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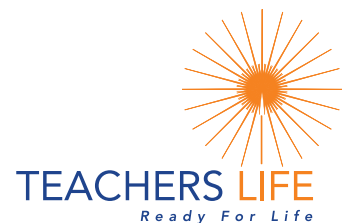
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The challenges of diversity and accessibility

BY the time you read this issue of *Forum*, OSSTF/FEESO's Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) will have been over for almost three months. However, each year AMPA holds a central role in the life of the federation. It is democracy in action, since the elected delegates from across the province decide upon the direction for the Provincial Executive and the union as a whole for the next school year. The Annual Action Plan adopted at AMPA 2009 includes the priorities of engaging new members, developing new leaders, promoting the involvement of Francophone members and forming an Aboriginal Education Work Group.

In my last column, I spoke on the strength of the diversity of this union. As the only education union which represents not only public secondary teachers, but also educational workers from every other level of education from elementary to post-secondary, and in all four public systems—elementary, secondary, Catholic and French—OSSTF/FEESO is uniquely positioned to share with each other and with our students a wealth of knowledge and interests which, in turn, can enrich our work in helping the province's students be successful and fulfil their potential as caring and productive citizens. This issue presents a wide variety of articles which represent the wealth of that diversity and which speak to its challenges.

The keynote speaker at AMPA this year was His Honour David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. His speech is reprinted for you as the cover story of this issue, and it is particularly timely, for it speaks of His Honour's desire to improve accessibility of all kinds, including accessibility of learning, to all of Ontario's citizens, and to Aboriginal students in particular.

Suzette Clark's article describes OSSTF/FEESO's commitment to provide quality professional development to our members on the topics of anti-homophobia and gender-based violence. From PAIN to PRIDE is the Federation's newest workshop and a team of passionate presenters is now ready to fan out across the province to teach members

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how to provide support to those who are experiencing homophobic and gender-based prejudice and violence.

As you are aware from previous issues of *Forum*, OSSTF/FEESO and its members often support activist projects and initiatives that are global in nature. Recently, the provincial Human Rights Committee provided some funding so that Canadian observers could go to

Bolivia to oversee elections there. Raul Burbano's article "Bolivia's New Constitution" tells the story of how that country is developing a new constitution through the broad participation of the opposition, indigenous groups, social movements, farmers and workers.

Bryan Smith's article reviews the recently published book *War Child: A Child Soldier's Story* by Emmanuel Jal, an autobiographical account of this popular Rap musician's experiences as a child soldier in Sudan. Smith explains how members can enrich their own global awareness through reading the book, and also provides some suggestions for how the book can be used to educate students about this human rights issue.

It is well-documented that the better educated adults are, the more likely it is that their children will also be successful. It stands to reason, therefore, that adult education is a vital necessity and school boards are best placed to provide that education, and this is clearly shown by Lydia Salmon's article "Adult education: A world of opportunities." Her description of the Heritage Day activities celebrated in the adult education programs in her school board shows how the challenge of diversity can be overcome, for the betterment of society.

Finally, Kim Penzhorn describes her experiences as an international volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and how that experience has helped her to inspire her own students to "be the change they wish to see in the world," and frequent contributor Judith Robinson provides an excellent column on how films in the annual Hot Docs Festival can be used to enrich students' learning experiences.

The editorial team and I hope that you will find the offerings in this issue engaging and that they will inspire you in the work that you do at your workplace. 🐾

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Le défi de la diversité et de l'accessibilité

Lorsque vous prendrez connaissance de ce numéro, la Réunion annuelle de l'Assemblée provinciale (RAAP) d'OSSTF/FEESO sera chose du passé depuis près de trois mois déjà. Chaque année, la RAAP joue cependant un rôle central dans la vie de la Fédération. C'est la démocratie à l'œuvre parce que les délégués de la province ont élu l'Exécutif provincial et établi l'orientation du syndicat pour la prochaine année scolaire. Le Plan d'action annuel adopté à la RAAP 2009 comprend les priorités suivantes : engagement des nouveaux membres, perfectionnement des nouveaux leaders, promotion de la participation des membres francophones et création d'un groupe de travail sur l'éducation des Autochtones.

Dans ma dernière chronique, j'ai parlé de la force de la diversité de notre syndicat. En tant que seul syndicat en éducation représentant non seulement le personnel enseignant des écoles secondaires publiques, mais aussi les travailleuses et travailleurs de tous les paliers du système d'éducation, de l'élémentaire au postsecondaire, et des quatre systèmes publics : élémentaire, secondaire, catholique et francophone, OSSTF/FEESO est particulièrement bien placé pour partager avec les autres et avec ses élèves la richesse du savoir et de la participation. En revanche, ceci nous permet d'aider les élèves de la province à réussir et à développer leur potentiel de citoyens productifs et altruistes. Ce numéro publie de nombreux articles qui représentent la richesse de cette diversité et leurs défis.

Cette année, l'honorable David C. Onley, lieutenant-gouverneur de l'Ontario, était conférencier invité à la RAAP. Son discours est reproduit à votre intention comme article-vedette de ce numéro; son discours tombe à point nommé, car il partage le même désir d'améliorer l'accessibilité à tous les niveaux, y com-

pris l'accès à l'apprentissage pour tous les citoyens ontariens et surtout pour les élèves autochtones.

L'article de Suzette Clark décrit l'engagement d'OSSTF/FEESO à offrir du perfectionnement professionnel de qualité à ses membres sur les questions de la violence fondée sur le sexe et de la lutte à l'homophobie. « De la souffrance à la fierté » (*From PAIN to PRIDE*) est le tout dernier atelier de la Fédération et l'équipe de présentateurs passionnés est maintenant prête à se déployer à travers

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la province pour enseigner aux membres comment soutenir ceux qui sont victimes d'homophobes, de préjugés et de violence fondée sur le sexe.

Comme vous avez pu le lire dans des numéros antérieurs de ce magazine, OSSTF/FEESO et ses membres appuient souvent des initiatives et des projets d'activistes qui sont de nature mondiale. Dernièrement, le Comité provincial des droits de la personne a assuré le financement pour que des observateurs canadiens puissent se rendre en Bolivie en vue de superviser leurs élections. L'article de Raul Burbano « *Bolivia's New Constitution* » raconte comment ce pays développe une nouvelle constitution grâce à la grande participation de l'opposition, des groupes autochtones, des mouvements d'agriculteurs, de travailleurs et sociaux.

L'article de Bryan Smith examine le livre d'Emmanuel Jal publié récemment et intitulé « *War Child: A Child Soldier's Story* », un récit autobiographique des expériences de ce musicien de rap populaire en tant qu'enfant-soldat au Soudan. Bryan Smith explique comment les membres peuvent enrichir leur sensibilisation mondiale en lisant un livre et suggère des façons d'utiliser ce livre en vue d'éduquer les élèves sur cette question de droits de la personne.

De nombreuses attestations démontrent que plus le niveau d'éducation des adultes est élevé, plus il est probable que leurs enfants réussiront aussi. Il va de soi par conséquent que l'éducation aux adultes soit vitale et que les conseils scolaires soient les mieux positionnés pour offrir cette éducation. Cela est clairement démontré dans l'article de Lydia Salmon intitulé « *Adult Education: A world of opportunities* ». Sa description des activités de la Fête du patrimoine, célébrée dans le cadre des programmes d'éducation des adultes dans son conseil scolaire, démontre comment le défi de la diversité peut être surmonté pour le mieux-être de la société.

Enfin, Kim Penzhorn décrit ses expériences en tant que bénévole internationale avec l'organisme « Habitat pour l'humanité » et comment ses expériences l'ont aidé à inspirer ses propres élèves à « être le changement qu'ils veulent voir dans le monde ». De plus, Judith Robinson, collaboratrice assidue, livre une excellente rubrique sur la façon dont les films du festival annuel « *Hot Docs* » peuvent être utilisés pour renforcer les expériences d'apprentissage des élèves.

L'équipe éditoriale et moi-même espérons que vous trouverez les articles de ce numéro passionnants et qu'ils seront une inspiration dans ce que vous accomplissez à votre lieu de travail. 

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all Canadians to recognize
the diverse cultures and
outstanding contributions of
First Nations, Inuit and Métis
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nationale des Autochtones,
une occasion pour tous les
Canadiens et Canadiennes
de reconnaître la diversité
culturelle et la contribution
remarquable des membres des
Premières nations, des Inuit et
des Métis.



Docs for Schools

Empowering and engaging education



An image from the documentary *Reporter*, which follows journalist Nicholas Kristof on a trek through the war-ravaged Republic of Congo

The films are fantastic,” said Barry Smith, Vice Principal at Delta Secondary School in Hamilton. At-risk students “were the most attentive, focused and quiet they’ve been all year,” while watching documentaries from the Docs for Schools program.

Smith, who is the Curriculum Leader for the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, has been championing the free film program in area schools for several years. He believes that the documentaries are “touching kids” in ways that other media are not.

Docs for Schools is part of the annual Toronto-based Hot Docs Festival, which has been in existence for 16 years and is one of the largest documentary film festivals in the world. In 2006, eight films were shown to 7,000 middle and high school students. In 2007, 50 schools and 14,000 students were involved; in 2008,

almost 23,000 students saw festival films. This year, from May 4–8, the festival reached approximately 30,000 students from 170 schools across the province.

In 2008, Smith joined 11 other educators to form the festival’s Teachers Advisory Council. Members have input as to subject areas and age-appropriateness, and publicize the event in their respective school boards. “We really feel valued by the executives of the festival,” he said. “They listen to our input.”

This has been the case since the program’s inception in 2006, when Docs for Schools’ first Education Manager, Barb Sniderman, surveyed teachers who had indicated interest in participating in the festival about their reactions to a list of 20 potential films. Based on teachers’ email responses, eight films were selected.

Docs for Schools courier DVDs of the films free to schools for exclusive use dur-

ing the week of Hot Docs—which takes place in early May of each year. Teachers have used a variety of screening options, from hosting school-wide mini-festivals, to utilizing guest facilitators provided by Docs for Schools for Q&As, to screening films in individual classes.

Hot Docs holds screenings at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. each day at Toronto’s Bloor Cinema. Afterwards, students participate in question and answer sessions with the filmmakers and/or people featured in the films. Some school groups attend two screenings in one day, while others, often those from outside Toronto, attend one screening and opt to use the extra time to visit other Toronto attractions such as the Royal Ontario Museum or the Ontario Science Centre.

Smith said that the program has been very popular in Hamilton. In 2008, the first year he promoted the films, five elementary and five secondary schools participated.

“Barton Secondary held a film festival with a red carpet, and kids playing paparazzi. They had a lot of fun,” he said. Volunteer facilitators, such as Smith, provided by Docs for Schools, often introduce the films and host question and answer sessions after the screenings.

“It’s quite unique,” said Lesley Sparks, Education and Programs Manager, Docs for Schools. “It makes the textbook come alive. Kids can relate to this kind of medium. The content is engaging and it’s NOW. It provides a catalyst to enter into the creative aspects of the curriculum.”

Amy Brandon, a special education resource teacher from Barrie North Collegiate (BNC), said that she “received a lot of positive feedback” about films screened in her school last year. Building on that, this year she coordinated a school-wide event that had “both staff and students excited.” So much so that 1,400 students



Brushy One String, one of the reggae artists featured in *Rise Up*

participated—up from 400 in 2008.

BNC has a television in every classroom connected to a central broadcasting system that enables films to be screened throughout the school simultaneously. Some films are shown to several classes in the library, and individual classes screen a number of subject-specific films.

The 2009 Docs for Schools lineup included 10 full-length films and one

short. Topics were as varied as the Exxon Valdez, Afghan entertainment, journalism in Burma, atrocities in the Congo, and Jamaican reggae superstars. Four Docs for Schools films were Canadian-made, out of the total of 65 Canadian films at the Hot Docs Festival.

Teachers can download curriculum resources that have been prepared by Chris Atkinson, an instructional coach for the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School


Board. Atkinson, an experienced teacher at both the elementary and secondary levels, writes literacy texts and teachers' guides for Pearson Education Canada.

Atkinson's 10–12 page packages for each film include a list of curriculum expectations for a variety of subject areas, links to websites and online resources, questions for discussion and information about the filmmaker(s). Also, there is a wealth of resources to be used before, during and after film screenings available at www.hotdocs.ca.


An exciting aspect of the festival is its inclusion of student-made films. In 2007, Doc It, a 90-minute program of films produced by students ages 14–18 was introduced to the line-up. "Films came from as far away as Germany and the UK, and there was an incredible amount of diversity," Sniderman said. "Some were class projects, some were personal explorations. Sniderman asked students from several schools to prescreen and select the films, each 12 minutes or less in length, to ensure that the content resonated with youth.

In 2009, 12 short films—nine of them Canadian—were shown at the Royal Ontario Museum on topics as diverse as autism, drug addiction, the plight of migrant workers in South Asia, voodoo in New Orleans and organic foods.

Sniderman, a high school English teacher for the Toronto District School Board, believes, as does Smith, that the films touch students that other educational methods often don't reach. "I saw an autistic student have a breakthrough in his ability to communicate after he viewing one of the documentaries," she said.

