses membres pour les membres. Suivez le lien [bit.ly/YT7wRm](http://bit.ly/YT7wRm) pour des renseignements plus détaillés.

Sous réserve de leur disponibilité, les ateliers nécessitent un préavis d'au moins un mois. Un dépôt remboursable de 250 \$ est requis pour chaque demande d'atelier. Il faut au moins 20 participants pour tous les ateliers.

Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements ou pour organiser n'importe quel atelier des Services éducatifs d'OSSTF/FEESO, communiquez avec Suzette Clark au 416-751-8300 ou, sans frais, au 1-800-267-7867.

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# December 6, 2014

Twenty-five years later, we cannot ignore the call

By Rosemary Judd-Archer

Humans are social animals who do best in groups. We are born into society; it shapes us, we shape it. The advancement of our species not only requires slipping in and out of societal structures but also creating circles of inclusion that require skillful navigation. Our goal in education is to advance individual knowledge and, as a bonus consequence, we elevate and push forward the collective that is our society. We strive to create environments that allow for sharing and experiencing of learning. We are keenly aware that ignoring actions, words, jokes and gestures implies consent of same and destroys those positive learning environments. As educators we know that one generation shapes the next through the messages they choose to perpetuate by action and by inaction.

It has been a generation since 14 women were killed at École Polytechnique, now named Polytechnique Montréal. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Montreal massacre. Knowing the significance of December 6 is the context within which an entire generation of Canadians has been raised.

We asked the question with 14 women members of OSSTF/FEESO: "Twenty-five years later, how has the Montreal massacre shaped you?"

/CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Les humains sont des animaux sociaux qui fonctionnent mieux quand ils sont en groupe. Nous naissons en société; elle nous modèle, nous la modelons. Non seulement l'avancement de notre espèce entre et sort inaperçu de nos structures sociétales, mais il crée également des cercles d'inclusion qui requièrent une navigation habile. Notre objectif en éducation est de faire avancer la connaissance individuelle et, en prime, nous élevons et faisons avancer le collectif qu'est notre société. Nous nous efforçons de créer des milieux qui permettent le partage et l'expérience de l'apprentissage. Nous sommes profondément conscients que le fait de ne pas tenir compte d'actions, de mots, de blagues et de gestes suppose leur approbation et détruit ces milieux d'apprentissage positifs. En tant qu'éducateurs, nous savons qu'une génération façonne la suivante à travers les messages qu'elle choisit de perpétuer en raison de son action ou inaction.

Une génération s'est écoulée depuis que 14 femmes ont été tuées à l'École polytechnique. Cette année marque le 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du massacre de Montréal. Une génération entière de Canadiennes et de Canadiens a été élevée en étant consciente de l'importance du 6 décembre.

Nous avons posé la question à 14 femmes d'OSSTF/FEESO : « Vingt-cinq plus tard, de quelle manière le massacre de Montréal vous a-t-il façonné? »

SUITE À LA PAGE 21/

# Le 6 décembre 2014

25 ans plus tard, nous ne pouvons ignorer l'appel

par Rosemary Judd-Archer



# Twenty-five years later, how has the Montreal massacre shaped you?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19/

We did not receive a definitive answer and the responses were very difficult to read: full of betrayal, anger and disillusionment. The 14 women injured and the 14 women killed on December 6, 1989 were and are representative of countless victims and survivors of violence against women. The 14 women we asked are representative of countless lives impacted by the actions of that day and the subsequent 25 years of action and inaction. In their words:

## "I remember..."

- being more conscious of possible dangers walking on campus, and if I was alone in a building, more afraid;
- being so much more aware of my surroundings;
- learning that some people have such little respect for women;
- being given a rape whistle;
- becoming a feminist;
- being taught about how I needed to protect myself because no one else would.

## "I feel..."

- anger and frustration every year when I see the names, faces and ages of these young women who would be in their 40s today;
- the events of December 6 came to represent everything I was working against;
- disheartened at the degree to which women are still targeted, used as scapegoats and abused, as they are around the world;
- we are moving backwards because although people's awareness of violence against women has increased, unfortunately the responses to the issue have not.

## "I know..."

- violence against women still continues;
- violence against women is just as prevalent today as it was in 1989 when the shooting occurred;

- violence against women is even more prevalent;
- we need to remember these women, and to speak their names, to defend the lives they could never live;
- we can't stop thinking about the meaning of that day until every woman is safe from violence and every man supports that belief."

Violence against women is part of our society. It is systemic in that it is everywhere: in the lyrics of award-winning songs, in the uninvestigated disappearances and murders of countless Aboriginal Canadian women, in the Photoshopped pictures marketing the products we use daily. But we, as a society, are beginning to truly recognize and know these truths. This knowledge is spurring action. Companies are choosing not to Photoshop in response to public pressure (Aerie, American Eagle, *Seventeen*); groups are protesting, writing letters and calling governments out on inaction with respect to women's issues (Canadian Labour Congress letter calling for federal leaders to act, organizations partnering with women's rights' campaigns); people are choosing not to be scandalized by female nudity but rather by the invasion of privacy. Actions like these, by the public, to hold government and media to a higher standard are creating lasting changes that will shape a better future for all.

Those who work in education do so because of the shared belief we can help shape the future. We know our actions inspire further action. Please take a moment to look at the new rose on the December 6 poster. It is purposefully disturbing. Just as comfort breeds complacency, discomfort can incite action. We hope you are uncomfortable.

/CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

# "I remember..."

being taught about how I needed to protect myself because no one else would."





# « Je sais que...

la violence à l'égard des femmes continue toujours. »

SUITE DE LA PAGE 19/

Nous n'avons pas reçu de réponses exactes et elles ont été très pénibles à lire : emplies de trahison, de colère et de désillusion. Les 14 femmes blessées et les 14 femmes assassinées le 6 décembre 1989 représentent d'innombrables victimes et rescapées de la violence à l'égard des femmes. Les 14 femmes auxquelles nous avons posé la question sont représentatives d'innombrables vies touchées par les actions de ce jour et des 25 ans d'action et d'inaction subséquents. Selon elles :

## « Je me souviens...

- d'être plus consciente des dangers possibles lorsque je marchais à travers le campus, et si j'étais seule dans un bâtiment, d'avoir davantage peur
- d'être plus sensible à tout ce qui m'entourait
- d'avoir appris que certaines personnes n'ont que très peu de respect envers les femmes
- d'avoir reçu un « sifflet d'alarme de viol »
- d'être devenue féministe
- qu'on m'a enseigné que je devais me protéger, car personne d'autre ne le ferait

## Je ressens.../Je me sens...

- de la colère et de la frustration chaque année quand je vois les noms, les visages et les âges de ces jeunes femmes qui seraient dans la quarantaine aujourd'hui
- que les événements du 6 décembre en sont venus à représenter tout ce qui allait à l'encontre de ce que je faisais
- d'être démoralisée par le degré auquel les femmes continuent d'être visées, utilisées comme boucs émissaires et maltraitées comme elles le sont partout dans le monde
- que nous avançons à reculons, car bien que la sensibilisation des gens par rapport à la violence à l'égard des femmes a augmenté, malheureusement ce n'est pas le cas des réactions à ce problème

## Je sais que...

- la violence à l'égard des femmes continue toujours
- la violence à l'égard des femmes est tout aussi répandue aujourd'hui qu'elle l'était en 1989 au moment de la fusillade
- la violence à l'égard des femmes est encore plus courante
- nous avons besoin de nous souvenir de ces femmes et de prononcer leurs noms pour défendre les vies qu'elles n'ont jamais pu avoir
- nous ne pouvons arrêter de penser à la signification de ce jour tant que toutes les femmes ne sont pas à l'abri de la violence et que tous les hommes partagent cette opinion »

La violence à l'égard des femmes fait partie intégrante de notre société. Elle est systémique du fait qu'elle est partout :

dans les paroles de chansons primées, dans les disparitions et les meurtres d'innombrables femmes autochtones canadiennes pour lesquels aucune enquête n'a été menée, dans les photos retouchées pour commercialiser les produits que nous utilisons quotidiennement. Mais en tant que société, nous commençons à vraiment reconnaître et à SAVOIR ces vérités. Ce savoir stimule l'action : des compagnies choisissent de NE PAS retoucher les photos à la suite de pressions exercées par le public (*Aerie*, *American Eagle*, *Seventeen*); des groupes protestent, écrivent des lettres aux gouvernements et les critiquent pour leur inaction quant aux questions touchant les femmes (lettre du Congrès du travail du Canada exigeant que les dirigeants fédéraux agissent, les organismes s'associent à des campagnes sur les droits des femmes); les gens choisissent de NE PAS se scandaliser par la nudité des femmes, mais plutôt par des actions d'atteinte à la vie privée. Des actions du public, comme celles-ci, qui tiennent le gouvernement et les médias à des normes plus exigeantes, créent des changements durables qui forgeront un avenir meilleur pour toutes et tous.

