

THE KIDS IN THE HALLOWED HALLS • THE BATTLES, THE WARS, THE VICTORIES

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EDUCATION



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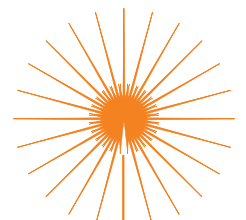
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Very big shoes to fill

It started with a question that came out of the blue: “How would you feel about taking over as editor of *Education Forum*?”

The question came from Rod Albert, General Secretary, and Wendy Bolt, Associate General Secretary, who were conducting interviews with all of the executive assistants to discuss assignments for the upcoming school year. After a short pause, I replied, “I would like to know a little more about what the position entails, but yes, I think I would be very interested.” After all, I am an English teacher and my favourite course when I was still in the classroom was Media Studies.

Shortly thereafter, I sat down with Pierre Côté, the outgoing editor, to discuss what was involved. I learned that the routine is very well established and is carried out by a myriad of highly capable and professional people. Greatly reassured and not at all surprised that this is the case, I went back to the General Secretary to let him know that I would be delighted to be the editor.

I was very excited as I shadowed the editorial team through the process of bringing the Spring 2007 issue to print. At the end of June, managing editor Marianne Clayton and I got together to start planning the issue you are holding now.

Pierre’s involvement with *Education Forum* has truly been a labour of love. He told me that being the editor of this magazine was his favourite part of a portfolio that held many responsibilities. Through his tenure, the number of French articles increased, as did the number of articles on social justice and environmental issues. As an OSSTF/FEESO member with a Professional Student Services Personnel background, Pierre always kept in mind that the readership of this magazine included not just teachers but

also an increasing number of other education workers. This has been a positive step in the evolution of this magazine.

In browsing through all the back issues of *Education Forum*, I became very aware, in a new way, that this is an extraordinary magazine that has always been ahead of its time in bringing social awareness, educa-

tion innovations and political issues to the attention of OSSTF/FEESO members.

This issue continues that fine tradition.

Regular contributor Jon Cowans brings us an insightful review of *Ivory Tower Blues: A University System in Crisis*. Julia Andreacchi gives us first-hand accounts of teaching in the brave new world of e-Learning Ontario. Roger Langen shares his concern about the treatment of the children of “illegals” and what schools can do to help them. Retired General Secretary Rod Albert writes of OSSTF/FEESO’s history over the past 35 years. Retired Director of Communications and Political Action Ruby Day writes of an innovative research project about World War II veterans undertaken

by students, and a PD program for teachers. Alan Skeoch brings a fresh perspective about native land claims. Pierre Côté gives us an account of the recent successful organizing campaign, which has brought to OSSTF/FEESO its newest bargaining unit, the 1,200 educational support staff of the University of Ottawa.

Letting go of *Education Forum* was hard for Pierre, but he told me, “It is time to move on,” and indeed he has

Letting go of *Education Forum* was hard for Pierre, but he told me, “It is time to move on,” and indeed he has a great job.

I have been entrusted with not only an incredible opportunity, but also a tremendous responsibility. And I have very big shoes to fill, not just Pierre’s, but those of his predecessor, Neil Walker, and every other editor who has ever worked on this magazine from its first incarnation in 1921 as *The Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation Bulletin*, through its next phase as *The Forum*, to its current existence as *Education Forum*.

As I close my first “Openers,” I wish to thank the General Secretaries, the newly retired Rod Albert and the newly appointed Wendy Bolt, for the confidence they are showing in me with this plum assignment. I wish to thank Pierre for entrusting his “baby” to me, and Marianne for guiding me through my first issue. Most of all, I wish to pledge to the OSSTF/FEESO members that I will do my best to fill the shoes I have inherited.





Un défi de taille que de prendre la succession

Tout a commencé par une question complètement inattendue : « Comment réagirais-tu si tu devenais éditrice en chef d'*Education Forum*? »

La question est venue de Rod Albert, secrétaire général, et de Wendy Bolt, secrétaire générale associée, lors d'entrevue avec tous les adjoints exécutifs afin de discuter des affectations pour la prochaine année scolaire. Après une courte pause, j'ai répondu : « J'aimerais en savoir davantage sur ce que comporte ce poste, mais oui je pense que cela pourrait m'intéresser. » Après tout, je suis enseignante d'anglais et mon cours préféré lorsque j'étais en salle de classe était les études médiatiques.