Docs for Schools not only provides a wonderful opportunity for students to see excellent documentaries for free, it gives them a chance to have their own films produced. Careers may be launched as students become exposed to important world issues and events. At the same time, students have the opportunity to develop a greater appreciation for an art form that is clearly the way of the future. 

Judith Robinson is an OSSTF/FEESO member working as an occasional teacher for the Halton DSB.



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Leading by example

And making the world a better place



After eight summers of volunteering for short-term Habitat for Humanity (HFH) builds in Central Europe, I longed to do something different, to really get to know the people, to immerse myself in the culture and live in the communities—to make a bigger impact. The dream was two years in the making—to spend my six-month sabbatical from teaching at Pickering HS volunteering with HFH.

I boarded a plane in early February 2008, not really knowing what to expect; my two-week builds were a far cry from the long-term commitment I had decided to take on. What had I gotten myself into? How would I fit in? What would my job with HFH entail? How would I adjust to the language barrier, the cultural differences and the time away from family and friends? I was confident dealing with a class of restless ninth graders and breaking up squabbles in the cafeteria, but could I handle what was about to come my way?

I rented a flat in the beautiful city of Budapest, and split my time between the HFH national office and the three small-town affiliates: Hajdúböszörmény, Csurgó and Szarvas. In the office, my main task was to help coordinate the in-coming international volunteer teams. I loved working with them: diverse adult groups from various places; school groups from Italy, Switzerland, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Germany; corporate teams from across Europe.

While my work in the office was fun and challenging, it was when working with the affiliates that I really found the greatest fulfillment. As educators, we sometimes have to wait rather a long time to see the fruits of our labours and to hear appreciation expressed. On the construction site, the team's work literally materialized in front of my eyes, to the delight of future homeowners. I loved being on-site—everyone navigating the challenges of language barriers and construction inexperience; working

side-by-side with local and international volunteers, HFH staff and homeowners. Through much laughter and charades, strangers quickly became friends. One Sunday afternoon was special. It was my day off, but as I looked around at my team and the locals, I realized we had begun creating a global family. I had spoken so often of this global community in my classroom, had talked about the shared responsibility we have for one another worldwide, and it was gratifying to see this very phenomenon taking shape in front of me. United in purpose and driven by the desire for better lives and brighter futures for the children surrounding us, we overcame the language barrier. As we came together to enjoy our traditional meal and the campfire that followed, we spoke the international language of smiles, laughter and song.

Some of my greatest moments were spent with local high school students who, though raised in a country where volunteerism isn't a part of the cultural fabric, rolled up their sleeves on the worksite, practised their textbook English and treated strangers with the warmth of long-lost friends. Working with these youths filled the void created when I walked away from my classroom for a semester. I got to see the very best in these adolescents, taught them new things and, in turn, learned from and was inspired by them. This was not only true of the Hungarian students, but also of the youth from Switzerland, Germany, the United States and Ireland with whom I worked.

There were many unforgettable experiences. In July, my team was honoured to be invited to a house dedication ceremony. Five families received the keys to their new HFH homes and there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd—it was amazing to see over a year's work culminate



Pictured: Kim Penzhorn (R), short-term volunteer Allan MacDougall (L), and fellow long-term volunteer eighth-grader William O'Brochta, putting in the final piece of insulation in the attic of a semi-detached dwelling

in this incredible celebration of family and community. It was this community aspect that really struck me; families from the previous project presented current homeowners with gifts, and the homeowners for the next project were on hand for a time capsule ceremony and official welcome to the HFH family...three 'generations' of homeowners,

brought together by common goals and dreams of a promising future.

At the end of a build, one of my team noticed a woman in the lobby of our Budapest hotel who was listening intently as the National Director of HFH Hungary gave us our certificates of participation. I thought that she would enquire about what we had been doing. Instead, she introduced herself: a homeowner from the London, England HFH program. She and her children had been living in their Habitat home for six years and she was misty-eyed as she explained that they now have a future she could otherwise never have imagined. She described the incredible sense of community that was created as neighbours helped build each others' homes, how everyone now watches out for all of the children and lends a hand in times of need. She thanked us on behalf of HFH families worldwide, and to hear her speak of the on-going impact of HFH in her life was an indescribably moving and gratifying moment.

It is impossible to summarize the experience of a lifetime—there were so many incredible "snapshots" during those six months. I helped coordinate hundreds of volunteers, was lucky enough to attend two housing project dedications, worked on-site with eight teams and 18 homeowner families and was inspired by the determination of people who work hard to make a difference in the lives of others. I was humbled by the openness with which I was received by the HFH families, and joyful in the know-

I thrived living in a culture different from my own, and found the peace, happiness and perspective which had been lacking in my life back home

ledge that they have the chance to make their dreams of better opportunities for their children a reality. I thrived living in a culture different from my own, and found the peace, happiness and perspective which had been lacking in my life back home. I made friends-for-life and didn't once regret the decision to give up school and salary to live in Hungary. I was a different person.

I returned to Canada inspired to share my experiences with my friends, my family, my colleagues and especially my students. Since then, I have shown countless photos, told innumerable stories and encouraged my students to "be the change they wish to see in the world." It's vital, this message of individuals giving back and doing their part to make the world a better place. As educators, we not only teach this with our words but should endeavour to lead by example. We are so fortunate to be in a profession where we can have such a tremendous impact on youth and on the future of the world around us. We are also lucky to have the time to go off the beaten path and try something new, exciting and worthwhile. To anyone contemplating such an adventure, I urge you to jump in with both feet. It's the best decision I ever made and I have no regrets, save for the fact that I couldn't stay longer!

To learn about HFH, visit:

www.habitat.ca



Kim Penzhorn is an OSSTF/FEESO member teaching for the Durham DSB.

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Adult Education: A world of opportunities

Struggling to survive despite the desperate need



Canada's contemporary demographic profile has been profoundly influenced by the end of the baby boom, decline in the fertility rate, ageing of the population and prospects for an absolute decline in population shortly after the turn of the century. These demographic characteristics necessitate an enhanced role for immigration.

—Constantine Passaris, University of New Brunswick

Immigration is not only vital to the sustenance of Canada's population, but also to its workforce. The immigrant population cannot contribute effectively without an adequate grasp of language and culture. The current economic picture is grim, accentuating the need for training and upgrading. In a January 12, 2009 editorial "Flaherty faces five choices on EI," Carol Goar of the *Toronto Star* writes, "Equipping laid-off workers with the skills to find work would make both economic and social sense."

Adult education is a valuable component of the education community. At the same time that boards struggle to address the emerging issue of declining enrollment, adult education, in many

cases, struggles to find space to house its burgeoning numbers.

In most boards, because of drastic cuts to adult education funding by the Harris Tories, adult education must run as cost neutral: these programs cannot access money from any source that is not allotted to them and they cannot spend more than they have been given.

In Thames Valley, adult English as a Second Language (ESL) learners total nearly 2,000. That number alone, without the addition of adult credit and Literacy and Basic Skills students, is the equivalent student body of two high schools.

And yet, ESL must beg for space in schools, even when a board is committed to adult education programming.

A Grade 11 student who can't seem to concentrate in class anymore has a mother and father who have just lost their jobs.

This student's trouble in school is being remedied in part by an adult education program which will help both parents upgrade to obtain a high school diploma and, hopefully, enter college.

A student who was expelled two years ago as an indirect result of his drug addiction has another shot at getting his high school diploma.

His need to continue in school, although he is over 21, is being addressed by an adult education program where he can gain credits.

A Grade 9 student who is struggling with reading has parents who arrived in Canada only five years ago.

His trouble with reading is being remedied in part by an adult education program that is teaching his parents how to read in English. When his parents are able to read with him in English, he will also improve.

Funding for adult ESL programs does not include funding for a facility in which to deliver the program. Consequently, the portion of any school building occupied by an adult ESL program is not counted in the board's accommodation numbers. Therefore, the building still appears under-occupied on paper and could end up closing under accommodation review.

Adult education is not a mandated program. Therefore, a school board may or may not be committed to it. Adult education programs can come and go. Despite the odds, the programs perse-

...it is in society's best interest to have vibrant and thriving adult education programs delivered throughout the province...



A group of adult ESL students, all from Columbia, shared a traditional dance with the audience at Heritage Day, at the Adult Education Centre, in London

vere wherever and however they can in order to serve the needs of adult learners, whatever they may be. The adult re-entering the education system is often frightened, excited, resentful, grateful and intimidated. Adult education program instructors understand this and so go out of their way to address the needs and fears of their students.

Students and staff at the Adult Education Centre in London, Ontario recently celebrated their annual Heritage Day. This event takes months to plan and prepare for. Learners from nearly 60 countries showcase their cultures through exhibits, performances, food and conversation. Pride in their accomplishments had the adult learners holding their heads high for days after the celebration as the buzz continued. Board administrators lauded their efforts and ours. In our microcosm, we celebrated the diversity of our country


by encouraging students to engage and share their cultures with each other.

However, the clashes that arose in the planning stages of Heritage Day made us wonder what we had gotten ourselves into. Although the atmosphere was jubilant and cohesive on the day of the celebration and afterwards, the lead-up to that special day was distinctly uncomfortable. The world politics played out on the six o'clock news suddenly existed in our classrooms and hallways with frightening similarities. Some contemplated pulling the plug on the whole celebration; there were arguments among students about the right to claim the existence of countries; there were threats that groups would boycott the celebration; there were cancelled performances—but we pressed on.

This was precisely the point where the preparatory phase became a learn-

ing endeavour. Rather than shy away from the highly charged conversations that had begun, the instructors took on the challenges, exploring geography, history, world issues, religion and politics. The adult World Issues credit class was given the task of interviewing ESL learners for an oral history project. Those students presented their stories to a packed auditorium. The audience listened to first-hand accounts of the immigration experience. Canadian culture meshed with the cultures of newcomers to achieve a harmonious celebration. In the end, somehow, new Canadians representing every continent came together with native-born Canadians and each was able to shine without detracting from the pride of the others.

This story illustrates just how vital adult education is, in all its forms. Undoubtedly, the successes experienced by adult learners, whether in ESL, in Literacy and Basic Skills, or in adult credit programs, will have a ripple effect. In turn, their children and their communities will also benefit. Ultimately, it is in society's best interest to have vibrant and thriving adult education programs delivered throughout the province, but in order to do so, the funding issues must be addressed.

We, the instructors of adult education programs, stand proud as a part of the education team, and will continue to advocate for our adult learners and their programs. Similarly, OSSTF/FEESO represents a diverse array of educational workers. As in any situation of diversity, the challenge becomes meaningful inclusion. As OSSTF/FEESO moves forward with its study of barriers to the involvement of individual members, the organization has and will continue to face times when, despite the nobility of the cause, the hassle may seem too great. This organization was built on the fortitude of individuals who believe in a cause, and who press on despite the discomfort in the struggle. A member is a member. 

Lydia Salmon is the President of the Continuing Education Instructors' bargaining unit in District 11, Thames Valley.



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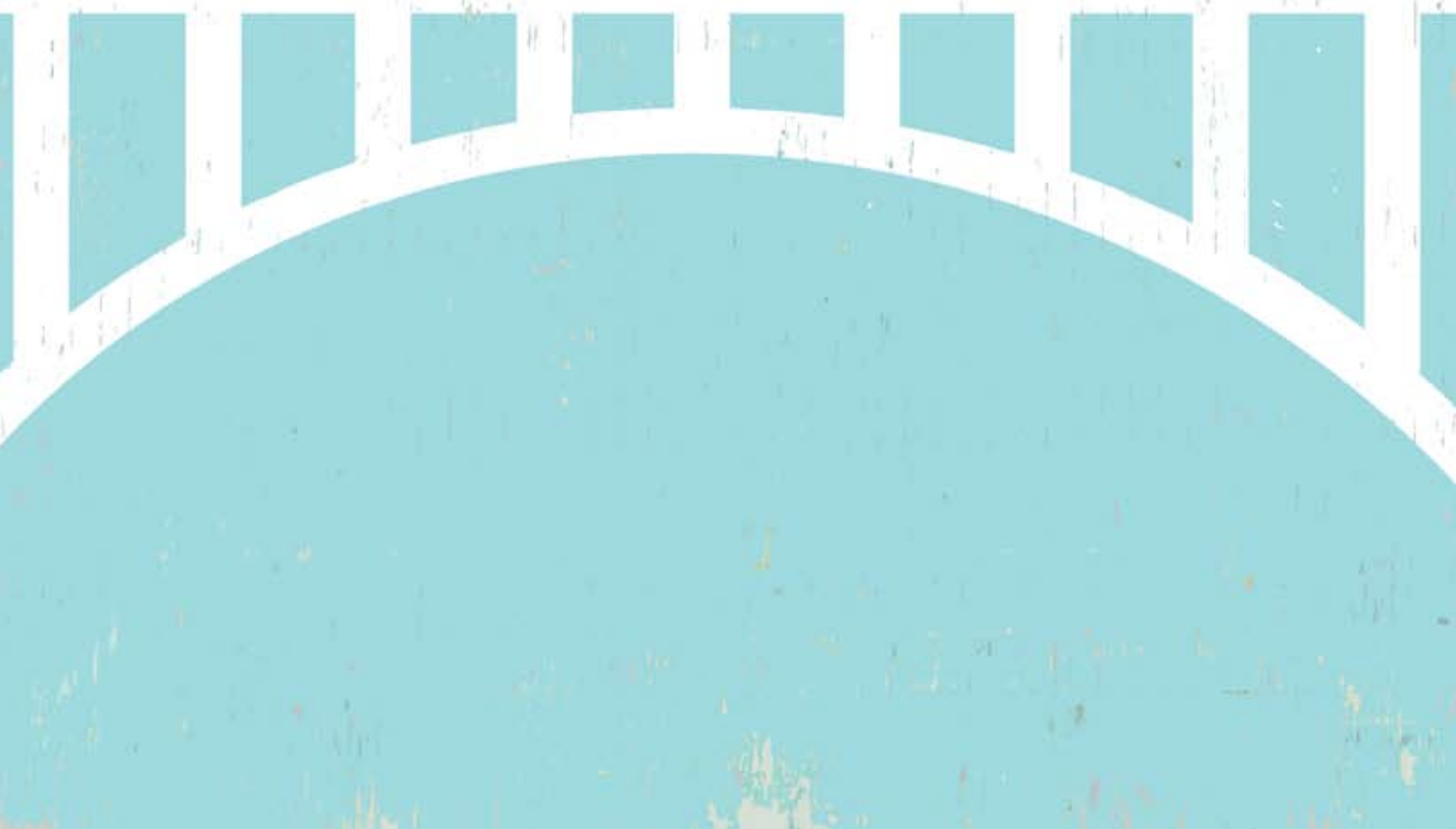
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THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S Commitment to accessibility

A mandate that includes accessibility to learning By David C. Onley

His Honour, the Honourable David C. Onley, O.Ont., Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, addressed the OSSTF/FEESO Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly on March 15, 2009 on the issues of Aboriginal youth literacy.