Ceux et celles qui œuvrent en éducation le font parce que nous partageons le sentiment que nous pouvons aider à façonner l'avenir; nous savons que nos actions suscitent d'autres actions. Prenons un moment pour regarder la nouvelle rose de l'affiche du 6 décembre. Elle est délibérément troublante. De même que le confort engendre la complaisance, le malaise peut inciter à l'action. Nous espérons que vous ressentirez un malaise.

Quatorze femmes ont été tuées PARCE QU'ELLES étaient

SUITE À LA PAGE 22/

# Vingt-cinq plus tard, de quelle manière le massacre de Montréal vous a-t-il façonné?



Fourteen women were killed because they were women. Remember them, feel angry and know you must act. Engage in the difficult conversations that will hold you, and all makers and policers of protocols, to the highest standards. We call you to remembrance this December 1-5. We call you to action every day.

Thank you to the following 14 women of OSSTF/FEESO who responded with brutal honesty to our question:

Diane Anderson, District 7, Bluewater ESP  
 Diane Bélanger-Brisson, District 35, Universities and Colleges PSSUO  
 Lindsay Chase, District 22, Niagara OTBU  
 Suzette Clark, Director, Educational Services  
 Jo Dean, Provincial Executive Officer  
 Sue Doughty-Smith, Provincial Executive Officer  
 Cindy Dubu , Provincial Vice President  
 Roberta Gamache, District 17, Simcoe EA  
 Kim Kruithof-Ray, District 1, Ontario North East EA  
 Th r se Matteau, Provincial Office, Reception  
 Lori Foote, Associate General Secretary, Professional Services  
 Susan Melville, District 3, Rainbow TBU  
 Patricia Morneau, District 9, Greater Essex PSSP  
 Lauren Simmons, District 12, Toronto TBU  

**Rosemary Judd-Archer** is an Executive Assistant in the Educational Services Department at Provincial Office.

des femmes. Souvenez-vous d'elles, ressentez de la col re et sachez que vous devez agir. Engagez des conversations difficiles qui vous tiendront, vous et tous les responsables de politiques et de protocoles,   des normes les plus  lev es possible. Nous faisons appel   vous pour les comm morer du 1  au 5 d cembre. Nous faisons appel   vous pour passer   l'action tous les jours.

Nous aimerions remercier les 14 femmes d'OSSTF/FEESO qui ont r pond  avec une franchise brutale   notre question :

Diane Anderson, District 7, Bluewater, ESP  
 Diane B langer-Brisson, District 35, Universit s et coll ges, PSSUO  
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 Suzette Clark, directrice, Services  ducatifs  
 Jo Dean, Ex c tif provincial  
 Sue Doughty-Smith, Ex c tif provincial  
 Cindy Dub , Ex c tif provincial  
 Roberta Gamache, District 17, Simcoe, EA  
 Kim Kruithof-Ray, District 1, Ontario North East, EA  
 Th r se Matteau, Bureau provincial, R ception  
 Lori Foote, secr taire g n rale adjointe, Services professionnels  
 Susan Melville, District 3, Rainbow, TBU  
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**Rosemary Judd-Archer** est adjointe ex cutive au Secteur des services  ducatifs, Bureau provincial.

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# DOING THE RIGHT THING

My experience with ethical investing and  
the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan

By Terry Hamilton

I have been a fan of Rick Mercer for over 20 years, since he was on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. His rants on the *Rick Mercer Report* have made him the conscience of Canada, so it was awfully hard to watch his January 9, 2004 show. This time, he wasn't creating a petition demanding Stockwell Day change his first name to Doris and he wasn't skewering the prime minister of the day. No, this time he focused his attention, and the country's attention, on the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP).

Mercer criticized teachers for having a pension plan that made investments in Ritalin, shopping malls and tobacco. Somehow he isn't as funny when he is pointing his finger at you.

ILLUSTRATION: DUSHAN MILIC



“He’s right, we shouldn’t be investing in things that hurt society.”

So what do we do if we want things to change?



I am sure many teachers across the province reacted much like I did: “He’s right, we shouldn’t be investing in things that hurt society.” So what do we do if we want things to change?

Perhaps the first thing to look at is who is “we.” It wasn’t until I became one of OSSTF/FEESO’s Ontario Teachers’ Federation Governors that I truly understood the answer to what most would think is a simple question.

To start off, we have to understand the history and structure of the OTPP. The OTPP was created in 1990, but it took two years before the agreement to create the partnership was finally achieved. At that point, the Ontario government and the Ontario Teachers’ Federation (OTF) became the two equal sponsors of the pension plan. There we have it. We just have to get the government and the OTF to agree on not investing in certain corporations. How hard can that be? Well, it isn’t as easy

as it might seem, and we haven’t finished with the ever-important “we.”

Although the two partners (the OTF and the provincial government) are ultimately responsible for governance of the OTPP, the Plan has its own administrative structure that oversees day-to-day operations. The OTPP Board of Governors is the group that gives direction to the senior administration of the Plan. This Board has nine members—four appointed by the government, four appointed by the OTF and the chair jointly appointed by the two sponsors. It would seem that we simply have to convince this group to make the right investments.

However, we have two problems. One is that only one of the Board members is a teacher; the rest of the Board members have experience in the investment industry or economics and therefore a focus on maximizing profits. The second problem is the Board usually doesn’t provide feedback on small investments, and what is a large investment for most of us is a small investment for the OTPP. Even the OTPP Annual Report includes only major investments, which it defines as over \$100-million. The Board members might not even be aware of investments that don’t hit this threshold. Finally, we get to the administrators of the pension plan. It’s the president and senior administrators who control the investment decisions on a day-to-day basis.

Above all, there is the legal concept of fiduciary duty. The administrators of the Plan, the members of the OTPP Board and the sponsors all have the responsibility

of making the best decisions for the members of the Plan. Unfortunately, the different groups don’t always agree on what are the best decisions. Both the administrators and the Board members believe their role is to maximize investment returns. This sometimes means making investments in companies that some Plan members might not want to invest in.

Now that the players are outlined, we can go back to thinking about socially responsible investing and what we can do to influence the investment decisions of the Plan. In 2005, OTF created an ad hoc committee to study socially responsible investments. Perhaps it was the work of that committee that convinced the OTPP to start factoring environmental, social and corporate governance issues into their risk analysis. The investment community was starting to realize that bad businesses are bad investments.





In addition, it was only after prodding from OSSTF/FEESO and other OTF affiliates' members of the OTF Board of Governors that the OTTP signed the United Nations-backed Principles for Responsible Investment Initiative (PRI) in 2011. According to the OTTP website, "These principles provide a voluntary framework for incorporating environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) issues into investment decision-making and ownership practices." So it should be much easier to get the pension plan not to invest in things we don't like. We just have to agree on which investments we oppose.

If you have ever attended the OTTP's Annual Meeting, during which members get to ask the President and Chair difficult questions, you will have heard a variety of members' opinions regarding which investments the pension plan should get rid of.

One such discussion centres around the question of whether the Plan should divest itself of investments in oil and gas companies. After members had expressed concern about global warming during the last annual meeting of the OTTP, I had a chance to talk to the new CEO, Ron Mock, about this issue. While Mock appreciates the seriousness of global warming, he has a slightly different take on these investments. In his opinion, because these companies are in the energy business, they are the very companies that have the resources and motivation to find solutions to energy-supply problems as oil and gas supplies dwindle. Maybe some of these questions are a little more complicated than they initially appear.

Still, the work isn't over, and we continue to have issues with some of our investments. As Rick Mercer reminded us in 2004, teachers' reputations are at risk due to investments made by the OTTP. But it isn't just our reputation; the reputation of the OTTP might also be at risk. That is critically important, as the Plan's reputation helps to open doors and make deals.

The Plan is proud of the work it has done to improve the corporate governance of the companies in which it has invested. Here is where our interests in responsible investments align with the fiduciary duties of the OTTP. If we can't convince the pension plan not to invest in certain companies, we can try to convince it to use its power to make the companies it invests in better corporate citizens—companies that minimize their impact on the environment, treat their employees fairly, companies that create sustainable growth and companies that will continue to be good investments 70 years down the road.

Seventy years is the horizon the plan looks towards for a valuation. Seventy years into the future, our younger members may still be collecting their pensions.

The OTTP is a very large pension plan that prepares for the long term, and long-term plans change slowly. The OTTP is similar to a large ship; it takes a long time to turn. We just have to keep nudging it in the right direction. ☞

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**Terry Hamilton** is the former president of OTF. He currently teaches in Thunder Bay and serves as OSSTF/FEESO's OTF Table Officer.

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# IT'S TIME TO DRAW NEW MAPS TO MANHOOD



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# PERSONA

Portrait of an artist, teacher and father at the  
Tom Thomson Art Gallery, Owen Sound, Ontario

By James Sebesta

When my second son, Christopher, was born in 1989 we were happy new parents once again. I had just started teaching visual art and history in Grey County. The four of us moved from the small log studio I had built into a large, half-finished new house next door. Both buildings were on our 10 acres of maple woods in a small lake community near Georgian Bay. These were our salad days and the setting was nothing less than idyllic.