Par la suite, j'ai rencontré Pierre Côté, l'éditeur sortant, pour discuter de ce que cela impliquait. J'ai appris que le travail était déjà très bien organisé et qu'il était exécuté par de nombreuses personnes professionnelles et extrêmement compétentes. Largement rassurée et non surprise que ce fut le cas, je suis retournée au bureau du Secrétaire général et je lui ai indiqué que je serais ravie d'être éditrice en chef.

Toute excitée, j'ai observé l'équipe de rédaction durant toute la conception et l'impression du numéro du printemps 2007 et, vers la fin de juin, j'ai rencontré Marianne Clayton, directrice de la rédaction, pour planifier le numéro que vous tenez présentement.

La participation de Pierre à *Education Forum* était vraiment un travail accompli avec plaisir. Il m'a confié que la rédaction de ce magazine était, parmi toutes ses responsabilités, celle qu'il préférait le plus. Pendant qu'il était en fonction, le nombre d'articles en français a augmenté ainsi que les articles portant sur les problèmes environnementaux et de justice sociale. Grâce à ses antécédents de mem-

bre d'OSSTF/FEESO provenant du personnel professionnel des services à l'élève, Pierre était sensible au fait que les lecteurs de ce magazine comprenaient non seulement le personnel enseignant, mais aussi un nombre sans cesse grandissant de travailleuses et de travailleurs en éducation. Ce fut une étape positive dans l'évolution de ce magazine.

En feuilletant tous mes anciens numéros d'*Education Forum*, je me suis rendue compte d'un tout nouvel œil qu'il s'agit d'un magazine extraordinaire qui a toujours été en avance sur son temps en portant les dossiers politiques, les innovations en matière d'éducation et la sensibilisation sociale à l'attention des membres d'OSSTF/FEESO.

Ce numéro poursuit cette excellente tradition.

Jon Cowans, collaborateur régulier, nous propose une critique éclairée de *Ivory Tower Blues: A University System in Crisis*. Julia Andreacchi nous donne un aperçu direct de l'enseignement dans le nouveau monde de l'Apprentissage électronique Ontario. Roger Langen partage ses préoccupations concernant le traitement infligé aux enfants des immigrants illégaux et comment les écoles peuvent leur venir en aide. Rod Albert, secrétaire général à la retraite, raconte l'histoire d'OSSTF/FEESO au cours des 35 dernières années. Ruby Day, directrice des communications/action politique retraitée, nous informe au sujet d'un projet de recherche innovateur entrepris par des élèves sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Alan Skeoch nous propose un regard nouveau sur les revendications territoriales des Autochtones. Pierre Côté nous relate la récente campagne de syndicalisation couronnée de succès qui a permis à OSSTF/FEESO de recruter sa toute

dernière unité de négociation, les 1 200 employés de soutien en éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa.

Laisser aller *Education Forum* a été difficile pour Pierre, mais il m'a dit que « c'était le temps de passer à autre chose » et c'est ce qu'il a effectivement fait. Pierre a pratiqué la psychologie à Ottawa où il a assumé les responsabilités de président et de négociateur pour OSSTF/FEESO. Il s'est joint au personnel d'OSSTF/FEESO en tant qu'adjoint exécutif en 1997 et est devenu directeur des Communications/action politique en 2005. Tout récemment, depuis le 1^{er} septembre 2007, Pierre a entrepris un nouveau rôle au sein d'OSSTF/FEESO, soit celui de secrétaire général associé. Bonne chance Pierre! Je sais que tu feras du bon travail.


On m'a confié non seulement une occasion incroyable, mais aussi d'énormes responsabilités. Et j'ai un défi de taille à relever, pas uniquement de prendre la succession de Pierre, mais aussi celle de son prédécesseur, Neil Walker, et de tous les autres éditeurs en chef de ce magazine depuis sa création en 1921 connue alors sous le nom *The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation Bulletin*, puis ensuite *The Forum* et son nom actuel *Education Forum*.