I thank OSSTF for its unanimous adoption in 2006 of a five-year sponsorship of the Lieutenant Governor's Aboriginal Summer Reading Camp, which is part of the Vice Regal Aboriginal Literacy Initiative. Many individual districts within the Federation have also pledged their support to the Lieutenant Governor's Club Amick program, and for this I am deeply appreciative too. As secondary teachers, you have a unique perspective on the issue and I applaud your commitment to a cause we both believe in.

After I was appointed Lieutenant Governor on July 10, 2007, I spent July and August of 2007 at what I called "Lieutenant Governor Summer School." James K. Bartleman, my predecessor,

and my staff were the instructors and I soon became aware of the substantive nature of the position and of the intricate protocol associated with it.

In addition to their specific constitutional responsibilities and their role as the guardian of democracy, Lieutenant Governors over the years have addressed issues and adopted mandates of significant social importance, which were above and beyond the daily hurly-burly of question period and partisan politics.

My immediate predecessors reflected the needs of their time when choosing themes for their mandates: John Black Aird, disability rights; Lincoln Alexander, racial harmony; Hal

ILLUSTRATION: DAN PAGE



Jackman, public service and the arts; Hilary Weston, volunteerism, women and young people; and James Bartleman, mental health, anti-racism and Aboriginal literacy.

As the first Lieutenant Governor of Ontario with a physical disability, I chose Accessibility as the over-arching theme of my mandate. I also specifically defined Accessibility as that which enables disabled people to achieve their full potential. Fundamentally, this includes people with physical and invisible disabilities achieving their full potential. Accessibility is much more than the ubiquitous blue sign with a white wheelchair symbol. Statistics Canada tells us that for 2006, 15.5 per cent of Ontarians had a limiting condition, either physical or invisible, which is generically called a disability. We must always remember that these invisible conditions are no less limiting than for those with physical disabilities—those of us who use assistive devices on a daily basis.

The great disabled tennis player Roger Crawford addressed this physical/invisible disabled reality. Despite being born with shorter than normal arms and just two fingers per hand, he became the first disabled person to become a certified coach



with the US Tennis Association. He is a great motivational speaker, and once said,

"The only difference between you and me is that you can see my handicap, but I can't see yours. We all have them. When people ask me how I've been able to overcome my physical handicaps, I tell them that I haven't overcome anything. I've simply learned what I cannot do—such as play the piano or eat with chopsticks—but more importantly, I've learned what I can do. Then I do what I can with all my heart and soul."

Now THAT is a great teacher! As educators, this is of course what you do from the perspective of academics. The process of teaching is the process of enabling children to achieve their full potential. I suspect each and every one of us is here today because some teacher in our past saw OUR potential.

All of us, this very moment, can think of teachers we had, who said something that showed confidence in us as individuals, saw a significant future when we could barely think past the next classroom or school function. They didn't form value judgments about us when they easily could have.

You may have heard Bob Morris speak at a retreat or seminar. He's writing his memoirs as a teacher and told us a wonderful story this summer at Fair Havens Bible Conference.

In the mid-'60s BC (that's "Before Computers"), Bob taught grade 10 English at Don Mills Collegiate to a class of students who had 'no plans to go to university.' This was a polite way of saying the students were not capable of post-secondary education. Even so, Bob felt it was important to teach them about the brand new concept of 'mass media' and decided they would start at the top by considering a quote from the master of mass media, the cerebral, and often opaque, Marshall McLuhan. This would be daunting for university students, but Bob pressed on and began with a classic McLuhan quote, "We don't know who first discovered water, but we are pretty sure it wasn't a fish."

One student, Gerry, simply didn't understand it, and I mean didn't get it at all. Now, Bob could have simply blown off the question with a quick answer, but didn't. Instead, he suggested that Gerry write down the quote, think about its meaning overnight and report back to the class the next day.

Lo and behold, the next morning Gerry was back in class, actually the first one in class, his hand in the air, eager to give his answer on the meaning of McLuhan's quote. Standing proudly, he said, "The fish's environment is water. It is his worldview. The thing we are least conscious of is our own context—the environment in which we live and move. So the fish would be the last one on earth to 'discover' water; it's virtually all he knows." Bob was quite astonished and asked him how on earth he came up with that.

Gerry's answer? "It was simple; I went home and phoned Dr. McLuhan. He talked to me for half an hour and explained it to me until I understood it." It would have been very easy for Bob to have dismissed Gerry as a kid who wouldn't be going too far, and thus wouldn't need to know about Marshall McLuhan. But he didn't, and I suspect Gerry has done very, very well indeed.

In the case of disabled people, accessibility in its fullest and purest sense is a goal that all too many disabled people have yet to achieve. There are, simply put, too many institutional and attitudinal barriers preventing success. The barriers are such that even if the person has actually overcome their disability, the remaining cultural barriers present themselves as almost insurmountable.

As such, the level of unemployment of the disabled is currently more than five times higher than the national average, the highest of any minority group in our society. To change this, I have called upon a wide range of players from our society, from education, business, the media and the arts to help right this. On another occasion, I would be pleased to explore this with OSSTF/FEESO.

But it would be wrong to assume that achieving your full potential, achieving full accessibility, only applies to the disability community. Accessibility also applies to those disenfranchised by ethnicity and geography, who are just as effectively barred from the mainstream. I speak, of course, of our Aboriginal students at Ontario's 28 fly-in communities.

In the week prior to the public notification of my appointment, I examined the literacy initiative of my immediate predecessor, James Bartleman. I concluded that he was, in fact, giving the 6,000 students of fly-in First Nation communities of

the far north *accessibility to learning*. So I asked myself, “How could I adopt an Accessibility Mandate to help people achieve their full potential without also including the students of the most isolated and northerly corners of our province?”

That is why, when I became Lieutenant Governor, I broke with the tradition of mandates ending with each Vice Regal term of office and decided that, as a part of my commitment to universal accessibility, I would continue the Aboriginal literacy initiatives launched by Mr. Bartleman.

Enhancing youth literacy appeals to me because, as a former education reporter and writer, I know the importance of awakening a love of reading in children at an early age. And it relates to accessibility, because young Aboriginal people with low literacy levels will have to face the same kinds of barriers to advancement as people with disabilities when the time comes for them to make their way in the world.

I’m pleased to say that Mr. Bartleman agreed to stay with the Aboriginal youth literacy project as an active volunteer, and is working with me on expanding it to include a computer literacy initiative. My goal is to get computer labs into all 28 First

Aboriginal youth must obtain the skills and support to manage their lives and careers. However, since many of those living in isolated communities have limited academic and literacy skills, they have equally limited access to employment.

The Ontario Native Literacy Coalition has some sobering statistics relating to literacy among First Nations communities in Ontario, which has the largest Aboriginal population of any Canadian province or territory—nearly one in five Aboriginal people in Canada live here.

- 31 per cent of Native people living on reserves in our province have no formal education, or less than grade 9, compared with 10 per cent in the non-Native population.
- In 2003, youth aged 16–25, whose parents had little or no education, scored even lower literacy levels than similar youth in 1994.
- According to Health Canada in 2004, suicide is one of the leading causes of death among First Nations youth between the ages of 19 and 24, with an estimated rate that is five to six times higher than that of non-Aboriginal youth. (As Mr. Bartleman has pointed out on many occasions, the reasons for such high rates



At the same time, where the Aboriginal Literacy programs, Club Amick and summer reading camps exist, suicide has become rare to virtually non-existent among youth. Why? Because they can see and read an alternate future of hope and potential, instead of despair

Nations fly-in schools in Ontario, as well as the new generation of e-books which the latest studies indicate also stimulate a desire to read traditional books, too. In total, this will help young Aboriginal people acquire market-ready skills, connecting them to the world outside and give them new options when it comes to deciding their future.

For generations, Aboriginal culture and traditions were passed down by the Elders through storytelling. But, as a recent policy paper by the Canadian Education Association points out, “in the context of the struggle for cultural survival and self-determination faced by many indigenous groups, raising literacy levels in the dominant language of the larger community can be a tool for indigenous political action.”

There is still a place for storytelling in the Aboriginal community, but if young First Nations people are to have any chance of success in our modern knowledge-based economy, they must achieve levels of book and computer literacy that are comparable to those of young people in the general population.

As *Working Words: Employment Skills for Aboriginal Youth*, a resource package prepared by The National Adult Literacy Database, pointed out more than ten years ago, with more than half of the Aboriginal population in Canada under the age of 25,

of suicide are not hard to find. They are rooted in the hopelessness of young people mired in poverty and lacking the basic academic and literacy skills to find a way out for themselves.)

At the same time, where the Aboriginal Literacy programs, Club Amick and summer reading camps exist, suicide has become rare to virtually non-existent among youth. Why? Because they can see and read an alternate future of hope and potential, instead of despair.

These are some of the reasons why I have pledged to build on the literacy initiatives of my predecessor, and to do all I can to help our Aboriginal youth break free from the cycle of poverty and suicide.

As we can see, Ontario’s teachers indeed have a unique opportunity to understand and experience first hand my definition of accessibility as that which enables people to reach their full potential. And as a collective, all teachers’ federations have already demonstrated they care deeply about all children in our vast province and act decisively beyond their own classroom when the need is compelling.

As The Queen’s representative in the province, I bring greetings to the delegates to this Assembly. And I thank you for your care and attention to the needs of young people in Ontario. 🐾



BOLIVIA'S NEW CONSTITUTION

The spirit of Tupac Katari and Bartolina Sisa lives on

By Raul Burbano



January 2009, I had the privilege of visiting Bolivia as part of a small group of Canadian community activists. Our Toronto observer team filmed an extensive video record of this event and interviewed Bolivians of every point of view. The financial assistance of OSSTF/FEESO and several other Canadian unions enabled us to produce a 15-minute video, *Bolivia: The People Win*.

We were in good company. Close to 4,000 official observers from around the world witnessed one of the most significant moments in Bolivian history: a national referendum, held January 25, which adopted a new constitution by a 61 per cent majority.

Nothing can prepare you for the experience of a visit to Bolivia. Not the beauty of its topography, the Andes Mountains or tropical lowlands, the richness of its culture, or the wisdom of its people. Not the atmosphere, energy and excitement that permeates the air and that you feel the moment you arrive. The reason for this is that Bolivia is experiencing a moment of *kairos*—an historic moment—unlike anything since the nation was founded in 1825. This *kairos* moment culminated in the election in 2006 of the nation's first indigenous president, Evo Morales Ayma, and his party, Movement Towards Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo [MAS]).

Morales is not your typical president. He did not attend university, nor does he wear business suits. He does not aspire to own mansions in Miami or to reach the highest echelons of academic excellence. Morales' education comes from what he calls the "University of Life."

His first act as president was to cut his own salary in half, to \$1,700 per month, and then ask his cabinet ministers to do the same—with the savings going towards the funding of additional teachers in public schools. Morales said, "We need 6,000 new teachers and there is only money for 2,200."

Once in office, Morales undertook the formidable task of constitutional reform, as mandated by the social movements that elected him and his party. The struggle for a new constitution precedes Morales, going back to the early

'90s with the "Great March" lead by the Guaraní people. This march from the eastern lowlands to La Paz was a symbol of indigenous renaissance. The indigenous majority, who make up 62 per cent of the population, felt that a new constitution would be a step towards the decolonization of the country, which for centuries had discriminated against, marginalized and excluded them.