As an energetic new teacher with two young kids, I found it hard to keep creating art works but I persisted and maintained a steady body of works throughout my teaching career. I continue to see myself as an artist first. Those who can do should teach. I kept on making art works even after it became evident that Christopher had a pervasive form of autism.

It began with colic that woke him up six times a night. When he could stand in his crib, the colic and screaming were accompanied by head-banging, a way to redistribute the pain, but also, as we found out later, a way to retreat from a sensory world that scared him, always. Being frightened of the sensory world was the cause of the colic, a vicious cycle. This self-inflicted pain extended to biting his own arms, scratching himself and then it turned into full-blown, meltdown tantrums.



*Strange Young Man*  
by James Sebesta



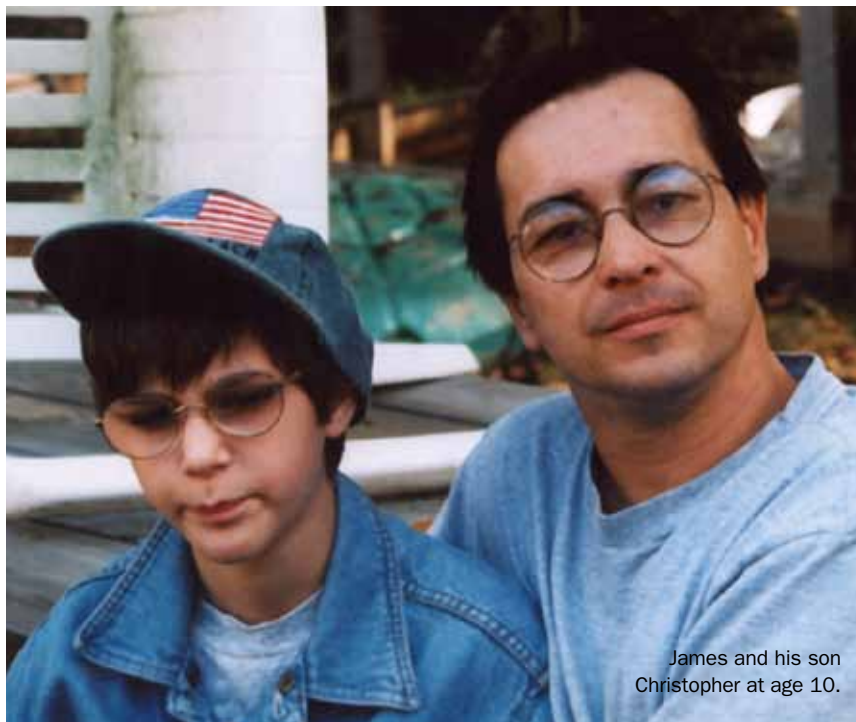
Now we were the ones getting bitten, head-butted and scratched six times a night and day. This aggressive behaviour lasted for 18 years and as he grew larger, the danger increased. We call these our lost years, our very own Great Depression era. Years in a Turkish prison seemed like an easier sentence. Sleep deprivation changes you, and we became something only half alive, sleep zombies.

In those days we seemed to be on our own regarding autism, both in education and medical therapies. Little was known about autism and it only came up in conversation when we mentioned the condition. After seeing legions of doctors, trying many drug cocktails, advocating for funding and educating many educators, we were exhausted but well informed. I have a Ph.D. in Christopher. He is my thesis. A thesis that will never be finished.

As teachers we should always remember that the haggard-looking parent of a special-needs child sitting across the table has dealt with similar problems and needs your patience and help more than most.

With all this on our plate my wife, Christine, quit work and went back to school to become a psychiatric nurse. So we had it covered from education to psychiatric treatment and we learned a great deal about how this kid, and many other children with autism, think. It would be impossible to describe the way his mind works entirely but I can give you some examples.

Most of Christopher's problems centre on a few major conditions: sensory integration, anxiety caused by sensory overload and obsessive compulsive behaviour to block out the sensory overload. Christopher has no volume control, no brightness contrast control and his olfactory sense is off the charts. He sniffs everyone he meets and tells them the perfume and brand name they are wearing. He remembers events and people from when he was a baby, could read phonically and speak some French before age five. But the autistic part of his brain made accomplishing these things unimportant. He felt no pride in them and he had no interest in pleasing others, as many of those with autism will report.



James and his son  
Christopher at age 10.

As teachers we should always remember that the haggard-looking parent of a special-needs child sitting across the table has dealt with similar problems and needs your patience and help more than most.

With the sensory problems we saw a number of difficulty behaviours. He had auditory sensitivity to stomach grumbles, coughs, flatulence, sneezes, baby crying, dogs barking, clattering dishes, speed washboards on the road—I could go on. For many years this resulted in full-blown tantrums. My wife was often a victim, as he could grab her long, curly hair, scream and pull her to the ground in a crowded shopping mall at Christmas, all because someone sneezed next to him. He once smelled an apple being cut open two rooms away. Imagine what a Grade 9 lunch-hour cafeteria would smell like to him.

Christopher displayed the classic lack of eye contact that comes with autism. Although he learned to speak early, it was through echolalia, learning to speak by repeating what others have said but not knowing the social or emotional meaning—like a politician. When he learned to make his own sentences at about age 10, I asked him why he didn't look in my eyes and he said, "Because they are sharp." Even looking into his own father's eyes caused him physical pain. Not understanding emotions is the social aspect of autism that is the most difficult to deal with and overcome.

He once looked into a hole he had



bitten in a hollow Easter egg and jumped back in body-shaking fear. When I asked him what was wrong he said, "I thought I would fall in." This is a condition of some with autism that suggests they have no concept of how big their body is in space. No gestalt, so to speak. This is why he gently knocks on hallway walls so he can try to define the space around him. His visual-spatial world is an abstract and therefore a very scary place with constantly changing dimensions.

We have survived as a family because we have laughed at most of these troubles. My wife, Christine, brought into our home the gift of song, silliness and rhyming, all of which was our main way of communicating, bringing Christopher out of his own world and into ours. It worked for us. This fact confirms my passionate belief in the importance of arts education in child development and learning in general.

Christopher has provided some of the humour. Like the time he was out with a support worker and plunged both arms up to his elbows in a vat of molasses at the health food store. Impulse control. Or when he is in the checkout line at Walmart and pokes a 300 lb biker in the stomach and says, "You're a fat, fat guy."

We are happy to say Christopher had a great high school experience, due to the wonderful teachers and educational assistants at West Hill Secondary School in Owen Sound under department head Barb King. Thanks to them and many others he has become a calm, friendly and well-liked member of our community at age 25.

It has been a roller-coaster raising this young man, but we have not stopped his education and he has not stopped learning. His life has, needless to say, shaped ours for the better, I think. But I wouldn't wish this kind of parenting challenge on anyone. It has driven me to focus my artwork on the human condition and perceptual psychology. As for our marriage the deal was, "Whoever leaves has to take the kids," so we are still here together.

I have tried to bring together my experience as an artist, teacher, father and mental-health advocate in a couple of projects. As I retire from teaching in January 2015, I also have an exhibition

of new portraits and a 30-year retrospective of my work at the prestigious Tom Thomson Art Gallery in Owen Sound that same month. The exhibition is called *Persona*. You can contact the gallery for more information or visit [tomthomson.org](http://tomthomson.org). A nice twist to the exhibition is that the curator is Heather Hughes, one of my former art students.

I have also written a yet to be published book on my experiences as an artist and a father of a pervasive autistic child titled

*The Laughing House Pictures*. I'm hoping it will be published by January 2015. ☺

**Jim Sebesta** is a visual and media arts teacher at the Owen Sound CVI in the Bluewater District School Board. His art works have been shown and collected in North America, Europe and Asia. They are also featured in Showcase on page 36 of this issue. For more information on the exhibition *Persona* or the book, *The Laughing House Pictures*, contact him at [jsebesta@gbtel.ca](mailto:jsebesta@gbtel.ca) or [www.jamessebesta.ca](http://www.jamessebesta.ca).



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**Sharon Robinson**, author of several widely praised books about her father, baseball legend Jackie Robinson, and educational consultant for Major League Baseball.



**Eric Walters**, prolific Canadian author having published over 80 novels and picture books and a former educator who devotes himself to humanitarian and social justice issues.



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# TAYLOR GUNN

## A voice and vote for democracy

Lamp of Learning recipient building student interest in elections

By Bill Hodgins

Taylor Gunn wanted to be a teacher. He worked in banking. He's held odd jobs in restaurants and bars. He's gone door-to-door, his young child strapped to his back, seeking any kind of financial backing for his democratic aspirations. He's even worked in a school.

Then one day it occurred to him that the teacher role he envisioned wasn't one in front of a classroom of students, carving out a lesson plan or marking up papers and exams. Sure, instruction was a part of it, but he saw himself more as a motivator, in a position of encouragement. A little more than a decade later, his efforts have been lauded by education officials across the province.