En terminant mon premier « Mot de l'éditrice », j'aimerais remercier les secrétaires généraux, Rod Albert, nouvellement à la retraite, et Wendy Bolt récemment nommée pour la confiance qu'ils m'ont accordée avec cette affectation de choix. Je remercie Pierre pour m'avoir confié son « bébé » et Marianne pour m'avoir guidée pendant ce premier numéro. J'aimerais avant tout promettre aux membres d'OSSTF/FEESO que je ferai de mon mieux pour poursuivre ce qui a été entrepris par mes prédécesseurs. 🐦



The Highly Reliable Times

VOLUME 1 - ISSUE 5

 Windows Server 2003



PALLISER FURNITURE FINDS COMFORT WITH WINDOWS SERVER OVER NOVELL SUSE LINUX

*Reliability and cost savings
key factors in decision.*

By BERT DANNON

WINNIPEG July 2007 – Palliser Furniture found itself in a "Narf!" when you wish for situation. The North American housing boom caused a North American furniture boom and Palliser experienced rapid growth.

When Palliser was small, and fewer employees needed business information, they got by with Novell-based networks with Open Enterprise Server and SUSE Linux Enterprise servers as the majority of the company's infrastructure. As they expanded, things got more complicated. More employees needed consistent, reliable information to do business. "The Novell-based system required significant IT support. We had to devote one full-time IT staff to managing the Novell eDirectory system and the file shares to ward off issues," says Ingo Bergeson, IT Director, Palliser Furniture Ltd. "There was a significant strain on our IT resources, which were already pretty stretched."

Palliser considered upgrading its Novell infrastructure to a new version, but opted instead to replace its predominantly Linux and Windows 2000-based infrastructure with Microsoft Windows Server 2003.

"Because Windows Server completely integrates with the applications we use each day, it is simpler to introduce new applications



Thanks to their new Windows Server

IT TAKES TO THEIR NEW WINDOWS SERVER, Palliser Furniture's business runs more smoothly

and features," says Bergeson. Further, that, the user login experience is "more efficient and reliable." In the past, users had to wait 5 minutes to log into the network, whereas now it only takes 10 seconds," adds Bergeson.

Keeping the interface simple was important for Palliser, but not at the expense of security and reliability. Windows Server enabled Palliser to manage network resources more efficiently from its headquarters in Winnipeg, while ensuring greater file and folder security. With Active Directory, Palliser's IT managers delegate rights and restrict administration privileges. Using Active Directory we can ensure our IT

colleague in Indonesia responsible for desktop support has the appropriate level of access to the Winnipeg systems," says Bergeson.

Palliser further simplified its IT management by moving Lotus 11 Client Mail Services to one email system running on Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 at the Winnipeg location. Reducing the number of servers meant saving the number of problems that could arise.

For the full Palliser case study plus other case studies and independent research findings on the reliability of Windows Server versus Linux, visit microsoft.ca/getthefacts/palliser

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BREAKING NEWS: WINDOWS SERVER A PERFECT FIT FOR PALLISER

With Windows Server, Palliser Furniture Ltd. is achieving simplified IT management, faster performance, better user experience, greater security and lower licensing fees.

Continued on Page D9

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OCE alumnus, Major (Ret'd) Roy Oglesby

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OISE alumna Michelle Jenkins



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Photo: Mary MacDonell

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Your Home on Native Land

Caledonia, Ontario, March 2007



Alan Skeoch is quite a character. A retired history teacher who taught for more than 30 years at Parkdale CI in the west end of Toronto, he's an extraordinary storyteller who engages his audience with a human interest angle, not just facts and dates. His delivery combines humour and passion.

When we met this spring at a conference where he was guest speaker, he talked about a book he'd written for high school students—*Your Home on Native Land*. I was intrigued, and asked him to share with Education Forum readers how he came to write this book. This is his story.

— Editor

"You can't go through there," said the OPP officer sitting in his cruiser. Not hostile, just stating the facts as he saw them.

"I would like to try."

"Suit yourself."

The barricade...a huge pile of gravel interspersed here and there with lumber and a tire or two. Atop flew the Mohawk Warriors' flag. A native checked cars. Like the officer, the native was not hostile. He looked in my truck window, said nothing.

"I have an appointment on the reserve."

"Go ahead," waving me forward.

Two words. No hassle. No need for long dialogue. And certainly no threat of violence.

How could a people who once occupied most of southern Ontario lose all their land? Land! A touchy issue among native people. Best not discussed.

Outside, the reserve tensions were building in Caledonia. Many citizens were incensed by the Six Nations' claim to a

developer's property. The land had been sold long ago to settlers and the deed had moved from owner to owner in what many believed was a legal manner. The young girl at the Dairy Queen observed, "Things are bad around here, real bad."