The Aymara people of Bolivia have a saying, "the first step is the last step": the energy and the spirit in which you start something is what you will end with. The previous constitution of Bolivia was exclusionist in spirit: it forgot the indigenous majority, women, workers and campesinos (farmers). The new constitution represents a new beginning for

the people of Bolivia, one that sets the stage for the "refounding" of the nation, as Morales has said.

The new constitution is radically different. The previous constitution was created by constitutional lawyers and senators, behind closed doors. The new constitutional process was lead by a Quechua, campesina woman, Silvia Lazarte, with the participation of the opposition, campesinos, indigenous groups, social movements and workers. Upon her swearing in as President of the Constitutional Assembly, she declared, "We all have to think with our hearts; we women and men legislators have to think how to end our differences."

At the core of the new constitution are new values and characteristics reflective of indigenous cosmology, making it one of



“What is happening today in Bolivia is not just important for Bolivia, but for the rest of the world because it teaches us that fear is not an undefeatable enemy”

the most progressive magna cartas in the world. For example, articles and aspects of the new document include:

ETHICS: Statement of principles: *Ama qhilla, ama llulla, ama suwa*; Don't be lazy, don't lie, don't steal.

INCLUSIVENESS: Recognition of the plurinational fabric of the nation, comprising 36 indigenous cultures and minorities, including Afro-Bolivians.

HARMONY: Respect for the environment (pachamama) and everything in it.

HUMANITY: Guaranteed human rights: access to the country's natural resources, e.g., water and food, free universal education at all levels, health care and employment.

PEACE: Proclamation of Bolivia as a pacifist state that “promotes a culture of peace.”

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: To be reflected in all areas of life, not just electoral politics.

RESPECT: Guaranteed freedom of religion and spiritual beliefs.

FRATERNITY: Guaranteed right to collective bargaining for all workers, rural and urban.

The constitution symbolizes a new social contract between the state and its people. The changes will not happen overnight and will require many new laws and a fundamental shift in the mindset of some, primarily the opposition. There will be confrontation and challenges—a natural part of any such profound social change.

The rise of Morales and MAS represents a major political and historical landmark for Bolivia and all of the Americas. The struggle for control of Bolivia's natural resources is linked to the broader regional struggle in Latin America over who will benefit from its wealth—the masses of the continent or the alliance of its traditional oligarchy with multinational corporations.

Morales has done what no other president in Bolivia's history has had the courage to do—govern on behalf of the majority. It is this courage that I witnessed and experienced while in La Paz, Bolivia.

The closing of the “yes” campaign, on January 22 in La Paz, was particularly moving and inspirational. People started to gather before dawn in anticipation of Morales' speech. In la Plaza Murrillo, the historic city centre, we watched as thousands of campesinos, workers and indigenous men and women descended from El Alto La Plaza, in essence invading the capital. Many waved wiphalas (the indigenous flag of the Andes), chewed coca leaves and held copies of the proposed constitution. The atmosphere was electrifying. As I stood among close to 30,000 people, I felt that spirit and courage all around me. I could not help but be in awe of the process and think of the story of Tupac Katari and Bartolina Sisa, because it is their courageous spirit that embodies what is happening in Bolivia today.

Tupac Katari and his wife Bartolina Sisa were 18th century Aymara revolutionaries who united the Aymara and Quechua people in revolt against Spanish invaders. Like many courageous revolutionaries, they were eventually captured. Just before his execution at the hands of the Spaniards, Tupac Katari prophesized the return of his people to power and said, “You will only kill me, but I will return and I will be millions.”

It was this prophecy that came to fruition on January 25, 2009 when over two million people, many of whom who are descendants of Tupac and Bartolina, voted “yes” for a new constitution, one that returns the nation to its rightful owners, the indigenous majority. Even more exceptional is the fact that this revolution is led neither by war nor bullets, but rather by ballots.

There was an important second vote

in the January referendum—the vote for “land reform.” The vote sought to limit the size of personal land holdings to either 5,000 or 10,000 hectares. Overwhelmingly, 81 per cent of Bolivians voted to limit the size of land holdings to 5,000 hectares. Unfortunately, the measure is not retroactive, meaning it will not affect existing landholdings as was proposed in the original constitution of Oruro. This was a major concession, criticized by some as giving in to the opposition, seen by others as a necessary step in avoiding civil war. It is the beginning of the end of latifundios (great estates) and the condition of servitude for many Guaraní communities. According to Vice-Minister of Land Alejandro Almaraz, close to 2,700 Guaraní communities in Santa Cruz still live in a state of servitude. The government recently confiscated 94,000 acres of land from big landowners, one of whom was Ronald Larsen, freeing indigenous people from servitude. This is the first of many such actions to come, thanks in part to the new constitution. (The confiscation process returns land titles to the community and all existing, law-abiding landholders—if a landowner is operating under conditions of servitude, the estate becomes state land.)

Mainstream media portrays Santa Cruz as a stronghold of the opposition, so naturally our group decided we wanted to be there on voting day. I was expecting conflict and possible violence, however, much to our delight we found the city centre to be calm, picturesque, affluent and modern. It possessed all the western amenities one could ever desire. The city seemed tranquil yet full of life, with everyone going about their regular activities. But we soon discovered that under this layer of beauty and serenity lies a culture of fear.

We headed to La Plaza 24 de September, in the centre of town, to meet



locals and get their opinion on the new constitution. Immediately upon arrival, we were approached by a woman who yelled at us that we weren't welcome, we should leave, we should go back to where we came from. We paid little heed and settled into our work. Not long after, a car full of youths drove by, with one youth hanging out of the window cursing at us to go back to where we came from. It was no coincidence that huge banners, hung from church and government buildings, conveyed one key message—fear. Fear of communism, fear of losing their religion, fear of losing their property, fear of losing their children—a culture of fear spread by the opposition: the right-wing civic committee led by Branko Marinkovic, the prefect Ruben Costas and the Catholic church led by Cardinal Julio Terrazas. The majority of those we met in Santa Cruz opposed the proposed constitution and/or any changes, primarily out of fear of the unknown. If only these people could think freely, without being paralyzed by the culture of fear.

As we left Santa Cruz, I was reminded of the words of Eduardo Galeano, a Uruguayan writer and novelist:

"Our worst enemy is fear. We live in a world of the dictatorship of fear, the fear to be, the fear to recognize ourselves as we truly are. What is happening today in Bolivia is not just important for Bolivia, but for the rest of the world because it teaches us that fear is not an undefeatable enemy. It teaches us that we can determine our own destinies; but for that we need courage, the courage that we can change ourselves and the reality around us, the courage to stand up to fear."

It can be said that Bolivians, under Evo Morales, have demonstrated to the world that courage can overcome the culture of fear. That people united under the banner of fraternity, peace and justice can never be defeated, and Bolivia's new constitution is the result of that victory.

To arrange a showing of Bolivia: The People Win, email Toronto Bolivia Solidarity at torontoboliviasolidarity@gmail.com or phone 416-832-2897. 🐦

Raul Burbano is a member of Toronto Bolivia Solidarity.

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WAR CHILD

A CHILD SOLDIER'S STORY

Emmanuel Jal's hope
for peace amid
the horrors of war

By Bryan Smith





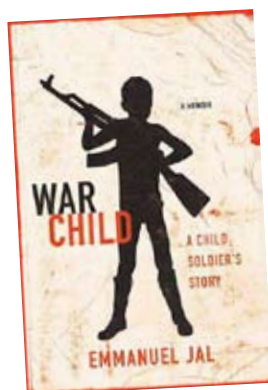


War Child: A Child Soldier's Story, by Emmanuel Jal, is a book which, though horrifying in content, was so compelling I read it quickly, almost compulsively. Piling adventure on adventure, episode on episode, horror on horror, it is a book that teachers should read and should consider having their students read too. Emmanuel Jal, a multi-talented performer, is a familiar figure, and/or voice, to many students and adults. He appeared at the Live 8 concert, Africa Calling, has two albums to his name, *Gua* and *Ceasefire*, and a documentary film (also called *War Child*); his music has been used in several episodes of television's *ER* and he is the face behind several charities.

The title of Jal's biographical account is not to be confused with the recently founded, highly active and youth-oriented organization by the same name. His story is of someone who survived life in a war zone; the organization tries to protect children from the horrors of war. The book is more than a story, it's a memoir, and although biographical, it does not tell the whole truth. Nor could it. As a memoir, it highlights elements the author thinks best exemplify his life. His rise to fame is the stuff of rock 'n' roll or rapper legend. Yet, as an account of battles, raids, torture sessions, retreats and desperate marches to flee death, it is a jumble. Details, dates, descriptions of human degradations are presented in a disjointed, back and forth, rapid-fire approach—as Jal lived them. It is Jal's perspective, not an attempt to provide a complete history of the wars in Sudan. It does, however, provide some context.

The subtitle, *A Child Soldier's Story*, should prepare you for the worst. The cover illustration takes its inspiration directly from the words of the author. It's a boy, in silhouette, and a gun, which is almost the size of the boy. Those familiar with Ismael Beah's account of his life, of Corneille's songs of Rwanda, or of Senator

Roméo Dallaire's account of the Rwandan genocide know that this will be a tough, emotional read. Not surprisingly then, *War Child* might come under the same attack as those aimed against the veracity of Beah's account, or against the character of Canada's front line peace-maker in the time of massacres in Kigali. These questions are worthy of consideration, in keeping with our desire to teach critical thinking alongside compassion, yet need



to be accompanied by an examination of the motives and biases of the critics. Herein lies an interesting study, some critical thinking, and meta-cognition on the part of the reader, if not the author.

The central message of hope arrives

quite late in the book. Jal has already told us of his years in the rebel forces, fighting for the south of Sudan. Hope is one of the reasons Jal survived to sing about peace. When he raps his lyric over the chorus of "I will be so happy when there's peace in the Sudan," there is no mistaking that this is a hard-won dream for Jal; it remains a dream for many Sudanese today. What makes this lyric more poignant is our knowledge that, while bullets no longer fly in the conflict between the northern and southern regions of Sudan, Darfur and other areas of the Sudan remain battle zones, its people remain refugees in adjoining countries, and that death stalks the land.

Jal begins with a childhood recollection of being on the back of a truck during the evacuation of his mother, siblings, an aunt and an uncle. When one of their captors smashes Jal's mother's face with his fist, Jal clamps his jaw shut on the leg of one of the assailants. In retrospect, Jal says, "I can see that the seed of hate was sown inside me that day." Jal has but a few memories of his early years, years of peace in the Sudan, but by 1983, the accumulated events had reinforced his hatred. For much of the rest of the book Jal and others are in constant motion, avoiding or

seeking out battle zones, fleeing for their lives or pursuing others with the intent of taking theirs. It's not a pretty story at all.

It is hard for most Westerners to imagine that Sudan has been in a constant state of civil war, repression of human rights, and now a bloody battle for supremacy by the government currently led by Omar al-Bashir, since long before 1983. (The second Sudanese civil war began in 1983, although it was largely a continuation of the first, 1955–1972.) Sudan has never received much press. Today, news about Darfur appears infrequently and fleetingly on television screens. In 1983, tribes that had been traditional enemies joined forces for a common cause as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) against the "African Arabs descended from the invaders of centuries ago." In an effort to retain control of Sudan's considerable resources for themselves, they opposed the government of Khartoum. Jal's account brings this story to life at a personal level.

It is clear for Jal's father, to whom Emmanuel refers with the endearment Babba, that the resources of the south

Aunt Sarah being raped at the side of the road. Jal is not safe either since, though "Rape and sexual slavery are weapons of war as destructive as any bomb," he knows that "boys were taken too, captured and stolen to be carried north to work as slaves." In the name of the cause, Emmanuel Jal, like thousands of other southern Sudanese children, is sent to Ethiopia to train as a soldier.

Later in the memoir, Jal is involved in a death march that decimates SPLA troops. There is war among the tribes. Massacres are described in detail. Jal is lucky to escape, sometimes with help, even friendship. His hatred grows. His descriptions of Pinyudu camp matches anything seen on a World Vision commercial, except for the lack of white westerners. The camp is, Jal concludes, "a place where hope has died." Even the camps of his father's allies are not safe for him. Accused of desertion and stealing a bar of soap, he is whipped 100 times with a hippo hide switch, then he's thrown into a pit and left there for days.

After surviving war, famine and other

those child soldiers who, not entirely by choice, became killers at a tender age. Jal's description of his role in those killings is unsparing:

This is what I had been waiting for. Now at last I would see the jallabas (Muslim soldiers) face-to-face. I would take revenge for all they had done to my family and my people. My body relaxed as I felt anger rushing into my veins. Its power made me strong. ...I had waited forever for this moment. Fear had no place inside me now.

Without Jal's redemption at the end of the book, this might be considered simply another sensational account of a life of violence. Without the violent words and images, the redemption would seem contrived, unconvincing, pointless.