This year, Taylor Gunn was selected to receive one of the highest honours offered by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the 2014 Lamp of Learning award.

Each year, candidates are selected by a panel of judges on the basis of exemplary contributions to public education in Ontario. This may consist of constructive participation in educational affairs over a number of years or of work on some recent and specific undertaking.

Paul Elliott, OSSTF/FEESO President, says Gunn exemplifies all that the Lamp of Learning represents. "Taylor Gunn, more than anyone else I know, embodies the spirit of Cervantes' Don Quixote," he says. "When he set out in 2002 to get kids interested in electoral politics, many thought it impossible. Over the last 12 years, Taylor has managed to show the impossible is possible. Through his program Student Vote, now CIVIX, he has managed to inform, engage and excite students across Canada about politics. Not an easy task."

Elliott says Gunn's "drive and infectious spirit" have reached more than 9,000 schools and more than three million students. "Taylor doesn't believe in the impossible. He only believes in the possible and how to make it happen."

PHOTO: BILL HODGINS







Given his own educational background, even Gunn admits his ambitions probably seemed a bit of a stretch at the start. He twice began university degree programs, only to drop out. But his passion for politics began much earlier.

Gunn was born and raised in Toronto, a city he still loves. His father's interests spilled over to him. "I think I was always interested in the news," he says. "I sort of had this habit. Every night, Dad would watch *The National*. It didn't matter what I wanted to watch. We only had one TV. I had to watch *The National*." At the same time, there was a daily newspaper delivery to the house. News exposure seemed only natural to him. "I've always seen the value of how lucky I am...of how I grew up." It's easy to take for granted the safety afforded to most of those growing up in Canada, he says. The war zones and slums that are commonplace in so many nations are hard to imagine here.

hunger for a while, but when he learned he was to be a father, he figured he needed to get a better plan together. "I wrote down a list of things I wanted to do, and working with young people topped the list." He found work at a private school where he really started to study the education system. One of the books he read focused on

the ground, he would need to figure out how to access the education system and how he would get teachers interested in his ideas. "I wasn't really affiliated with any group. I just made it up. It was just me knocking on doors. I went around with a name I made up and cards I had printed." At the time, Gunn was back living in his

**"...his drive and infectious spirit" have reached more than 9,000 schools and more than three million students. "Taylor doesn't believe in the impossible. He only believes in the possible and how to make it happen."**

— Paul Elliott

**"If you use it in the right way, you can make positive changes. Use it effectively and people pay attention."**

— Taylor Gunn

But Gunn took something more away from the daily headlines. He saw that if one could ignore some of the frustrations and scandals that deter so many from government, there are positives to be mined. "If you use it in the right way, you can make positive changes. Use it effectively and people pay attention."

During his time at university, Gunn loved to read. But he had no interest in the books assigned in class. It made the motions of plotting his future just a little confusing. Business school seemed practical to him and it brought him to a role in banking between his first and second year of university. "Then I quit. I realized I didn't want to be a part of the machine, at least in the way I experienced it that summer." He needed to be with people, learning about people.

His restaurant and pub work fed that

voting in the U.S. and efforts made to get students involved. In one study, students were encouraged to bring their parents to the polls on election day.

He read how young people who were exposed to government policy and fairness in democracy had a greater interest in the world around them as they matured. He thought it was something that could be taught. He also felt there was a growing trend in "education purpose" towards employability over citizenship. "Maybe it was just my feeling—I don't know." But he wanted citizenship to thrive.

"I thought about trying to become a teacher but it wasn't going to happen. I had to figure out a way to employ myself and raise this amazing kid. I couldn't stop thinking about this idea I read about and I thought it could work just as well up here."

To get his vision of Student Votes off

parents' basement with next to no financial support. "Looking back, I thought I could bring some sources of income into this faster than I eventually did," he admits. "But I was pretty young. I was 23. It was just the choice I made. I had to get this up and running."

By the start of the 2003 he was able to attain some limited funding. Student Vote had its start. A year earlier, he had met his current wife, Lindsay, and they began to work together. But even with a partner, they faced some uphill challenges. For the most part, he says, their efforts—at least their ideas—were rebuffed. Those he sought advice from warned him that teachers wouldn't be interested. They were too busy. There was too much on their plates.

Peter Lipman, an educational consultant and former Director of Educational Services at the OSSTF/FEESO, helped him focus his ambitions. Lipman says when he first met Gunn, he was impressed with his energy, commitment, passion for the democratic system and his awareness that any program encouraging students to vote and participate in the democratic process had to be non-partisan. "Taylor was very concerned about the declining level of student and other Canadians' involvement in the democratic process, and he was determined





to bring his idealism and organizational ability to our schools in order to help our students learn more about politics and become involved in the process.”

Lipman says Gunn also had the insight that the more students became involved and talked about it at home, the more likely it was that other family members would also be energized and start engaging in the political process. “All he needed from us,” says Lipman, “was contacts with the schools, moral support and a few of our terrific teachers who could design the curriculum that would be used in classrooms. Eleven years later, Taylor is the same idealistic, energetic and persuasive person and Student Vote, now CIVIX, continues to be a success for our students and for our schools.”

Lipman encouraged Gunn to move forward but pushed him to develop curriculum. Gunn admits it is one thing to want to get students interested and involved; it's another to figure out how to do it. Through his new contact, Gunn found teachers willing to help build resources. Teacher unions saw to it that those who wanted to be involved could be made available. “For the first time, it started to turn into something tangible,” Gunn says. Student Vote's first real involvement in an election, in the fall of 2003, saw thousands of students and more than 800 schools involved.

But a new problem arose in the aftermath. How would Student Vote stay viable between elections? Gunn says they had found interim funding for the program through various grants and donations, but it was on the basis of individual project funding. When each project came to an end, so did the funding. “We had to string together projects to pay staff and team members, and there were regular gaps in that pay.” At about the same time, Student Vote reached out to similar groups to see if there could be areas where they could mutually benefit. That's when CIVIX was born. It allowed a merger of groups to form a charity where a steady stream of funding could be available.

A collaboration of ideas was also born, bringing about new programs to involved schools and students. Consider some of the current projects in which CIVIX is involved:

#### Ontario municipal and school-board elections

CIVIX organized a Student Vote parallel election for elementary and secondary schools coinciding with the Ontario municipal and school-board elections on October 27. Students from across the province learned about the electoral process, engaged in the campaign and cast ballots on official local candidates. This was the 10th Student Vote project co-ordinated in Ontario and around 100,000 students participated. The project was made possible due to financial support received from the Ontario Ministry of Education and Youth Take Charge Program at the Department of Canadian Heritage.

support received from the Youth Take Charge Program at the Department of Canadian Heritage, Interac and the Education Foundation at the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians.

#### Rep Day

Rep Day is a nationwide civic education initiative that connects elected representatives with high school students for a dialogue on current political issues. Rep Day aims to break down the stereotypes young people have of politicians and the political process and develop a better understanding and sense of trust in the people and institutions within our democracy. The Rep Day 2014-15 project

“Taylor was very concerned about the declining level of student and other Canadians’ involvement in the democratic process, and he was determined to bring his idealism and organizational ability to our schools in order to help our students learn more about politics and become involved in the process.”

— Peter Lipman

Sharing its decade of expertise working with teachers and education stakeholders, CIVIX took Informed Vote Toronto under its wing to help incubate the ESL education pilot project for the 2014 municipal election.

#### 2015 Student Budget Consultation

The 2015 Student Budget Consultation will provide students with an opportunity to learn about government revenues and expenditures, debate varying viewpoints on national political issues and offer their opinion on the priorities of the federal budget. The results are analyzed and presented to the Department of Finance during the budget consultation period. The project is made possible due to financial

was launched during Canada's Democracy Week and will be offered during parliamentary break weeks during the 2014-2015 school year.

Gunn says he appreciates the support he has received from OSSTF/FEESO. He realizes the significance of the Lamp of Learning Award and what it can mean, both to him and to the CIVIX organization in terms of interest and exposure. And he's hoping students and schools take notice as well. With municipal elections in 2014 and a federal election looming, he says, there is reason to be excited. ☺

**Bill Hodgins** is a Peterborough-based communications specialist, a former journalist and a father of three.





# Persona

Portrait of an artist, teacher and father

James Sebesta is an accomplished artist and visual-art teacher at Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute. The images displayed here are part of an upcoming exhibition titled *Persona* at the Tom Thomson Art Gallery, Owen Sound. Some of the pieces are inspired by his experiences as the father of a child on the autism spectrum.