Inside the reserve, however, life was relaxed. Margaret and Julie, native leaders, made me feel very welcome. Nonetheless, it was a very surreal experience. Old diaries were hauled out, and maps perused amid normal conversation. At least until...

"My son starts high school next year, and he's scared."

"Scared?"

"Yes, he will have to leave our reserve school and attend a white school...and with all the trouble, he is worried. I am worried, too."

That single comment, "scared," was the beginning of my book. *Your Home on Native Land* was only the germ of an idea on that March day.

The boy's fear was similar to the fear recorded by Peter Jones, a Mississauga chief, way back in the 1840s, when the band lived in a small log village above the Credit River. Peter had been away for a time, and when he returned one of his people said Peter was scared at night. Not scared of bears or wolves, for nearly all had been shot and skinned by the 1840s. He was scared of the white settlers, many of whom harassed native people. The insatiable demand for native land was at the heart of the harassment. And the white settlers won. Natives got little pieces of land. Or, as one perceptive Cree recorded, scrap land.

Eventually, the day came to an end, and I drove away.

Whoops! The exit barricade.

"Where you goin'?"

"Home."

"No, you aren't. The boss says no one

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The boss man looked my way. Big dark sunglasses made him look like the Terminator. “Follow me!”

leaves the reserve.”

“But I have to get home for supper,” I answered lamely.

“Hey!” yelled the Warrior to a man sitting on an ATV some distance away. He had a woman on the back of the machine and a flag anchored to the handlebars. “Hey! This guy wants to go home for supper.”

The boss man looked my way. Big dark sunglasses made him look like the Terminator. “Follow me!”

He led me out, weaving around the barricades, and back to Caledonia, where he stopped beside an oil drum fired with the remains of wooden skids. I think he waved, but I could not be sure.

Four words: “Go ahead,” those two got me into the reserve; “Follow me,” those two got me out of the reserve.

My book begins in Caledonia and moves from the present to the past, the very deep past...back to first contact. Although somewhat skeptical at first, the small publishing company Jackfruit Press then greeted the idea enthusiastically when I told them the book would be a dialogue between two people.

I explained, “Suppose we create two fictional characters, a young boy called Born With Eyes Open, and a wise female elder called Oronhyatekha (Burning Cloud). The boy wants to know more about his people...all native people. And the elder tries to answer his questions.... We will move back to the point of first contact with whites and will talk about the impact of that contact on all native people across Canada.... The history of Canada is a history of land surrenders, and of land claims in an attempt to get land back. A successful attempt. Natives have reclaimed 40 percent of the land in Canada.”

The book is not fiction. Every answer,


indeed every question, can be sourced in real events in the rocky and tragic relationships between whites and native people in Canada.

Born With Eyes Open: *How did we become land losers?*

Elder Oronhyatekha: *That’s a long and nasty story.*

Elder Oronhyatekha: *The white people thought we were heading towards extinction. It was a tragedy and a great many whites were saddened to see us dwindling away. Others thought it was an example of survival of the fittest and an unfortunate fact. The worst thing that was happening was invisible. And it happened to all of our people in North America. When I say invisible, I mean the deaths were caused by things we could not see—smallpox, typhus, measles, tuberculosis, cholera and influenza. Our people had no resistance to these diseases and died by the tens of thousands.*

This excerpt alludes to the horrific example of smallpox. The British General Amherst, stung by the victories of Pontiac’s native warriors in the 1760s, devised an easier way to crush native uprisings. He distributed little silver boxes containing nothing but a scrap of woollen cloth from smallpox-infested hospital blankets. Thousands died. Entire native bands, even tribes, disappeared. An empty land for white settlers.

Your Home on Native Land is just 100 pages long, and many stories had to be left out. It is, however, my attempt to understand and to share with others the roots beneath the current land claim disputes. 

Your Home on Native Land, by Alan Skeoch, is available from Jackfruit Press: www.jackfruitpress.com. Telephone 1-877-458-9669.



The classroom without walls

A new experience



Tomorrow is today. The virtual classroom, “a classroom without walls,” a powerful alternative to the traditional classroom, has arrived.