What makes this a valuable record is its honesty, and despite Jal's statement to the contrary early on, he remains hopeful for peace, the rescue of the Lost Boys and other child soldiers from their traumatic experiences, and for the Western world's understanding of Africa. There is potential here for a strong unit of study,

WHAT MAKES THIS A VALUABLE RECORD IS ITS HONESTY, AND DESPITE JAL'S STATEMENT TO THE CONTRARY EARLY ON, HE REMAINS HOPEFUL FOR PEACE

of Sudan and the rights his people have to them supercede all other concerns. He goes to the war front, rising in rank and running the risk of death. He abandons his family for years, leaving them to struggle for survival. They are not safe, even in Bantui, the town where Babba's mother lives. Jal witnesses his

perils, Jal learns that mere survival is not enough. He begins to use the languages of the Sudanese peoples, all together. He suggests peace and forgiveness in his songs. He becomes a leader in the rescue of the Lost Boys of the Sudan, those boys who walked out of the desert and into relief camps in other countries;

especially if presented in conjunction with Ishmael Beah's *Long Way Gone*, a parallel account of his life as a child soldier, and with Roméo Dallaire's *Shake Hands with the Devil*.

Jal's account is controversial for its portrayal of hatred among peoples. Anyone who reads it, however, will understand



ANYONE WITH SYMPATHY FOR CHILDREN WILL SEE THAT A HIDEOUS CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY WAS COMMITTED, AND CONTINUES IN SUDAN TODAY

that hatred is equally dangerous to both the person consumed by it and to the target of the hatred. Jal's analysis of the war, though slight, gives us an understanding of how individuals and groups are sacrificed by petty tyrants to ideologies, economic gains and dreams of grandeur. These are good things to understand. The conclusion, which is also the introduction, is Jal's song for peace.


War Child is a quick way to learn that the price of oil is paid in human suffering. It is a vision of the future, a dystopian shrinking water-hole scenario. Anyone with sympathy for children will see that a hideous crime against humanity was committed, and continues in Sudan today. Jal spreads a wide network of guilt. The responsibility to do something lies with us. It is difficult to imagine what that something is. This is the puzzle that

Emmanuel Jal's book leaves us with, as citizens of a peace-making nation.

Educators who have qualms about putting such a "searing" book of "vivid tales of brutality" (these quotes are from the cover lines) in the hands of students might decide to select only tough-minded students. There are two students in my school who were indeed tough enough. One has been on two missions in the Caribbean. He read an account of some of the same realities he witnessed taking place in another country and he chose to take action. Another student, originally from Kosovo, realized her story was parallel to that of African child soldiers. She felt empathy because of her real-life experience. Others might well also reach this level of maturity and empathy through study.

Many Holocaust survivors and veter-

ans of war feel an urgency to tell their stories so that the errors that led the world down the path towards global destruction won't be repeated. Yet there is a hesitancy to share first-hand accounts for fear of traumatizing families and children or of opening old wounds.

Lively debates between young people who have read accounts of recent wars and those who have survived wars; heated discussions on the uses of autobiography, memoir and true accounts; the reliability of eye-witnesses and the bias that accompanies all storytelling—Emmanuel Jal's unsparing account of war in the Sudan should be one of the texts leading these opportunities for growth. 

Bryan Smith is a teacher and human rights activist at College Avenue Secondary School in Woodstock.



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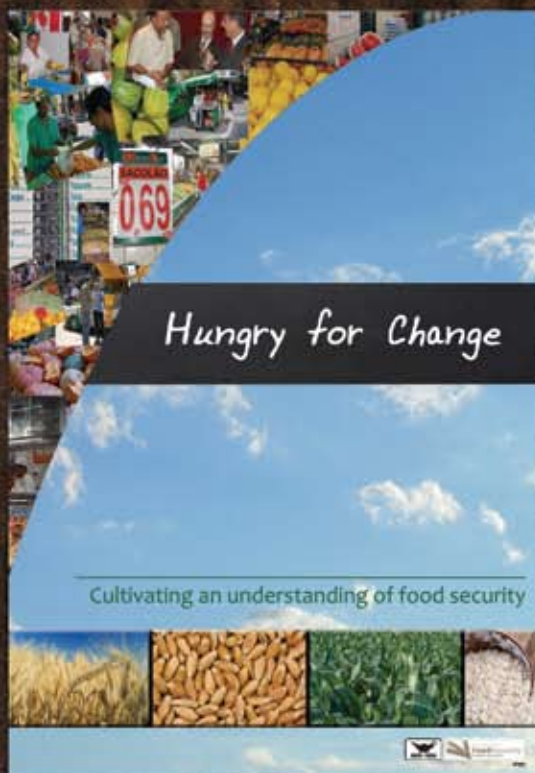
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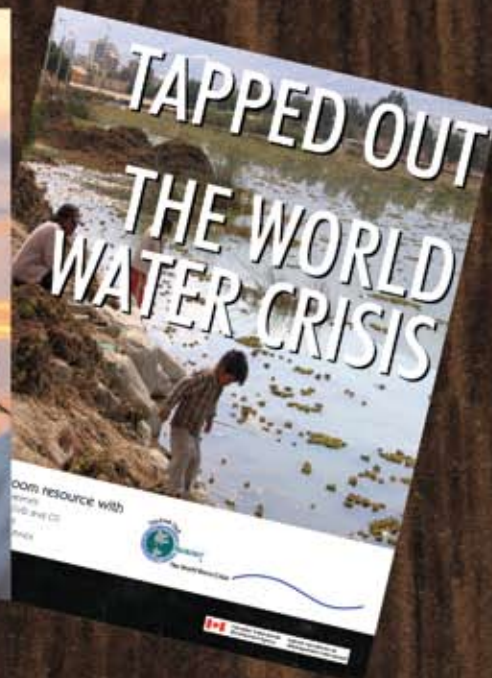
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From PAIN to PRIDE

OSSTF/FEESO's journey in addressing gender-based violence

By Suzette Clark

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has a long history of addressing social justice issues. In fact, when one considers that the federation's beginnings were to address salary inequities in a period of excessive prices, OSSTF/FEESO was certainly one of the first to identify issues of gender in the labour movement. The principle of "equal pay for equal work" was first incorporated into an OSSTF/FEESO motion by Miss Jessie Muir in December 1920. Even in those first few months of the federation's existence, issues relating to gender were clearly identified.

Decades later, the Canadian government began formalizing a commission

whose mandate was to inquire into and report upon the status of women in Canada, and to recommend what steps might be taken by the Federal Government to ensure that women have equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society. The activities of the Royal Commission in this period resulted in a significant increase in public awareness of women's situations. The same period produced women's liberation and radical feminism in Canada. These latter groups, which drew substantial public attention, can take much of the credit for directing attention to such crucial women's issues as "equal pay, abortion, and violence against women."

During this same period, Canadian society began to acknowledge the rights of GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, or questioning) individuals. Canada began a journey of understanding, tolerance and acceptance, when homosexuality was decriminalized in 1969, and then Justice Minister and Attorney-General Pierre Elliott Trudeau remarked that, "The state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation." Canada's development towards truly becoming a world leader, not only promoting, but also guaranteeing equity through legislation and policy, had taken another major step forward.

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De la SOUFFRANCE à la FIERTÉ

L'évolution de la réaction d'OSSTF/FEESO face à la violence fondée sur le sexe

Par Suzette Clark

La Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario s'intéresse depuis longtemps aux questions de justice sociale. En fait, lorsque l'on considère qu'à l'origine, la Fédération était vouée à résoudre les problèmes d'inégalité salariale lors d'une période de flambée des prix, OSSTF/FEESO a été certainement l'un des premiers à identifier les problèmes liés au sexe dans le mouvement syndical. Le principe de « salaire égal à travail égal » a été incorporé pour la première fois dans une résolution d'OSSTF/FEESO par Jessie Muir en décembre 1920. Dès les premiers mois d'existence de la Fédération, les problèmes liés au sexe ont été clairement soulevés.

Des décennies plus tard, le gouverne-

ment canadien a commencé à mettre sur pied une commission officielle dont le mandat était d'enquêter sur le statut des femmes au Canada, d'établir un rapport et de faire des recommandations sur les mesures que le gouvernement fédéral pouvait prendre pour assurer chances égales aux femmes dans la société canadienne. Les activités de la commission royale d'enquête de cette période ont permis d'augmenter considérablement la prise de conscience de la situation des femmes. Cette même période a vu l'avènement du Mouvement de libération des femmes et du féminisme radical au Canada. L'intérêt suscité par des questions cruciales pour les femmes, comme « l'égalité salariale, l'avortement et la violence envers les femmes » est principale-

ment à mettre au crédit de ces derniers groupes qui ont attiré tout particulièrement l'attention du grand public.

Pendant cette même période, la société canadienne a commencé en outre à reconnaître les droits des personnes GLBTQ (personnes lesbiennes, homosexuelles, transgenres/transsexuelles, queer et en questionnement). Le Canada a commencé à évoluer vers la compréhension, la tolérance et l'acceptation lorsque l'homosexualité a été dépénalisée en 1969 et que le ministre de la Justice et procureur général d'alors, Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, a remarqué que « l'état n'a pas sa place dans les chambres à coucher de la nation ». L'évolution du Canada vers sa position de véritable leader mondial,

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OSSTF/FEESO has supported these movements and has successfully used legislation such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the Criminal Code, specifically referencing Hate Propaganda and the Incitement of Hatred, when dealing with those issues relating to discrimination because of gender or sexual identity.

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

—Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Although the above section of the Charter does not explicitly make reference to sexual orientation in its equality provisions, since 1995 the courts have regarded sexual orientation as analogous to the other personal characteristics listed.

Always politically active, OSSTF/FEESO has continued to embrace issues relating to the Status of Women and Human Rights through its support of those committees at the local and provincial levels. Through the work of these committees, and the commitment of members throughout the province, OSSTF/FEESO demonstrates its resolve annually through events such as those commemorating the 14 young women whose lives ended tragically in Montreal on December 6, 1989. Some would say that Canada came of age that day, when we could no longer look only beyond the borders of our country for injustices that would shape our vision as Canadians. Others would say we are still on a journey of growth.

Our growth as a federation is evidenced annually at the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly. Every year, delegates from across the province, representing dozens of job classifications,

convene to give direction to the organization. At AMPA 2007, the OSSTF/FEESO Annual Action Plan made a commitment to develop a specific workshop to address homophobic bullying. By March 2008, OSSTF/FEESO was actively providing workshops on bullying of three significant kinds: student, staff and cyber-bullying. The workshops address a variety of issues providing members the opportunity to better understand and more effectively deal with the bullying encountered and experienced in their varied educational settings.



The 2007 directive had set in motion the creation of a workshop to assist members in better understanding and dealing with homophobia. In the midst of the development of this resource, AMPA 2008 also brought concerns regarding gender-based violence to the forefront with the following motion:

Be it resolved that AMPA direct the Provincial Executive to ensure that Bullying/Harassment workshops identify gender-based bullying and harassment as a specific separate form of bullying and harassment, and that the OSSTF/FEESO Bullying/Harassment workshops be modified to include information specific to the causes, prevention and handling of gender-based bullying and harassment.

AMPA's direction and support has resulted in the development of the new workshop, From PAIN to PRIDE—Gender-Based Violence and Homophobia: What To Do About It. This workshop, available as a half-day or full-day professional development opportunity, has been presented in several locations across the province. Workshop presenters are ready to deliver this powerful experience in your area. It will soon be translated and offered to our French Language members.

With the development of From PAIN to PRIDE, the OSSTF/FEESO writing team's

research resulted in the finding that Gender-Based Violence, broadly defined, includes:

- Power and control norms based on gender and perceived gender (heteronormative)
- Gender bias (sexism)
- Homophobia
- Violence against women

Understanding the complexity of gender-based violence and its origins is necessary so as to address it within our schools and worksites. Human Rights legislation mandates each of us to address bullying or harassment that occurs in our schools or worksites. Furthermore, there is increasing understanding among members that they can be held legally liable for failing to take decisive measures in order to prevent or prohibit discrimination or harassment.

This challenging workshop will provide participants with the definitions, understanding and strategies necessary to address the impact of gender-based violence and homophobia. With recent research identifying the alarming rate of these forms of harassment and assault in school settings, it is up to everyone to take ownership of the rights and responsibilities we share. Only then will we understand the seriousness of gender-based violence and homophobia, and work to stop it.

Suzette Clark is an Executive Assistant at the OSSTF/FEESO provincial office working in the Educational Services Department.

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promouvant non seulement l'équité, mais la garantissant aussi par le biais de lois et de règlements, venait de prendre un tournant décisif.

OSSTF/FEESO a soutenu ces mouvements et tiré parti avec succès de la législation comme la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés*, la *Loi canadienne sur les droits de la personne* et le *Code criminel*, citant spécifiquement la propagande haineuse et l'incitation à la haine lorsqu'elle traitait de problèmes liés à la discrimination fondée sur le sexe ou l'identité sexuelle.

La loi ne fait exception de personne et s'applique également à tous, et tous ont droit à la même protection et au même bénéfice de la loi, indépendamment de toute discrimination, notamment des discriminations fondées sur la race, l'origine nationale ou ethnique, la couleur, la religion, le sexe, l'âge ou les déficiences mentales ou physiques.