His art work speaks to his role as a father, husband, teacher and advocate. His dark paintings are washed in moody colours that both unsettle and intrigue the viewer. Sebesta's upcoming show will feature these images as well as a retrospective of his body of work that spans three decades. His art can be found in collections around the world. To learn more about the artist and his family's experiences, read his feature article "Persona" on page 36 of this issue. Sebesta welcomes inquiries about his art and his upcoming book, *The Laughing House Pictures*. Please contact him at [jsebesta@gbtel.ca](mailto:jsebesta@gbtel.ca) or [www.jamessebesta.ca](http://www.jamessebesta.ca). ☺



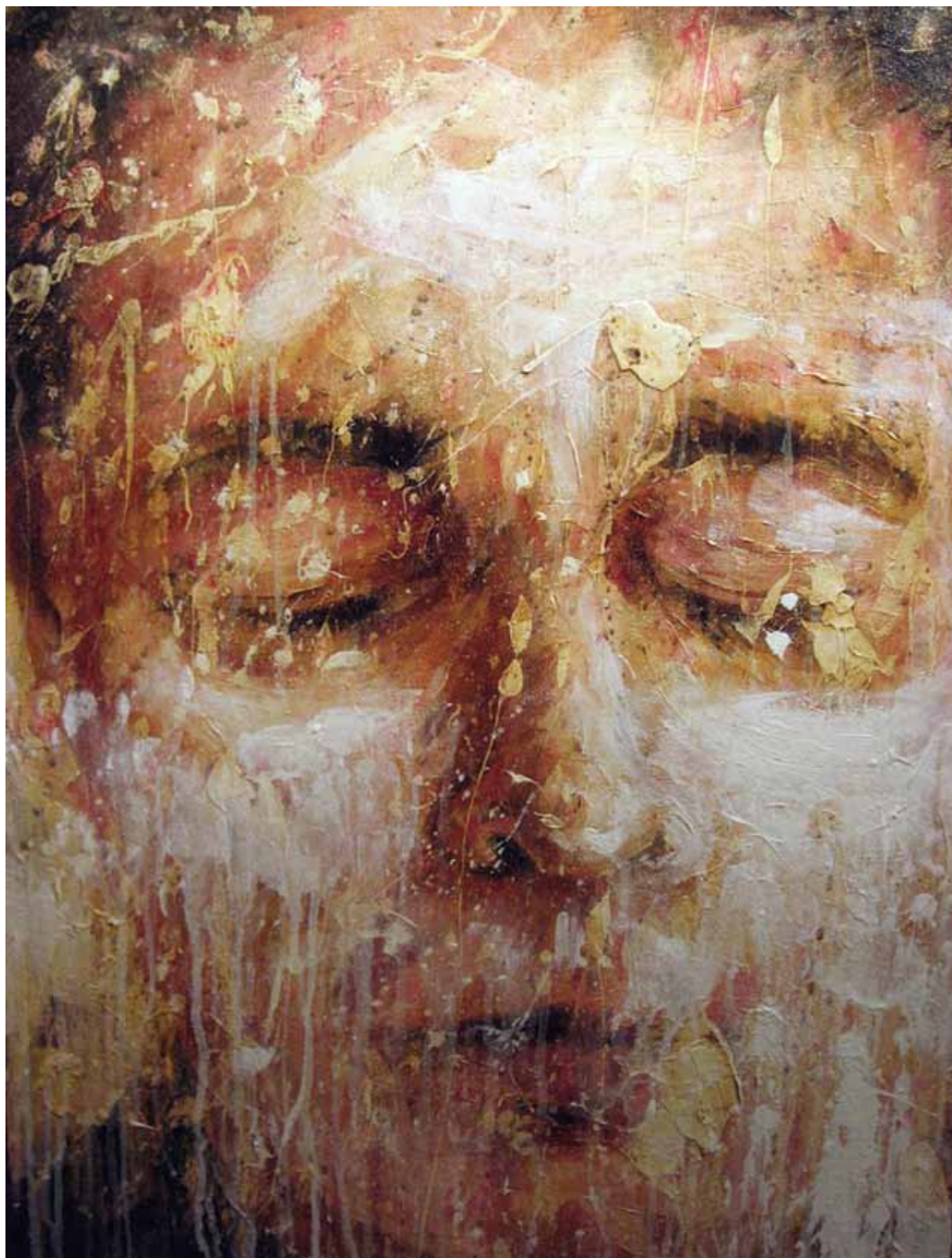
Jeanne version 3 (detail)



MS M. (detail)



Strange Child



*Portrait of Phineas Gage*





## Ripley's Aquarium

Smiling faces of the sea

**AS** I look through the glass, I see what appear to be smiling faces looking back at me. I think this might be the only time I would use the word “cute” to describe an underwater creature. The appearance of happy faces is actually the underside of the cownose stingrays as they swim up and around the Ray Bay tank, one of 16,000 sea and fresh-water specimens housed at Ripley's Aquarium in Toronto.

The first and only aquatic facility of its kind in Ontario, Ripley's Aquarium offers visitors of all ages an exciting chance to closely observe marine and freshwater creatures and habitats from around the world. Open for a year now, it offers 50 live exhibits, over 100 interactive displays, and hours of intrigue and excitement.

The tanks at the aquarium hold a remarkable 5.7 million litres of water. There are a variety of tanks populated by aquatic life from Canadian waters and beyond. One of the first tanks I encountered was hypnotizing. The Pacific Kelp exhibit features

a wave-maker that simulates the sea conditions of the British Columbia shoreline. The fish look as if they are still, but in fact they float up and down in groups, surrounded by the kelp.

My favourite has to be the Planet Jellies gallery. Five species of jellyfish are featured inside a kreisel tank, a circular aquarium designed for delicate creatures like jellyfish, who float through the water with grace. A lighting feature changes their colours from pink to red to purple. It is a beautiful and tranquil sight.

These exhibits and more all have interesting visual elements as well as numerous facts and figures posted alongside. There are galleries featuring a unique double exhibit—a tropical saltwater tank inside a freshwater tank; a 17-tank gallery displaying Canadian aquatic creatures; a tropical reef in a 420,000-litre tank, the largest in the aquarium; an underwater tunnel and moving side-walk where a grouper tank is located halfway through the tunnel; a variety of sharks; and a crawl-through tunnel for viewing. Overall you can observe nature's aquatic life from all over the





world—including venomous fish, sea horses, weedy and leafy sea dragons, piranhas and sharks—through interactive displays and a large viewing area on the lower level, plus a large touch pool on the upper level full of stingrays.

The aquarium offers school programs with a range of interactive and exciting options designed to meet Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum standards and provide participants with a deeper understanding of the aquatic world and the importance of environmental protection and conservation. These programs are offered both in classrooms and in the aquarium itself. The classroom workshops include one or more hands-on activities or experiments and a component of conservation and environmental awareness. Classroom workshops are 45 to 50 minutes in duration. Please note each classroom can accommodate a maximum of 30 students, plus accompanying adults. Alternatively, teachers may choose to have their students participate in the Tank Talk Programs that take place on the floor of the aquarium at a specified tank. An educator facilitates a discussion about the tank and the animals that inhabit it, coaches students in a guided observation and leads a short educational game or activity. Tank Talk Programs last 25 to 30 minutes.

There are also programs geared to the secondary level.

- Grade 9 and 10, *Up-cycled Art*: students look at the work of

local and international artists who turn garbage in to art. They learn about the devastating impact of plastic and other trash on freshwater and marine environments, and then use their artistic abilities to create art with a message;

- Grade 9 and 10, *Stream Science*: students work with household materials to represent aquatic macroinvertebrates, organisms that live on the bottoms of lakes, rivers and streams and can reflect the chronic effects of pollutants and relatively acute changes in water quality. Students sample a stream and assess its health, then compare results from different streams to assess the impact of human activity;
- Grade 9: *Sustainable Ecosystems*; Grade 10: *Climate in Crisis*: both programs explore the effects of the warming earth on weather patterns and oceans through a variety of experiments, focusing on the phenomenon of ocean acidification and its impact on shelled ocean creatures.
- Grade 10: *Climate Change*; Grade 11 and 12: *Aquarium Careers*: students examine animal care, water chemistry and the dynamic field of marine science.

For more information about Ripley's Aquarium, go to [www.ripleyaquariums.com/canada](http://www.ripleyaquariums.com/canada). For educational tours, phone 647.351.3474 X 2648 or e-mail [education@ripleysaquariumofcanada.com](mailto:education@ripleysaquariumofcanada.com). 🐠

# Keeping you in the loop

Reviews, conferences, PD opportunities and other items of interest

## BOOK REVIEW

### Helping Boys Learn: 6 Secrets for Teaching Boys in the Classroom

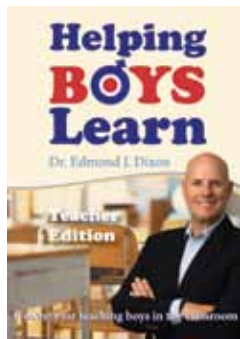
By Dr. Edmond J. Dixon  
CreateSpace, 2013  
122 pages, \$29.95

### Jump-Starting Boys: Help Your Reluctant Learner Find Success in School and Life

By Pam Withers and Cynthia Gill  
Viva Editions, 2013  
285 pages, \$19.95  
Reviewed by Shaun Naroski

"Of all animals, the boy is most unmanageable." —Plato

That quote was a clever way for Dr. Dixon to introduce his book and share his secrets for teaching boys in the classroom. Secret number one describes how movement is used in engagement and learning.