I am often asked, “Are virtual courses as rigorous as traditional courses?” The virtual classroom does not offer any compromise. Provincial curriculum policy documents define expectations and the programs developed follow these expectations—the same criteria against which the work of all Ontario students is measured.

Course modules developed by the Ministry of Education include content and activities, but learning does not happen by chance. The online experience is a marriage of pedagogy and technology where the teacher is the driving force, the active participant responsible for

moving the course and the online student forward towards successful course completion. Technology functions as a tool in the education of the student.

Successful online teaching owes itself to a number of factors including organization, time management and moving students forward with timely feedback and encouragement. Couple these with adherence to program standards, an academic honesty policy, netiquette and workload issues and you have a picture of the virtual classroom experience.

Teaching any course for the first time, whether by traditional or online delivery, can be intense, rigorous and exhausting. The district school board for which I work mandates a designated number of working hours that the teacher is to be available for online discussions or ques-

tions. I used these mandated hours to review and respond to student e-mail. Responding to student questions in a timely manner is necessary to keep students focused and to avoid frustration. Students need to know that you care about their progress and success. All e-mail correspondence is strictly through a school board e-mail address and server and, as such, can be monitored. Business e-mail addresses are provided for both teachers and students by local school boards, to protect all involved. Although courses and the virtual library are accessible 24 hours a day, work hours are under the teacher’s strict control. After designated online business hours, my time was spent offline planning and marking. The teacher determines the balance between workload and life.

At the commencement of online courses, I made phone calls to students from a school phone. The purpose of this initial contact was to personalize the virtual teaching experience. Throughout the course, phone contact was made when students were experiencing difficulties. I found that “real contact” in “real time” worked wonders when students were struggling. Additionally, correspondence with parents was positive. From these personal contacts, a team effort ensued.

My first online teaching experience made it evident that to be successful an online student must be highly motivated, able to work well independently and possess strong language and technical skills. I encourage guidance counsellors to seriously consider these requirements before recommending and promoting distance education as a viable learning alternative for all Ontario students.

In 2005–2006, 11 Ontario school boards offered 29 online distance education courses to students eager to learn in the virtual classroom. As of September 1, 2007, all of Ontario’s school boards are part of e-Learning Ontario. There are 29 additional online courses developed by teachers, and several more courses in development will be released in the near

future. The Ontario Educational Resource Bank (OERB) represents an ever-growing databank of teacher-developed and uploaded resources and activities. All of the courses offered online are also part of the OERB.

All Ministry of Education online courses present a standard course template with navigation bars clearly directing teachers to course content, learning activities, chat rooms, e-mail, threaded discussions, electronic whiteboards and classroom management tasks.

The Ministry's online teaching modules include content, activities and tests. Teachers can follow modules as prescribed; however, teachers are able, and indeed encouraged, to modify and customize existing units. Resourcefulness and working with what is readily available online will assist teachers in delivering successful online programs.

The weekly schedule and structure form essential scaffolding that maintains the focus for students, and the teacher as


As teachers become more familiar and comfortable with the e-learning experience, they will be ready to move into structured threaded discussions

well. Computer technology provides the database of information, but it is still the teacher who determines course focus, maintains student motivation and

engagement and sets the standards for student achievement.

Netiquette, and adherence to it, is essential to ensure the smooth running of a distance education classroom. Words are powerful, and a lack of physical and auditory clues can inadvertently offend or mislead students. My written dialogue with students was brief. On many occasions, I redirected students to a variety of URLs outside of the learning platform, where students could find specific information and activities that would enhance and support online learning. To protect my teaching integrity, standard procedure was to re-read my written correspondence to students before hitting the "send" button. The online teacher's dialogue with students must be beyond reproach and misinterpretation. The salutation of the day was "Ms." I am the teacher, not an online friend, hence the importance of maintaining respect, authority and a professional distance in a virtual classroom.

A teacher's duties also include monitoring online peer group discussions to ensure that harassment and inappropriate comments do not occur. Tone and contextual clues are missing in online dialogue, and sometimes it can be difficult to interpret comments. As well, everyone involved in e-learning needs to realize that written records of online discussions exist for the protection of all involved and are available for retrieval if issues of harassment or freedom of speech arise.

Change is sneaking up on education, and to some extent the classroom teacher works in a "classroom without walls" when s/he utilizes and integrates resources and activities found on the "information highway." Technology can replace the pen, paper and textbook, but the teacher will remain the force that moves the virtual experience forward. See you in cyberspace—sooner than you think. 