Bien que les dispositions d'égalité des droits de cette section de la Charte ne fassent pas explicitement référence à l'orientation sexuelle, depuis 1995, les tribunaux considèrent l'orientation sexuelle comme analogue aux autres caractéristiques personnelles citées.

Toujours active sur le plan politique, OSSTF/FEESO a continué de s'emparer des problèmes liés au statut des femmes et des droits de la personne en soutenant ces comités aux niveaux local et provincial. Grâce au travail de ces comités et à l'engagement de membres de part et d'autre de la province, OSSTF/FEESO démontre chaque année sa résolution par le biais d'événements comme ceux qui commémorent la fin tragique de quatorze jeunes femmes à Montréal le 6 décembre 1989. Certains diraient que le Canada a mûri le jour où il n'était plus nécessaire de regarder au-delà de nos frontières pour trouver des exemples d'injustices qui allaient former notre vision en tant que Canadiens. D'autres diraient que nous sommes toujours en train d'évoluer vers la croissance.

La Réunion annuelle de l'Assemblée provinciale est la preuve de notre croissance en tant que Fédération. Chaque année, des délégués de toute la province,

représentant des douzaines de classifications d'emplois, se réunissent pour définir la voie sur laquelle notre organisme s'engage. Lors de la RAAP 2007, le plan d'action annuel s'est engagé à mettre au point un atelier spécifique sur l'intimidation à caractère homophobe. Dès mars 2008, OSSTF/FEESO a proposé effectivement des ateliers sur trois types importants d'intimidation : contre les élèves, contre le personnel et la cyberintimidation. Ces ateliers traitent de diverses questions et donnent aux membres l'occasion de mieux comprendre et de résoudre plus efficacement l'intimidation à laquelle ils font face dans le milieu éducatif qui est le leur.

La directive de 2007 a suscité la création d'un nouvel atelier visant à aider les membres à mieux comprendre

La loi ne fait
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l'homophobie et à y faire face. Pendant la mise au point de cette ressource, la RAAP 2008 a mis également en avant certaines préoccupations quant à la violence fondée sur le sexe avec la résolution ci-dessous :

Il est résolu que la RAAP demande à l'Exécutif provincial de faire en sorte que des ateliers sur l'intimidation/le harcèlement identifient l'intimidation/le harcèlement fondé sur le sexe comme une forme distincte d'intimidation/de harcèlement et que les ateliers d'OSSTF/FEESO portant sur ce thème soient modifiés pour inclure de l'information spécifique sur les causes, la prévention et le traitement de l'intimidation/du harcèlement fondé sur le sexe.

L'orientation et le soutien de la RAAP ont abouti à l'élaboration du nouvel atelier intitulé « De la SOUFFRANCE à la FIERTÉ—La violence fondée sur le sexe et l'homophobie : Que faire pour y remédier ». Cet atelier peut être suivi

dans le cadre d'une activité de perfectionnement professionnel d'une demi-journée ou d'une journée entière. Les animateurs de l'atelier « De la SOUFFRANCE à la FIERTÉ » sont prêts à livrer cet enseignement lourd de sens dans votre région. Il sera traduit sous peu pour être proposé aux membres francophones.

L'étude ayant mené l'équipe rédactionnelle d'OSSTF/FEESO à la mise au point de l'atelier « De la SOUFFRANCE à la FIERTÉ » a permis de déterminer que la violence fondée sur le sexe, dans sa définition la plus large, comprend :

- Des normes de pouvoir et de contrôle fondées sur le sexe et la perception du sexe (hétéronormatives)
- Un parti pris quant au sexe (sexisme)
- L'homophobie
- La violence envers les femmes

Comprendre la complexité de la violence fondée sur le sexe et ses origines est une étape nécessaire pour résoudre ce problème dans nos écoles et en milieu de travail. Les textes de loi sur les droits de la personne nous donnent pour mandat de résoudre les problèmes d'intimidation ou de harcèlement qui surviennent dans nos écoles et nos milieux de travail. D'autre part, les membres sont de plus en plus conscients qu'ils peuvent être tenus légalement responsables de ne pas avoir pris de mesures décisives pour éviter ou interdire la discrimination ou le harcèlement.

Cet atelier stimulant donnera aux participants les définitions, la compréhension et les stratégies nécessaires pour traiter les effets de la violence fondée sur le sexe et de l'homophobie. Suite aux études récentes mettant en avant le taux alarmant qu'atteignent ces formes de harcèlement et d'agression en milieu scolaire, chacun doit se sentir responsable de la protection des droits et obligations qui sont les nôtres. Ce sera seulement à partir de là que nous comprendrons la gravité de la violence fondée sur le sexe et de l'homophobie et pourrons prendre des mesures pour les faire cesser. 🐦

Suzette Clark est adjointe exécutive au Bureau provincial d'OSSTF/FEESO et travaille au Secteur des services éducatifs.





(Top left) Varanasi, India on the ghats of the holy Ganges river which originates in the Himalayan Mountains. Paul witnessed many religious ceremonies on the banks of the Ganges, including several cremations. The remaining photos were taken in South America. They depict Lake Titikaka, right and above right, the highest commercially navigable lake in the world, which is located on the border of Bolivia and Peru; and a pre-Colombian Inca site (top) forgotten for centuries, Machu Picchu, in Peru. This site is located 2,400 m above sea level and was built in 1450. It was brought to world-wide attention in 1911 by Hiram Bingham, an American historian. It is listed as one of the new Seven Wonders of the World.



Learning through culture

Over the past ten years, Paul Wesley has taken advantage of the summer months by travelling to various parts of the world with the intention of learning about and experiencing various cultures through music, food and talking with the locals. • His travels have taken him to places such as India, Nepal, Thailand, Morocco, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Australia. • He has always had a passion for documenting these trips through photography. • During his travels Paul has seen many things ranging from witnessing several religious ceremonies to seeing one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. • Paul is a teacher at East York C.I. in Toronto. • He currently is a Mediator on the OSSTF/FEESO Mediation Services Resource Bank and is a former member of OSSTF/FEESO's Judicial Council. 🐦





Edited by Ronda Allan

Forum Picks

OUTINGS



SHUNTING THE CLASSROOM TO THE STUDENTS

There are many adjustments teachers and education workers need to make today in terms of the physical space and resources available to educate and help their students. However, none can be as limited as those faced by Fred Sloman and his wife Cela while teaching the students of the Sloman School Car.

The Original School on Wheels #15089, also referred to as the Sloman School Car, or School on Wheels, was one of seven railway schools used as a highly successful method of reaching and teaching the isolated children and adults of the Northern Ontario wilderness early last century. These students ranged from illiterate Canadians to newly immigrated families who couldn't speak or even read English.

The first of these schools was a converted coach donated by Canadian National Railways (CNR) in 1926. The teacher on this car was Fred Sloman of Clinton, Ontario, who later became known as the "Dean of Car School Instructors." The seed for this teaching method was planted and nurtured by Sloman and Dr. J.B. McDougall of the Ontario Department of Education. Both men were teachers from Northern Ontario who felt a deep concern over the absence of educational opportunities in these scattered settlements.







Each week, a CNR way freight train moved the school car to specially built sidings on the route between Capreol and Folyet, and it would remain there for five days or so. The school car would move on and the students were left with sufficient homework to last until their 'school' returned to them from a full tour of its 240 km 'schoolyard.' More than 1,000 children graduated from this unique school, including Fred and Cela Sloman's own five children.

Car #15089, one of the original seven school cars, was thought to have been scrapped long ago. It was found in 1982, abandoned, in the Toronto/Mississauga CNR rail yard. It was transported to Clinton to undergo renovation and is now located in a beautiful park which bears Fred's name. CNR School Car #15089 is also a memorial to Fred Sloman.

Visitors of all ages will be amazed to hear how Fred Sloman and his family lived and travelled in this single railway car, bringing reading and writing skills to Canada's north. One of Fred Sloman's children, Margaret, still lives in Clinton

and is active with the care and upkeep of the car and the park.

The School on Wheels has been given museum status and detailed tours are conducted by Curator Carolyn Brophy and/or Assistant Curator Donna Hardie, both of whom provide visitors

with a vast knowledge of how things were for the Sloman family and the students of Car 15089.

The School on Wheels is situated in Sloman Memorial Park, on the banks of the Bayfield River, just west of Highway 4 at the southern limits of the town of Clin-



Pictured above, Cela Sloman (r) and four of her five children in the living and sleeping quarters of the train, and (top) the car today, as a museum



The yoke and buckets once used to carry water to the train at each stop along the route

ton. Turn west, north of the bridge, onto Victoria Terrace. Sloman Park is located just two blocks away, at the corner of Victoria Terrace and Matilda Street. School on Wheels is open Victoria Day weekend to the end of September; Thursday to Sunday, and holidays; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Donations are welcome and special tours can be arranged. For directions and more information, visit www.schoolcar.ca/RA

BOOKS



“UNLEASHING THE UNPOPULAR”: TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION by Isabel Killoran and Karleen Pendleton Jimenez

Published by Association for
Childhood Education International
160 pages, \$22.00
Reviewed by Debbie Jamieson

The editors of *“Unleashing the Unpopular”*: *Talking About Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity in Education* have compiled the deeply personal experiences of educators, counsellors,

students and other professionals. The book gives us a vivid picture of what it means to belong to a sexual minority. The authors of the stories are people of all ages, often invisible or closeted by the homophobia around them.

Didi Khayatt, a speaker at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Gender Diversity Conference 2003 said, “We need to take gender seriously if we are to begin to address homophobia. It comes down to homophobia being based in misogyny: the palpable fear is that somehow men might become like women—and that is the despicable thought, not the sex acts that they perform.” A counsellor tells us there may be confusion about the feelings and experiences that an adolescent encounters. He says, “Equally important is the fact that emerging homosexual feelings are both unexpected and unwelcome. The conflict between the feelings and the fears results in confusion.” The reader is challenged by research that shows some homophobic violence stems from the perpetrator’s self-hatred of their own same-sex attraction.

Revealing information about one’s sexuality, or “coming out,” is described in *“Unleashing the Unpopular”* as something a person decides to do (or not to do) over and over again according to each setting they find themselves in. The decision is a huge one, and has the potential for serious consequences. In one story of a youth’s gender transition we are told of the courage and strength required by the student and her family in order to pursue such a change in her whole identity. Being transsexual “is a reality for this 17-year-old” and “not a choice or decision.” For this transition to be successful it took a “commitment to ensuring equality and compassion” on the part of all the adults involved.

Throughout the book it is reported that schools and their administrators are being held accountable for ignoring or minimizing the verbal and physical attacks on GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, or questioning) students. We know from the cases given that all students, regardless of orientation, can all be painted with the same

broad brush of negative profiling if it goes unchecked.

Educators are challenged to look at how schools work with transitioning and questioning youth, and are asked:

- Is your education system supportive of all gender diversities?
- Do you have a basic understanding of sexual orientation and gender issues?
- Are you familiar with basic sensitivity protocols for engaging affected youth?
- Are you aware of the current laws and rights of transitioning youth regarding accommodations and prevention of harassment and discrimination?
- Do you know how to respond to a student who has approached you about transitioning in his or her school setting? Or with concerns about his or her sexual orientation?

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB), with the backing of their Equity Policy, has shown support for their diverse school population by hiring a human sexuality social worker and creating a unique “sexuality program” in a specifically designated safe high school for youth who have experienced sexual orientation discrimination in the regular school system. Though the TDSB is described as having “a great deal of work to do before achieving its lofty policy goals,” this board is a model for all school boards who still need an Equity Policy and some innovative programming of their own to counter the discrimination of affected students and staff.

Even more important than its description of the issues, *“Unleashing the Unpopular”* serves as a vital resource for educators. It provides candid case studies, structured discussions, as well as practical suggestions and strategies for change in the classroom and in the education system as well as being more sensitive to the needs of GLBTQ staff, students and parents.

I highly recommend this book for those who work in any field of education. Teaching and non-teaching staff, including administrators, all need to be educated against homophobia. GLBTQ teachers should be treated as assets, and encouraged to educate each of us to make things right and truly safe for



all students and staff. *"Unleashing the Unpopular"* shows our greatest tool in our celebration of diversity is an informed and committed educator.

Debbie Jamieson is an OSSTF/FEESO member working as an Educational Assistant for the Greater Essex County DSB. She is also a member of the provincial Human Rights committee.

**"UNLEASHING THE UNPOPULAR":
TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL
ORIENTATION AND GENDER
DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION**

**Par Isabel Killoran et Karleen
Pendleton Jimenez**

Éditeur Association for Childhood
Education International

160 pages, 22 \$

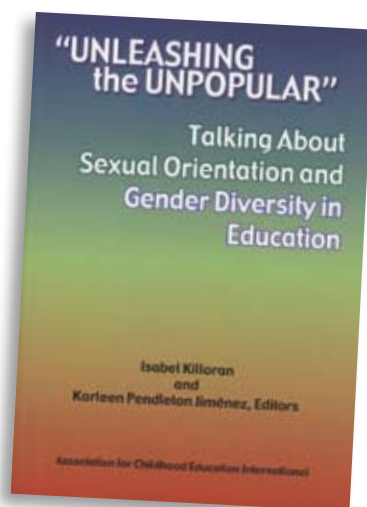
Critique par Debbie Jamieson

Les responsables du collectif *"Unleashing the Unpopular : Talking About Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity in Education"* ont compilé un ouvrage présentant des expériences éminemment personnelles, rédigées par des pédagogues, des conseillers, des étudiants et divers professionnels. Ce livre brosse un portrait très vivant de ce que représente l'expérience d'une minorité sexuelle. Les auteurs des récits sont des gens de tous les âges, souvent invisibles, parfois captifs de l'homophobie ambiante.