Secret number three is entitled "Boys Learn with Laughter" and is actually quite humorous. I believe humour in the classroom has positive effects for both students and

education workers. *Helping Boys Learn* also includes links to videos, templates, worksheets for parents and also an opportunity to share learning strategies with other parents by using the tip box provided.

*Jump-Starting Boys* is directed at parents of preteen and teen boys who are "underperforming in school and life." In Chapter

Two, for example, Withers and Gill explore the literacy link and the challenges faced by boys from an early age when it comes to reading and writing. The book includes a self-quiz to assess whether or not the adults in a boy's life are providing constant and varied opportunities to read or access reading materials. The appendix includes a list of additional recommended books and websites for parents and teens. The small percentage of Canadian content comes primarily from *The Globe and Mail*.

The most obvious difference between two books is the length. *Helping Boys Learn* is an ink-friendly 122 pages while *Jump-Starting Boys* weighs in at 285 pages. *Helping Boys Learn* is divided into six secrets, while *Jump-Starting Boys* is configured into 11 more traditional chapters. Both publications have their merits, but I recommend reading *Helping Boys Learn* as a first resource.

Shaun Naroski is a music teacher in District 6A, Thunder Bay and is the Vice-Chair of the Educational Services Committee.

### Lifelong Learning as Critical Action: International Perspectives on People, Politics, Policy, and Practice

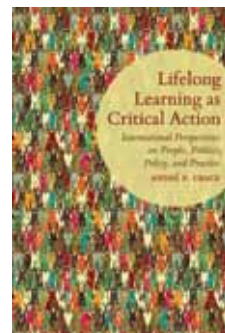
By André P. Grace  
Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2013  
250 pages, \$54.95  
Reviewed by Ronnie Whitcomb

Lifelong learning is a topic of keen and personal interest. As a mantra, it is listed as such on my Twitter bio and I was one of the first recipients of an Education Champion Award based on my desire for continual learning.

Upon opening the text *Lifelong Learning as Critical Action* by André P. Grace, it was apparent the term "lifelong learning" conjures up different definitions in various contexts. Grace is incredibly articulate in providing examples and research and applying varying lenses while studying a perhaps overused or over-interpreted term. Speakers and authors delve into what lifelong learning means to present-day society and point out the economy or business and even

governments will promote lifelong learning in a neoliberal fashion, implying or stating outright that further learning will help a situation, hence the person, their company, then the economy will improve—a very bottom-line approach to the definition.

Other studies Grace highlights show lifelong learning through a cultural/social lens.



Not all learning is formal. Not all learning is a means to an end. Learning can come from Elders. It can stem from health concerns. The pleasure of learning can

come from sheer interest! There are those who view learning as a lifetime achievement, from toddlers to formal education to institutions of higher learning and trade schools and on throughout a person's life. This is a holistic approach to the definition.

Grace devotes individual chapters to specific lenses: historic, equity, diversity, gender, Aboriginal, all very current and very important. His perspectives are perhaps enhanced from his roles as Director of the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and also a Professor with the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

When Grace talks about lifelong learning as critical action, he calls for "action that encompasses and nurtures social engagement, political and economic understanding, and cultural work to benefit citizens as learners and workers."

Personally, I found these studies and definitions to be eye-opening. Under the various pressures of globalization, economies and government policies, if shaped by neoliberalism, does that produce the lifelong learner needed by Canadian or global society? My new mantra? Life-Wide Learner.

Ronnie Whitcomb is an educational assistant in District 23, Grand Erie and is a member of the Communications/Political Action Committee.

## **Technocreep: The Surrender of Privacy and the Capitalization of Intimacy**

By Thomas P. Keenan

OR Books, 2014

224 pages, \$18.00; e-book \$10.00

Reviewed by Lisa Black-Meddings

Thomas Keenan presents an at times sinister look into how unseen technology has crept in to all aspects of our private lives. Keenan, a professor at the University of Calgary, uses his background as a computer technologist and digital security expert to analyze scenarios the reader may think only exist in the movies but are all too real.

He discusses the many ways our phones and computers stealthily spy on us and invade our private lives, taking note of everything from closed-circuit cameras monitoring city streets to facial-recognition software, biometric identification and how to better safeguard our privacy to try to protect ourselves from the invasive technologies creeping into all aspects of our lives.

There is plentiful Canadian content, including case studies of Internet bullying and the suicide of Rehtaeh Parsons and Amanda Todd, which make for painful but important class discussions of Internet safety and the proliferation of images via social media.

Keenan has a wry sense of humour that pervades his narrative even when analyzing technological invasions. He says he is trying to be forthright about technology with the understanding that all technology can be used for good or evil. Keenan also gives a historical framework to aspects of technological advancements that will provide students with more context, especially for those who grew up in the digital age.

Summing up, he says, “We should be thinking about the moral, ethical and even spiritual dimensions of technology before it is too late.” This is an interesting read for both teachers and students about up-to-the-minute issues.

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**Lisa Black-Meddings** is the Chief Negotiator and Executive Officer with the Secondary Teachers’ Bargaining Unit of OSSTF/FEESO Toronto and

a member of the Communications/Political Action Committee.

## **Raising Expectations (and Raising Hell)**

By Jane McAlevey

Verso, 2014 (reprinted edition)

332 pages, \$11.97

Reviewed by Dan Earle

Inspiring. Provocative. Candid. *Raising Expectations* offers a rare behind-the-scenes look into the work of union organizer Jane McAlevey. In *Raising Expectations*, McAlevey challenges the labour movement from grassroots members to national labour leaders, calling on them to take the necessary steps to revive the labour movement. Although some may describe McAlevey’s strategies as unconventional, they proved to be the key strategies that enabled historic organizing and contract victories in some of the most hostile anti-union, right-to-work regions of the United States.

According to McAlevey, reviving the labour movement is essential if there is any hope of stopping the austerity-driven, right-to-work agenda that has crippled organized labour in the United States and beyond. But since fewer and fewer workers globally are even part of a union, McAlevey is not only proposing the raising of expectations for unions but also raising them for all members and structures of society.

McAlevey speaks plainly about the need for people to expect more and be willing to fight for more in every aspect of their lives, “their employer, their government, their community, and their union.” Furthermore she challenges us all to raise the bar on what we are capable of achieving if we work together in solidarity. She demands workers themselves must be the agents of change. We must move towards “social movement unionism.”

Labour laws in the United States make organizing and sustaining a unionized shop near impossible. McAlevey’s stories of staring down the lawyers and corporate bosses from some of the largest for-profit health-care corporations are both engrossing and funny.

Time after time McAlevey was sent

into what many national labour leaders believed were can’t-win situations with impossible employers and hopeless, disengaged workers. By employing strategies like power Structure Analysis, big representative bargaining and “whole worker organizing,” McAlevey was able to revitalize and organize unions wherever she went, particularly in the state of Nevada.

With McAlevey’s efforts and strategies, workers went from hating the union to members ready to take on their employer using militant strategies where necessary. They became stronger unified activists and staunch defenders of their union.

Despite all her victories Jane McAlevey’s tactics did not simply try to change what unions do but also challenged their organizational structures. Although such radical ideologies and beliefs ultimately led to her demise as an organizer in the U.S. labour movement, *Raising Expectations* is an incredibly moving account of how difficult self-analysis and a revision of strategy are required if unions hope not just to survive but thrive in the United States.

Put simply, any activist looking for motivation and re-energizing could benefit from picking up this book and seriously begin to raise their own expectations. However, be warned: it will likely also require “raising hell” as well.

---

**Dan Earle** is an OSSTF/FEESO teacher in District 19, Peel.

## **Raising Expectations (and Raising Hell)**

de Jane McAlevey

Verso (Réimpression, 2014)

332 pages, 11,97 \$

Critique de Dan Earle

Stimulant. Provocateur. Franc. *Raising Expectations* offre un aperçu inédit des coulisses du travail de Jane McAlevey, agente de recrutement syndicale. Dans *Raising Expectations*, Jane McAlevey lance un défi au milieu syndical, à commencer par les membres de la base jusqu’aux dirigeants syndicaux nationaux. Elle leur demande de prendre les mesures nécessaires afin de





raviver le mouvement syndical. Même si certains peuvent décrire les stratégies de Jane de non-conformistes, elles se sont avérées des stratégies décisives qui ont permis de conclure des campagnes de recrutement et des conventions collectives historiques dans les régions qui sont à la fois les plus hostiles au syndicat et en même temps appuient le programme de droit au travail des États-Unis.

Selon Jane McAlevey, raviver le mouvement syndical est essentiel si nous espérons mettre un frein à ce programme de droit au travail reposant sur l'austérité qui a paralysé les syndicats aux États-Unis et au-delà. Mais comme de moins en moins de travailleurs sont membres d'un syndicat à l'échelle mondiale, Jane McAlevey propose non seulement d'accroître les attentes à l'égard des syndicats, mais aussi d'élever celles-ci pour tous les membres et toutes les structures de la société.