Julia Andreacchi is the head of Library at Sir William Mulock SS in Newmarket. She recently completed her Masters of Education in Adult Education and E-Learning, online, at the University of Phoenix.



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Philoxenia

Finding ourselves among strangers



Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 4:9

Through pluck and initiative, Matthew Nguyen, orphaned in Canada at age 10, found his way to school, and graduated from Jarvis Collegiate in Toronto in June 2006. He received his deportation order just days later. Similarly, Rawad Reda, in Canada for six years and also on his own, graduated with honours before being ordered deported to his bombed home country of Lebanon, where no family remained.

Public outrage, spurred in part by teacher activism, led to stays of these deportation orders. Kimberly Lizano-Sossa wasn't as lucky. Snatched from her Grade 12 classroom at Dante Alighieri

Academy in Toronto, she was taken, along with her two-year-old Canadian-born sister, to a detention centre by "dog-catcher" van and was deported on Canada Day 2006.

Do newcomer children deserve better? Do schools have a role in the protection of such children in the complicated world of Canadian immigration and refugee politics?

I am descended from the first wave of refugees that came to Canada following the American War of Independence (1776–1783). My mainly Irish forebears opted for British allegiance in the potato fields and timberlands of New Brunswick, where they remain to this day. Many more have followed. The War of 1812 stimulated a migration of those with British backgrounds to Upper Canada, thus creating

Ontario. More Irish came during the famine of 1846–49. Continental Europeans helped settle the Canadian West in the years 1910–13. Finally, non-white restrictions were removed in 1967, the year of the new Canadian flag, and Canadian multiculturalism was born.

Excluding island or city states, Canada's immigration rate remains the highest in the world, nearly one percent of the population in 2001, and 23 percent of the total population during the previous 25 years. "Visible minorities," a phrase questioned by the UN Human Rights office, were 13.4 percent of the population in 2000. Prejudice remains. Of the 250,000 newcomers to Canada each year, the Chinese remain the largest group. A Canadian apology for the prejudicial Chinese Head Tax (initiated in 1885) was finally issued on June 22, 2006.

We like skilled workers, but are reluctant to recognize their skills. Money works. By combining all classes of newcomers together—economic, family class, refugee, "illegal"—Statistics Canada (2001) notes that newcomer earnings after 10 years is 80 percent of the Canadian average, while the net labour force participation rate is 70 percent (compared with 68 percent for Canadians overall). Newcomers are not layabouts.

"Illegals"—better referred to as undocumented resident/workers—are, like the students targeted above, typically overstays, not false entries. Adults, whether driven by war, repression, poverty, enticed into exploitive employment, or smuggled in as prostitutes and slaves, have some capacity to accept privation. But children in these circumstances have unique claims to be fully supported as persons. In this respect, education is fundamental.

According to a 2007 issue of *Policy Matters*, a publication of the Ontario Metropolis Project (formerly the Joint

Let all students in our schools share the one world, in a climate that is safe, secure and welcome, like home

Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement—CERIS), Paul Anisef et al. wrote that the “first and most important institution encountered by most newcomer children and youth upon their arrival in Canada is the school.” Schools are potential “key information hubs” for the economic (jobs), social (networks), cultural (lifestyle) and political (voting) integration of youth into their new country. Unfortunately, schools have lacked funding, policy direction, and the “open boundaries” necessary to be able to fulfill this role.

A simple example is the woeful lack of ESL support in our schools, especially at the elementary level. In high schools, programs are frequently non-existent. Students are expected to blend in with regular subject classes, forced, if their parents can afford it, to seek private tutors who may often, in effect, write their assignments for them. Thus the student mucks along—invisible, racialized, her learning needs unmet.

Yet his intercultural needs are not limited to language. Newcomer youth experience a culture shock on several levels. They find the lack of recognition of their prior learning disconcerting. New ideas of male/female roles are confusing, possibly disabling, to teens. The clash of values between home and school can be a source of ongoing tension and conflict. Perhaps the greatest shock of all is the discovery that, relative to the main-

stream, one is now “poor.”