Didi Khayatt, conférencière à une rencontre organisée par le *Centre for Gender Diversity* de l'Université de Toronto en 2003 affirmait : « Nous devons prendre au sérieux le sexe de la personne si nous voulons faire véritablement face à l'homophobie. Car, au fond, l'homophobie se fonde toujours sur la misogynie : la peur manifeste consiste à voir des hommes se comporter comme des femmes; et c'est cet élément qui semble le plus méprisable, non pas les actes sexuels qui sont commis. » Un conseiller affirmait d'ailleurs qu'il y a probablement confusion sur les sentiments et les expériences qu'un adolescent peut vivre. « Autre facteur important, le fait que les tendances homosexuelles émergentes sont tout autant imprévues qu'importunes. Et

c'est de ce conflit entre les sentiments et l'anxiété que résulte la confusion. » Le lecteur sera également interpellé par les recherches indiquant comment la violence homophobe tire son origine de la haine de soi que vit l'agent de cette violence, mal à l'aise avec l'attraction homosexuelle qu'il connaît lui-même.

Dévoiler aux autres sa propre orientation sexuelle—ce qu'on appelle l'affirmation de l'identité sexuelle—fait l'objet d'une description dans *Unleashing the Unpopular*. Il s'agit ici d'une décision prise par l'intéressé(e) de révéler ou de cacher maintes et maintes fois sa sexu-



alité dépendamment du contexte dans lequel il ou elle se trouve. Il faut savoir que cette décision est lourde de conséquences, surtout lorsque l'information est transmise de mauvaise foi à d'autres ou qu'elle est donnée à des personnes animées de mauvaises intentions. Dans un des récits rapportés, touchant la transition sexuelle d'une jeune personne, nous pouvons constater le courage et la force morale nécessaires à l'étudiante et aux membres de sa famille pour le processus de transition quant à l'identité dans son ensemble. Être transsexuel(le) est une réalité pour cette jeune personne de 17 ans, et non pas un « choix » ou une « décision personnelle ». Et pour que cette transition soit réussie, il aura fallu l'engagement de tous les adultes concernés, engagement à assurer égalité et compassion.

Dès les premiers récits, on constate que les écoles et leurs administrateurs

sont tenus responsables d'avoir ignoré ou minimisé les agressions verbales ou physiques perpétrées contre les élèves GLBTQ (gais, lesbiennes, bisexuels, transsexuels ou en quête d'identité). Nous savons d'après les cas recensés que tous les étudiants, indépendamment de leur orientation sexuelle, peuvent devenir victimes de généralisations et d'amalgames imputables à ce genre de profilage négatif si celui-ci n'est pas contré. En tant que pédagogues, nous sommes interpellés; nous devons voir comment nos écoles réagissent à la transition et au questionnement des jeunes, et nous interroger sur les points suivants :

- Notre système d'éducation est-il assez réceptif devant la diversité sexuelle?
- Comprenez-vous vraiment l'orientation sexuelle et la problématique hommes/femmes?
- Connaissez-vous les protocoles de sensibilité élémentaire permettant de dialoguer avec les jeunes concernés?
- Connaissez-vous les droits et les lois qui concernent les jeunes en pleine transition, relativement aux accommodements et à la prévention du harcèlement et de la discrimination?
- Savez-vous comment réagir lorsqu'un élève se confie à vous et vous parle de son processus de transition dans le contexte scolaire? Ou bien lorsqu'il ou elle vous fait part de ses inquiétudes à l'endroit de son orientation sexuelle?

Forte de sa politique en matière d'équité, le *Toronto District School Board* (TDSB) a su montrer le soutien voulu à la diversité du corps étudiant, en engageant un travailleur social spécialisé en sexualité humaine et en créant un programme unique sur la sexualité dans une école conçue expressément comme un havre de sécurité pour des jeunes que la sexualité a déjà victimisés dans d'autres établissements scolaires. Le TDSB, apprend-on, a encore du pain sur la planche avant de parvenir à ses nobles objectifs. Il demeure cependant un modèle à suivre pour tous les conseils scolaires qui ne se sont pas dotés d'une politique en matière d'équité ou de programmes innovateurs individuels dans le but de contrer la discrimina-

tion dont font l'objet des élèves ou des employés d'un établissement.

Bien plus important que la description de la problématique qui y figure, le livre *Unleashing the Unpopular* renferme des ressources vitales pour les éducateurs. Il nous présente des études de cas directes, des échanges structurés, ainsi que des suggestions et des stratégies pratiques permettant l'apport d'un changement dans la salle de classe et dans le système d'éducation. Il s'agit là d'une vraie bible pour quiconque souhaite mieux comprendre les besoins et les attentes des employés, des élèves et des parents GLBTQ.

Je recommande chaudement cet ouvrage à tous les intervenants du domaine de l'éducation. Qu'on soit membre du personnel enseignant ou de soutien, ou qu'on soit administrateur, on a tous besoin d'être mieux renseignés sur l'homophobie. Par ailleurs, les enseignants GLBTQ devraient être traités comme une ressource précieuse parmi nous; on devrait les encourager à bien nous renseigner sur la manière de faire les bons choix et de préserver un environnement qui soit sécuritaire pour tous les élèves et employés. *Unleashing the Unpopular* montre que la meilleure façon de célébrer la diversité sexuelle consiste à avoir des enseignants bien informés et dévoués.

Debbie Jamieson est membre d'OSSTF/FEESO; elle est éducatrice au Greater Essex County District School Board. Elle est également membre du Comité provincial des droits de la personne.

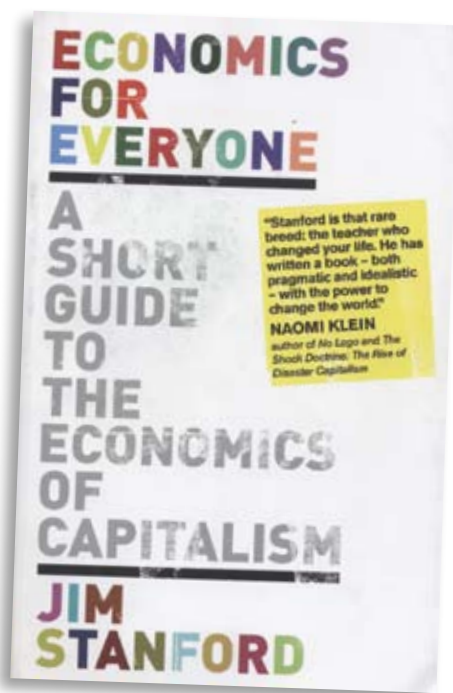
**ECONOMICS FOR EVERYONE:
A SHORT GUIDE TO THE
ECONOMICS OF CAPITALISM
by Jim Stanford**

Published by Fernwood Publishing,
Canada, 2008
360 pages, \$24.95
Reviewed by Larry French

Chile, 1995: A "non-Chicago Boy" economist gave my wife and me his

take on capitalism: "Production of wealth, great. Distribution of wealth, lousy!"

Canada, 2008: Jim Stanford, chief economist for the CAW, columnist for *The Globe and Mail*, television commentator and author of the popular blog "Facts from the Fringe," brought the same pungent lucidity to his study of the theories, practices, strengths and shortcomings of the economic system. It seems we are condemned to live within the boundaries of this system, despite its ever-present potential for meltdown.



Economics for Everyone shows how the basic building blocks—work, consumption, investment, finance and the environment—function to produce the complex structure of the modern economy. When there is balance among these factors leading to productivity, and an equitable distribution of reward, prosperity ensues. For example, during the good times—"Les Trente Glorieuses," the years 1945–1975—when western nations enjoyed a generalized improvement in their standard of living. However, as Stanford emphasizes, key "economic" decisions are always political. Stanford offers up an enormous boon to educators, labour activists and

anyone else interested in understanding the workings of capitalism. Skilful, often humorous illustrations by Tony Biddle highlight Stanford's analysis.

Since the late 1970s, our Anglo-Saxon corporate elite, in particular, has ensured that governments deregulate, privatize, build in unemployment and weaken unions, with the result that prosperity has been for the few at the top of the pyramid, and hard times or stagnation for everyone else. To add insult to injury, rather than invest the massive profits generated by free market practices in productivity improvement, our capitalists have preferred the easy money path of financial speculation. We are living through the result.

The website offers statistics, data and a blog to support the book (www.economicsforeveryone.com). Teachers and group leaders will be delighted by the additional sample curriculum resources available in PDF format:

- 13-lesson course outline organized around sections of the book with PowerPoint instructor guide (lecture notes are in development).
- Four, 90-minute workshops—Reclaiming Economics: Understanding Capitalism, So That We Can Be More Successful at Changing It—designed for shorter workshops.
- Student exercises.

A French version will be available at the end of the year, followed by Japanese and Korean translations.

As Pogo remarked, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Recently, Naomi Klein's, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, exposed the destructive reality of free-market capitalism. *Economics for Everyone* offers us an essential tool to use in the fight to re-regulate the beast, so that it again meets the needs of the working people—the majority of our society.

Larry French, life member of OSSTF/FEESO and former director of the Communications/Political Action Department, enjoys an active retirement in Switzerland, Toronto and Sault Ste. Marie.

ECONOMICS FOR EVERYONE: A SHORT GUIDE TO THE ECONOMICS OF CAPITALISM

Par Jim Stanford

Éditeur Fernwood Publishing,
Canada, 2008

360 pages, 24,95 \$

Critique par Larry French

Au Chili, en 1995, un économiste étranger aux *Chicago Boys* nous donnait, ma femme et moi, son point de vue sur le capitalisme : « Production de la fortune, super. Distribution de la fortune, nulle! » Aujourd'hui, Jim Stanford, économiste en chef des TCA, chroniqueur pour le *Globe and Mail*, commentateur à la télévision et auteur du blogue populaire *Facts from the Fringe*, fait preuve de la même lucidité caustique dans sa nouvelle étude sur les théories, pratiques, forces et faiblesses du système économique dans les limites duquel nous sommes condamnés à vivre, en dépit de son éternelle tendance aux désastres. Son ouvrage *Economics for Everyone* constitue une occasion rêvée pour les pédagogues, les militants syndicaux et toute personne intéressée à bien comprendre les rouages du capitalisme. Des illustrations soignées, souvent humoristiques, signées Tony Biddle, viennent agrémenter l'analyse de Stanford.

L'auteur explique comment certains éléments constitutifs fondamentaux—le travail, la consommation, les investissements, la finance et l'environnement—interagissent pour produire la structure complexe que l'on connaît dans l'économie d'aujourd'hui. Tant qu'il existe un équilibre entre ces facteurs pour engendrer la productivité et que la distribution des retombées favorables se fait de manière équitable, on connaît la prospérité. Nous avons vécu ces années de vaches grasses durant « Les Trente Glorieuses », c'est-à-dire la période 1945 à 1975, au cours de laquelle l'Occident a connu une amélioration générale de son niveau de vie. Toutefois, comme le souligne Stanford, les décisions « économiques » clés sont toujours des décisions politiques.


En effet, depuis la fin des années

1970, l'élite économique, particulièrement dans les pays anglo-saxons, a tout fait pour que les États déréglementent les marchés, privatisent les entreprises, augmentent le chômage et affaiblissent les syndicats, ce qui s'est traduit par une prospérité pour les rares élus qui se trouvent au faite de la pyramide, et des temps difficiles ou unestagnation pour le reste de la population. Et le comble, c'est qu'au lieu de réinvestir dans l'optimisation de la productivité les immenses profits imputables à ces pratiques de libre marché, nos capitalistes ont préféré opter pour la facilité, c'est-à-dire la spéculation financière. Et nous en goûtons tous le résultat.

Un site complémentaire, www.economicsforeverone.com, propose des statistiques d'appoint, de nombreuses données et un blogue. Enseignants et dirigeants de groupe pourront s'en donner à cœur joie dans les ressources complémentaires qui y sont offertes :

- une présentation PowerPoint de 13 leçons accompagnées d'exercices (les notes de cours sont encore en préparation);
- une série de quatre séances de 90 minutes, intitulée *Reclaiming Economics: Understanding Capitalism, So That We Can Be More Successful at Changing It*, a été préparée en vue d'ateliers plus courts.

D'ici la fin de l'année, il y aura une version française; des versions japonaise et coréenne sont également en cours de préparation.

Comme le disait Pogo, « Nous avons rencontré l'ennemi et c'est nous. » Récemment, Naomi Klein présentait dans *Shock Doctrine* la réalité destructive du capitalisme libéral. *Economics for Everyone* nous présente un outil essentiel qui nous aidera à démonter le monstre de façon à pouvoir à nouveau satisfaire les besoins et les attentes des travailleurs, qui constituent après tout la vaste majorité de notre société. 