Jane McAlevey parle de manière claire de

la nécessité pour les gens de s'attendre à plus et à être prêts à lutter en ce sens dans tous les aspects de leurs vies « leur employeur, leur gouvernement, leur communauté et leur syndicat. » En outre, elle nous lance à tous le défi d'élever le niveau des attentes par rapport à ce que nous pouvons tous réaliser si nous travaillons ensemble, en solidarité. Elle exige que les travailleurs eux-mêmes deviennent des agents du changement. Nous devons nous diriger vers un « syndicalisme de mouvement social. »

Aux États-Unis, le droit du travail rend pratiquement impossible la syndicalisation et le maintien d'atelier syndiqué. Les récits de Jane, qui a dans sa mire les avocats et les dirigeants d'entreprise des plus grandes sociétés à but lucratif dans le domaine de la santé, sont à la fois captivants et drôles.

À maintes reprises, Jane McAlevey s'est retrouvée dans ce que plusieurs dirigeants syndicaux nationaux pensaient être des situations impossibles à gagner avec des

employeurs difficiles et des travailleurs désespérés et désintéressés. En utilisant des stratégies comme *Power Structure Analysis*, *Big representative bargaining* et *Whole worker organizing*, Jane McAlevey a su raviver et organiser des syndicats partout où elle est allée, en particulier dans l'État du Nevada.

Grâce aux efforts et aux stratégies de Jane McAlevey, les travailleurs qui haïssaient le syndicat se sont transformés en membres prêts à lutter contre leur employeur en ayant recours à des stratégies militantes si nécessaire. Ils sont devenus des activistes plus forts et plus unis, d'ardents défenseurs de leur syndicat.

Malgré toutes ses victoires, les tactiques de Jane McAlevey n'ont pas seulement tenté de changer le rôle des syndicats, mais elles ont aussi remis en question leurs structures organisationnelles. Même si de telles idéologies et convictions ont finalement entraîné sa fin en tant qu'agente de recrutement au sein du mouvement syndical américain, *Raising Expectations* est un témoignage très émouvant de la difficulté pour les syndicats de s'auto-analyser et de la nécessité de revoir leurs stratégies s'ils espèrent non seulement survivre, mais également grandir aux États-Unis.

En d'autres termes, tout activiste à la recherche de motivation et d'un nouveau dynamisme pourrait certainement tirer parti de la lecture de ce livre et commencer sérieusement à rehausser ses propres attentes. Soyez toutefois prévenu qu'il faudra aussi faire des pieds et des mains.

Dan Earle est enseignant, membre d'OSSTF/FEESO, du District 19, Peel.

## CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**November 5–7, 2014**

Educational Computing Organization of Ontario

Bring IT Together 2 Conference  
Scotiabank Convention Centre,  
Niagara Falls, ON

Plans are underway for this annual conference for educators interested in the

University of Windsor  
cepe Centre for Executive and Professional Education  
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR EDUCATORS  
**set yourself apart**  
**démarquez-vous**  
Winter Semester:  
Registration Opens: October 1st  
Registration Closes: January 18th  
Classes Start: January 19th  
Classes End: April 11th

integration of new computing technology into the educational curriculum. For more information visit [ecoo.org/conference2013](http://ecoo.org/conference2013).

#### **November 6–8, 2014**

##### **Soundscapes 2014**

[London Convention Centre, London, ON](#)

The Ontario Music Educators' Association (OMEA) and the Canadian Music Industry Education Committee (CMIEC) are co-hosting the Soundscapes 2014 conference on Music and Music Education in Ontario. Soundscapes 2014 will offer music educators from across Ontario the opportunity to participate in focused workshops and discussions on their craft, investigate the latest music-industry innovations and technologies, and gather with colleagues to discuss and refine the education of Ontario's students towards success in life. For more information visit [www.omea.on.ca](http://www.omea.on.ca).

#### **November 9–11, 2014**

##### **OSCA Gold: Creating Pathways to Success (K to 12)**

[International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, ON](#)

The Ontario School Counsellors' Association presents a conference focusing on six themes: career and labour market trends, mental health issues, counselling techniques, career development, at-risk students and shared best practices. For more information visit [www.oscaconference.ca](http://www.oscaconference.ca).

#### **November 13–15, 2014**

##### **STAO2014: Inspiring Innovation**

[International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, ON](#)

The Science Teachers' Association of Ontario presents its annual conference to help science educators in Ontario better understand the significance of STEM education and how it can prepare our students for a rapidly changing world. Science educators today have the awesome task of transforming thinking and learning practices in the classroom and STAO is here to help. The goal of STAO2014 is to help turn inspiration into action, initiatives into implementation. For more information, visit [stao.ca](http://stao.ca).

#### **February 26, 2015–March 01, 2015**

##### **Best Start Resource Centre 2015 Annual Conference**

[Hilton Toronto Airport Hotel, Toronto, ON](#)

The Best Start Resource Centre conference will address issues of interest to service providers working in the areas of preconception health, prenatal health and/or early child development. Acquire the latest information, learn innovative strategies and programs, and meet new colleagues. For more information, visit [www.aecce.ca/tags/pd](http://www.aecce.ca/tags/pd).

#### **March 26–28, 2015**

##### **World Congress of Modern Languages Collaborating across Languages and Borders conference**

[Sheraton on the Falls, Niagara Falls, ON](#)

Be part of the most exciting event of the year for teachers of second languages. Topics include multilingualism, cultural

interaction, language acquisition and class management. The conference will include two symposia by the European Centre for Modern Languages and the Canadian Centre for Studies and Research on Bilingualism and Language Planning. For more information, visit [www.caslt.org/conference15/conference2015\\_en.php](http://www.caslt.org/conference15/conference2015_en.php).

#### **April 9–10, 2015**

##### **Association for Special Education Technology Spring Conference**

[Sheraton on the Falls, Niagara Falls, ON](#)

ASET's seventh annual conference will begin with a vendors' showcase, followed by a meet and greet. Friday's conference will include an inspirational keynote address by Alvin Law, followed by a variety of relevant and informative breakout sessions. For more information, visit [aset-ontario.ca](http://aset-ontario.ca).

## *International Teaching Opportunities*

### **Teachers' Overseas Recruiting Fair 23–25 January 2015**

- 70–80 international schools from 40–50 countries
- Several hundred positions K–12
- Placements for August/September 2015
- Most contracts for 2 years
- Minimum 2 years experience required
- Well organized event, comfortable size
- Limited space, register ASAP

#### **CONTACT**

Teachers' Overseas Recruiting Fair  
Faculty of Education  
Queen's University  
Kingston, ON  
Canada K7L 3N6  
Tel 613-533-6205  
[torf@queensu.ca](mailto:torf@queensu.ca)



<http://educ.queensu.ca/torf>



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## Forum picks

### May 7–9, 2015

Ontario Association of Physics Teachers  
Bridging the Gap conference  
University of Guelph, Guelph, ON

This year's conference theme looks at bridging the gap between K–12 teachers and post-secondary educators. Workshop proposals are being accepted now. To submit a proposal or to register, visit [www.oapt.ca](http://www.oapt.ca).

### May 13–17, 2015

Dare to Stand Out: The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Forum  
Jer's Vision  
Glendon College, Toronto, ON

This event invites 100 students from across the region to participate in a week-long training event. The participants will be trained to run successful Gender and Sexuality Alliance clubs in their schools and community. If you know of a student who would be interested to attend as a participant or as a mentor, please visit <http://www.jersvision.org/en/programs/dare-stand-out-gender-and-sexuality-alliance-forum-dtso> for more information.

### June 22–25, 2015

Canada International Conference on Education  
University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

The Canada International Conference is an international refereed conference dedicated to the advancement of theory and practices in education. The CICE promotes collaborative excellence between education academicians and professionals. Submissions are accepted in English and French.

The aim of CICE is to provide an opportunity for academicians and professionals from various educational fields with cross-disciplinary interests to bridge the knowledge gap, promote research esteem and the evolution of pedagogy. CICE–2015 invites research papers that encompass conceptual analysis, design implementation and performance evaluation.

This conference covers a wide range of topics concerning teaching and learning. For more information, visit [www.ciceducation.org](http://www.ciceducation.org).







Last word

by Paul Elliott, President

Mot de la fin

par Paul Elliott, président

## December 6, 1989

Twenty-five years later and not enough has changed

Specific dates—milestones, anniversaries, birthdays—are meant to give us pause. We take a moment to reflect on the significance of the date, on what was lost that day, or gained, or how much we have grown in a variety of ways since the passing of the day. The significance of December 6, and the horror that occurred on that day in 1989, has been captured, in one way, by the Denis Villeneuve film *Polytechnique*, released in 2009. The anniversary of the senseless murder of 14 women once again raises the spectre of violence against women and girls, and the evil, insidious nature of a violent impulse directed at specific victims for the simple reason they are female.

Twenty-five years have passed since that day, and although we have not seen a recurrence of a violent incident of that magnitude, we cannot delude ourselves that violence against women has been diminished or reduced. It continues to plague our society—and yet we continue to witness federal funding cuts to women's programs and shelters, and the failure of the federal government to act and develop a national program to raise awareness of the issue or to push back in a meaningful way against something that has become a systemic blight upon us all.

In March 2014, the federal government released the parliamentary report *Invisible Women: A Call to Action; A Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada*. The committee report gave us a modicum of insight into the issue of violence against indigenous women, and included 15 recommendations in regards to public awareness, support, police services and, in general terms, violence against women and girls. The report was followed by an RCMP report, *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview*, which provided a statistical synopsis. The statistics cited in the RCMP report were alarming. Aboriginal women account for 16 per cent of female homicides and 11.3 per cent of missing women in Canada. This is three to four times higher than the proportion of Aboriginal women within the Canadian population, which is 4.3 per cent. The most distressing trend was in the number of female homicides per year from 1980 to 2012. Over that time period the percentage of Aboriginal female homicides as a proportion of total female homicides per year grew from 8 per cent in 1980 to 23 per cent in 2012. The statistics are disturbing

## Le 6 décembre 1989

Vingt-cinq ans plus tard et pas suffisamment de changements

Les dates précises, les moments importants, les fêtes, les anniversaires de naissance nous incitent tous à réfléchir. Nous prenons quelques instants pour penser à l'importance de la date, à ce qui a été perdu ou gagné ou à quel point nous avons progressé dans différents domaines. L'importance du 6 décembre et l'horreur commise ce jour-là en 1989 ont été captées d'une certaine façon dans le film *Polytechnique* de Denis Villeneuve, sorti en 2009. L'anniversaire de ce meurtre insensé de 14 femmes a soulevé une fois de plus le spectre de la violence faite aux femmes et aux filles de même que le caractère insidieux et maléfique d'un élan de violence visant tout particulièrement des victimes, pour la simple raison qu'elles sont des femmes.

Vingt-cinq ans se sont écoulés depuis ce jour-là et, bien que nous n'ayons pas constaté un autre incident violent de cette envergure, nous aurions tort de croire que la violence faite aux femmes a diminué ou s'est amoindrie. Elle continue d'empoisonner notre société et, pourtant, nous sommes témoins des compressions budgétaires fédérales dans les programmes et les refuges destinés aux femmes de même que de l'inaction du gouvernement fédéral dans l'élaboration d'un programme national de sensibilisation à ce problème ou de lutte constructive contre ce qui est devenu un fléau systémique qui nous menace tous.

En mars 2014, le gouvernement fédéral a publié un rapport parlementaire intitulé *Femmes invisibles : Un appel à l'action; Un rapport sur les femmes autochtones portées disparues ou assassinées au Canada*. Le rapport du comité nous donne un aperçu du problème de la violence à l'encontre des femmes autochtones et comprend 15 recommandations sur la sensibilisation du public, le soutien, les services de police et d'ordre général sur la violence faite aux femmes et aux filles. Il a donné lieu à un autre rapport de la GRC : *Les femmes autochtones disparues et assassinées : Un aperçu opérationnel national* qui brosse un résumé statistique. Les statistiques citées dans le rapport de la GRC étaient inquiétantes. Les femmes autochtones représentent 16 pour cent des homicides commis contre des femmes et 11,3 pour cent des femmes disparues au Canada. C'est trois à quatre fois plus élevé que la proportion des femmes autochtones au sein de la population canadienne qui est de 4,3 pour cent. Le nombre d'homicides de femmes par année entre 1980 et 2012 est la tendance la plus préoccupante. Au cours de



in the extreme, and these numbers alone should have been enough to convince Prime Minister Harper to call for an immediate public inquiry. But he continues to refuse to act.

Despite the widespread call for a public inquiry and the parliamentary report that clearly identifies an escalating trend, the recommendations of the parliamentary committee remain dormant and the federal government remains conspicuously silent, plainly uninterested in developing and releasing a strategy to deal with the recommendations before it. We clearly can't wait for government action, and one group, which had its funding cut by the current government, has begun to act.

The Canadian Women's Foundation recently released its report, *From Heartbreaking to Groundbreaking: Stories and Strategies to End Sex Trafficking in Canada*. The report patiently connects the dots, drawing clear and undeniable links between violence against girls and women and the dehumanizing, violent world of sex trafficking. The Canadian Women's Foundation commissioned a National

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We will need courage and vision to  
fight this problem.”**

Task Force that travelled to eight cities across Canada and consulted with all levels of government, more than 260 organizations and 160 survivors of sex trafficking. The Task Force members heard the accounts of recruitment, beatings and rapes, and the stories of the survivors who have tried to piece their shattered lives back together.

What the Task Force did not get to hear were the stories of those sex-trafficking victims who did not survive the violence. Their individual stories are lost to us forever, except to the extent that the distressing circumstances of their lives reverberate through the compiled statistics. These numbers are all we have to underscore the magnitude of this tragedy: the most common recruitment age, 13 to 14; the average annual profit from each female trafficked in Canada, \$280,800; and the number of trafficked girls and women served in 2012 by 266 Canadian organizations, 2,872.

And so we now have three comprehensive reports from diverse sources and still there is no action. We cannot continue to ignore these reports. Each contains recommendations not only for governments, police services, government agencies and community supports but also for each member of the community. The issues surrounding violence against women and girls may be deep-rooted and complex, but they are not insurmountable.

The Task Force Chairs, Margot Franssen and Sheila O'Brien, have challenged us all: “Emotion is no substitute for action. We will need courage and vision to fight this problem.”

On December 6, when we observe a day of remembrance for those senselessly murdered, let us also use that day as a call to action to and an emphatic proclamation of our commitment to end violence against women and girls. ☞

cette période, le pourcentage d'homicides de femmes autochtones, comparativement au total des homicides de femmes par année, est passé de 8 pour cent en 1980 à 23 pour cent en 2012. Les statistiques inquiètent au plus haut point et ces chiffres auraient dû suffire pour convaincre le premier ministre Harper de déclencher une enquête publique immédiate. Mais il s'entête à ne pas agir.

Malgré l'appel généralisé en faveur d'une enquête publique et le rapport parlementaire qui signale clairement une tendance à la hausse, les recommandations du comité parlementaire demeurent sans action et le gouvernement fédéral reste remarquablement silencieux, manifestement désintéressé à élaborer et à mettre en œuvre une stratégie pour donner suite aux recommandations qui lui ont été présentées. Il est évident que nous ne pouvons pas attendre les mesures concrètes du gouvernement et un groupe, dont le financement a été réduit par le gouvernement actuel, a commencé à agir.

La Fondation canadienne des femmes a publié récemment son rapport intitulé *From Heartbreaking to Groundbreaking: Stories and Strategies to end Sex Trafficking in Canada*. Le rapport établit des liens clairs et indéniables entre la violence envers les filles et les femmes et le monde violent et déshumanisant de l'exploitation sexuelle. La Fondation canadienne des femmes a mandaté un groupe de travail national qui a visité huit villes dans tout le Canada et a consulté des représentants de tous les paliers de gouvernement, plus de 260 organisations et 160 survivantes de l'exploitation sexuelle. Les membres du groupe de travail ont entendu le récit des survivantes qui ont été recrutées, battues et violées et qui ont tenté de rebâtir leurs vies brisées. Ce qu'ils n'ont pas pu entendre, ce sont les récits des victimes d'exploitation sexuelle qui n'ont pas survécu à cette violence. Leurs récits individuels sont à jamais perdus, sauf si les situations pénibles de leurs vies se répercutent dans les statistiques compilées. Ces chiffres sont tout ce que nous avons pour souligner l'ampleur de cette tragédie : l'âge de recrutement le plus courant – entre 13 et 14 ans; le bénéfice annuel moyen de chaque femme victime de traite de personnes au Canada – 280 800 \$; le nombre de filles et de femmes que l'on cherche à exploiter sexuellement desservies par 266 organisations canadiennes en 2012 – 2 872.

Et nous avons maintenant trois rapports détaillés de diverses sources et il n'y a toujours pas de mesures. On ne peut continuer de les ignorer. Chacun d'eux comprend des recommandations à l'intention non seulement des gouvernements, des services de police, des organismes gouvernementaux et des services communautaires, mais aussi pour chaque membre de la communauté. Les problèmes entourant la violence faite aux femmes et aux filles peuvent être profonds et complexes, mais ils ne sont pas insurmontables.

Margot Franssen et Sheila O'Brien, présidentes du groupe de travail, nous mettent tous au défi : « L'émotion ne remplace pas l'action. Nous aurons besoin de courage et de vision pour lutter contre ce problème. »

Le 6 décembre, lorsque nous observerons une journée de commémoration pour celles qui ont été assassinées sans aucune raison, servons-nous aussi de cette journée comme un signal pour agir et une proclamation catégorique de notre engagement à mettre fin à la violence faite aux femmes et aux filles. ☞



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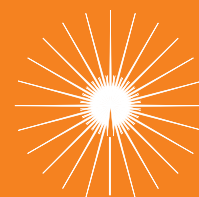
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