Larry French, membre à vie d'OSSTF/FEESO et ancien directeur du Secteur des communications/action politique, écoule une retraite active, partagée entre la Suisse, Toronto et Sault Ste. Marie.

HOT LINKS



E-Learning Ontario: Teacher-Friendly Resources and Professional Development

Reviewed by Judy Mallette

In an era where it is difficult to compete and keep pace with the latest innovations, educators may ask themselves, "Where can I find high-quality online resources for my students, and what can I do with these resources to engage my students?" The provincial e-learning strategy has the answer to these questions. Launched in 2006, e-Learning Ontario offers teachers over 15,000 free electronic resources that can be used at home or in classrooms—and PD to learn how to use them.

Teacher-Friendly Resources

Quiz yourself. How often do you find yourself:

- Teaching a new subject, grade, topic, or course?
- Managing split grades or multiple preps?
- Needing remediation or enrichment materials for your students?
- Wanting to differentiate instruction to engage more students?
- Feeling bored or stale with your usual approach to a topic?
- Looking for another way to reach students who didn't understand a concept the first time around?
- Packaging material for absent or suspended students?
- Compiling materials for supply teachers because of unexpected illness or absence?
- Providing students with extra help, substitute assignments, or credit recovery materials?

Most teachers can relate to many of these scenarios, and to having too little time to find or create suitable resources of their own.

The Ontario Educational Resource Bank, located at resources.elearningontario.ca, contains a gold mine of free educational resources searchable by keyword, grade, subject, strand, and overall expectation. Get your username and password from your board, and then view, download, print, and copy thousands of K-12 resources created by Ontario teachers, for Ontario teachers. Check out the thousands of videos, games, worksheets, lesson plans, crossword puzzles, full units, and interactive multimedia elements you can use with your students. Once you've done that, you may just want to contribute your own materials to augment the collection.

Just-in-Time PD

And in case the thought of all that technology leaves you feeling lost, rest assured that the e-Learning Ontario team won't leave you out there in the cold. A variety of free professional development opportunities are available for teachers, just for the asking:

- Access eLO's recorded webinars at your leisure at elearningontario.ca/eng/strategy/webinars/default.aspx#wbmr_01.
- Take part in a two-day training session on the provincial e-learning tools and content.
- Request a demonstration or workshop for your next PD day or staff meeting.
- Self register in a virtual online PD course in e-Community at community.elearningontario.ca.

- Drop by the e-Learning Ontario booth at many provincial conferences, such as OSCA, OAME, OMLTA, STAO, OCTE, and ECOO, to talk to one of our staff.
- Check out the e-Learning Ontario website at elearningontario.ca/eng/Default.aspx.

While taking part in this PD and getting comfortable with the OERB may not keep you on the cutting edge of all technology, it will help you to stay informed and your students engaged. 🐾

Judy Mallette is an e-learning teacher with the Avon Maitland DSB.



Summer 2009

Learn, Share & Have Fun at Camp OTF. Various locations across Ontario. OTF's three-day workshops are professional learning events that provide time to reflect on your classroom practices, collaborate with colleagues and share best practices. Experienced teacher facilitators guide discussions and help participants build on each other's expertise. Anticipate a rich sharing of strategies and resources in a variety of Going Green, subject-based or Thinking about Thinking workshops. Online registration closes June 19, 2009. The \$50 registration

fee covers workshop materials, onsite meals and onsite accommodation, if required. For more information on programs, specific locations and online registration, visit www.teachingmatters.on.ca and click on Camp OTF 2009.

October 15-17

2009 Ophea Kids' Health Conference
Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea)

Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, ON

This conference will help educators prepare for the implementation of the renewed Health and Physical Education (H&PE) curriculum, and provide practical applications and supports to create and maintain healthy schools and communities. Interactive workshops will be presented on innovative creative strategies for H&PE, sport and intramural activities, ideas to address various health promotion topics and assessment and evaluation tools. A select number of workshops will be offered in French. For full details and conference registration information, visit www.ophea.net.

October 23-25

Momentum...Powered by Drama and Dance

Council for Drama and Dance in Education (CODE)

Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, ON

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more about implementing the new Arts Curriculum, and be inspired to embrace change as you connect with colleagues in the drama and dance community. For full details and conference registration information, visit www.code.on.ca.

November 5–8

Con Brio 2009
Ontario Music Educators' Association (OMEA)
Doubletree by Hilton
Toronto Airport
Con Brio 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the Ontario Music Educators' Association and the 50th anniversary of their national affiliate, the Canadian Music Educators' Association. Conference highlights include keynotes by Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser and The Canadian Brass and Friday night entertainment by Sean Cullen. For full details and conference registration information, visit www.omea.on.ca.

November 8–10

Catch the Energy: Tools for Success
Ontario School Counsellors Association (OSCA)
Doubletree by Hilton, Toronto
Airport Hotel
Guidance counsellors, Student Success teachers, Career Studies teachers and other teachers and educators play a unique role in every school and in the lives of students. The focus of this conference is energizing guidance and career education programs by providing resources, ideas and tools for successful planning and implementation. We will investigate ways to energize our programs, curriculum and ourselves so that we can inspire and energize our students. For full details and conference registration information, visit www.osca.ca. 

ERRATA

Education Forum, Winter 2009, Vol. 35 (1), Creative Arts Club Inspires and Engages, page 11: The batik work *Fish* was created by Erica Tran. We apologize for incorrectly identifying the artist.



OSSTF/FEESO: Celebrating 90 years

Embracing the future

ON December 30, 2009, OSSTF/FEESO celebrates its 90th anniversary. The 62 members who met on that date back in 1919 could never have predicted that the strength, tenacity and dedication upon which they founded the organization would flourish as it has. Today, OSSTF/FEESO consists of over 60,000 members—public secondary teachers as well as educational workers from public elementary, secondary, French and Catholic schools, universities and even some private schools, including Royal Conservatory of Music members. As it continues to grow, our OSSTF/FEESO family becomes more influential and powerful in our work to protect and improve publicly-funded education. As we celebrate the past, we must also embrace the future by linking our past struggles with the victories of tomorrow.

If there is one lesson that our 90 years of experience have taught us, it is that OSSTF/FEESO does not rest on its laurels: we celebrate and learn from our past, and we continue to prepare in order to embrace the future with confidence. While we acknowledge our history and are proud of it, we want to be known for what we do today and tomorrow, not what we did yesterday. So, what does the future hold?

We may not be able to predict the exact events that will unfold, but we can predict what OSSTF/FEESO needs to do to continue to lead the way. While we have secured long-term deals for most of our members, we have secured opportunity as well, and we will have to move forward to take advantage of those opportunities. The challenges will be there—competing for funding at all levels of the education system, eliminating workplace violence, preserving publicly-funded education as it faces declining enrolment, struggling against privatization and protecting pensions and benefits, to name a few. We know what it takes to keep moving ahead and take on these challenges.

We also know that we need the entire membership, not just the leadership, to be engaged. As our influence on policy and legislation has expanded over the years, we have broadened our involvement on provincial committees and task forces, as well as with various coalitions and labour organizations. We write letters, we lobby at all levels—from our neighbourhood to our legislature, and we take action when necessary. With all that we do, we

OSSTF/FEESO : Célébrer nos 90 ans

Investir dans le futur

LE 30 décembre 2009, OSSTF/FEESO célébrera son 90^e anniversaire. Les 62 membres qui s'étaient réunis à cette date en 1919 n'auraient jamais pu prévoir que la force, la ténacité et l'engagement sur lesquels ils ont fondé l'organisme se développeraient comme ce fut le cas. Aujourd'hui, OSSTF/FEESO représente plus de 60 000 membres tant du personnel enseignant dans les écoles publiques que les travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation des écoles élémentaires et secondaires publiques, des écoles catholiques et françaises, des universités et même quelques écoles privées dont le *Royal Conservatory of Music*. Au fur et à mesure que nous grandissons, OSSTF/FEESO, notre famille, a plus d'influence et est plus forte dans son travail de protection et d'amélioration de l'éducation financée à même les deniers publics. En célébrant le passé, nous devons aussi nous investir dans l'avenir en reliant nos luttes du passé aux victoires de demain.

S'il y a une leçon que nous pouvons tirer de nos 90 années d'expérience, c'est qu'OSSTF/FEESO ne se repose pas sur ses lauriers; nous célébrons et apprenons de notre passé et nous nous préparons avec beaucoup d'assurance à investir dans l'avenir. Bien que nous reconnaissons notre histoire et que nous en soyons fiers, nous voulons être reconnu pour ce que nous faisons aujourd'hui et demain et non pas pour ce que nous avons accompli hier. Alors, que nous réserve l'avenir?

Nous ne pouvons peut-être pas prédire exactement les événements qui prendront forme, mais nous pouvons prédire ce qu'OSSTF/FEESO doit faire pour continuer d'être le chef de file. Alors que nous avons obtenu des ententes de longue durée pour la plupart de nos membres, nous avons aussi des occasions assurées et nous devons aller de l'avant pour profiter de ces occasions. Les défis seront présents entre autres, la rivalité pour le financement à tous les niveaux du système d'éducation, l'élimination de la violence au travail, la protection de l'éducation financée à même les deniers publics alors qu'elle est confrontée à une baisse des effectifs, la lutte contre la privatisation et la protection des régimes de retraite et des avantages sociaux, pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns. Nous savons ce que cela prend pour continuer à aller de l'avant et relever ces défis.

Last Word *continued*

run the risk of spreading ourselves too thin unless our members are aware and driven to get involved and get the job done.

We know we have more work to do to spark new involvement and fuel that fire of commitment—our communications audit has identified that we need to employ innovative ways of communicating and provide more training and future leadership opportunities.

That commitment is highlighted in the 2009–2010 Action Plan with the establishment of the new members' regionals and the new members' workgroup. This does not mean that we

Our strength, derived from the
commitment and dedication of
members, is our hallmark

Notre force, obtenue par l'engagement
et le dévouement des membres, est ce
qui nous définit

can take the involvement of our more experienced members for granted. They have helped build the foundation for our successes and their continued support and involvement must be supported and appreciated.

I want to thank all members for all of their support and hard work over the past year. Our strength, derived from the commitment and dedication of members, is our hallmark.

For 90 years, education has been our specialty. OSSTF/FEESO has used its knowledge, power and strength to balance both the protective and professional concerns of its membership. While establishing working conditions for members, OSSTF/FEESO will continue to work to build strong public services, preserve academic freedom, prevent the privatization and commercialization of our educational institutions, ensure that students receive an education free of bias and discrimination and provide an equitable opportunity for all students to succeed in a strong, well-funded public education system.

Like our founders, it is difficult for us to predict what lies ahead for the next 90 years, but the one certainty that will endure is that the solidarity and strength of our members will always help us win the day. I invite and encourage each and every one of you to take an active part in our team to accomplish these goals.

Mot de la fin *suite*

Nous savons également que nous avons besoin de tous les membres, et non seulement des dirigeants, pour être engagés. Puisque notre influence sur les politiques et la législation s'est accrue au fil des ans, il en est de même de notre participation aux comités et groupes de travail provinciaux ainsi qu'auprès des divers syndicats et coalitions. Nous rédigeons des lettres, nous faisons des pressions à tous les niveaux, de notre quartier jusqu'à l'Assemblée législative, et nous agissons au besoin. Avec tout ce que nous faisons, nous risquons de nous disperser à moins que nos membres soient informés, qu'ils aient la volonté de s'engager et d'accomplir le travail.

Nous savons qu'il y a encore beaucoup à faire pour susciter une nouvelle participation et pour motiver un engagement solide. Notre examen des communications a identifié que nous devons avoir recours à des moyens de communication novateurs et offrir davantage de formation et d'occasions de leadership.

Cette participation ressort dans le Plan d'action annuel grâce à la création d'un groupe de travail et à des rencontres régionales à l'intention des nouveaux membres. Cela ne signifie pas que nous devons présumer de la participation de nos membres plus chevronnés. Ils sont à la base de

nos réussites et leur soutien continu et leur participation doivent être appuyés et appréciés.

J'aimerais remercier tous les membres pour leur soutien et leur travail acharné au cours de la dernière année. Notre force, obtenue par l'engagement et le dévouement des membres, est ce qui nous définit.

L'éducation est notre spécialité depuis 90 ans. OSSTF/FEESO a utilisé ses connaissances, son pouvoir et sa force pour équilibrer les préoccupations de protection et professionnelles de ses membres. Tout en déterminant les conditions de travail de ses membres, OSSTF/FEESO continuera à bâtir des services publics solides, à maintenir la liberté universitaire, à empêcher la privatisation et la commercialisation de nos établissements scolaires, à s'assurer que les élèves reçoivent un enseignement sans préjugés ni discrimination et à assurer à tous les élèves des occasions équitables de réussir au sein d'un système d'éducation publique solide et bien financé.

Tout comme pour nos fondateurs, il est difficile de prédire ce que réservent les 90 prochaines années, mais une chose subsistera, c'est que la solidarité et la force de nos membres nous aideront toujours à avoir le dessus. J'invite et encourage tous et chacun d'entre vous à participer activement au sein de notre équipe afin d'atteindre ces buts.

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