For the average teen, the development of personal identity often occurs in a tormented closet of comparison with others. Imagine this same closet for the immigrant child described above. The perception of socioeconomic disparity with a glamorous, but alien majority, can tip a child suddenly toward “negative development.” Low academic performance, family pressure to work or leave school, substance abuse—all fit the profile. Many immigrant children soon find themselves “at risk.” Disrupted families or years of stress about status also take their toll. All this, and the minority experience within an immigrant culture’s own normal (or abnormal) reality: hidden or apparent disability, alternative identities and trauma.

Ancient ethics—Greek or Persian, Muslim or Christian—saw hospitality as a cardinal virtue. One gave the traveller not only drink, but also enough water to get to the next well. Outside of war, intercultural commerce was *xenophilic*, not xenophobic. Regrettably, 20th century modernity has diminished the idea of hospitality to mean the familiar guest—one like you, but not a stranger. Yet, hospitality to the stranger is a path to truth, as ancient wisdom well understood—bringing an antidote of light to the threat of a mono-cultural mind becoming overcast.

Post-9/11 America, with Canada unfortunately in step, has presented a darkly

unwelcoming face to the world. Strangers beg to be treated well. Refugee families account for 24 percent of the use of homeless shelters in Toronto. Prime Minister Harper refuses to fill appointments to the Immigration and Refugee Board or to ensure that such appointments will be competence-based. A moratorium on deportations passed by Parliament in June 2007 is studiously ignored. Advocacy groups have to carry pickets to get school boards to implement their own newcomer protection policies.

While schools cannot be all things to all people, they have a duty of outreach and welcome that goes well beyond preaching tolerance. Through their boards, they can work co-operatively with such groups as Education Not Deportation, an OSSTF/FEESO-supported coalition providing legal advice and publicity for endangered students and their families. They can form cost-free partnerships with a wide array of service provider organizations, enhancing without duplicating the current range of in-school education services.

And if money is required, they can ask Ontario, which exports more goods to the United States than Japan, to supply it. Let teachers teach. Let support staff take care of our buildings and their various systems. And let the Government of Canada process the various classes of arrivals on our shores in a legally respectful manner. But let all students in our schools, whether newcomers or Aborigines, or long-time immigrants, share the one world, in a climate that is safe, secure and welcome, like home. Otherwise, we risk making strangers even of ourselves.

A valuable website that provides newcomers with information and resources to assist them in getting settled in Ontario is www.settlement.org. Teachers and educational workers will also find many resources there, in many languages, for use with students and parents. – Editor

Roger Langen is the Human Rights Officer for OSSTF/FEESO District 12, Toronto.



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Why Johnny can't fail

I am responding to Harry Huizer's letter (Winter 2007), "Re Why Johnny can't fail." Huizer asked why administrators are so afraid to hold back students in elementary school. One possible reason could be the physical size of the student being held back and the threat they may present to much smaller students in the class and school. While I was teaching a Grade 8 physical education class, a fight broke out in the change room between a hulking boy who had been held back in Grade 8, and a younger, smaller classmate. Blood was shed and the younger student was quite traumatized. If the student who was retained had been transferred to Grade 9, this incident would not have happened. So perhaps student safety is a reason to transfer a Grade 8 student. I believe that every case should be judged individually and retention decisions should be made in the student's and school's best interests.

Don Cooper
Peel Region

Keep it coming!

Please publish more articles like "Queen Bee Moms & Kingpin Dads, Advice for guidance counsellors and others who encounter difficult parents" by Rosalind Wiseman (Spring 2007). That's just the kind of useful professional advice I need. I'm a high school biology teacher who has been in the business for four years. The article's comments might be obvious to my veteran colleagues, but to me, it's sage advice.

Paul Neem
York Region

Credit Integrity

I would like to respond to Jon Cowans' article "Credit Integrity" (Spring 2007). I agree that credits in Ontario must have integrity but I have difficulty with some of Cowans' analyses. In particular, I would

like to comment on his five proposals for restoring the integrity of the credit.

No pseudo-credit: I agree that there should be no pseudo-credits, but I disagree with some of the criteria for what Cowans calls a "standard" credit. I see no reason why "real" credits cannot be obtained online in virtual schools as long as there is "significant study and evaluation."



Raise the passing mark: I agree that the pass standard for a high school credit is too low, but tinkering with the percentage required for a passing grade will not solve this problem. Percentages do not provide performance standards as we can make any percentage easy or virtually impossible to attain. There needs to be a number of clearly defined and described learning goals for each high school course with a credit requiring competency in most of the learning goals and close to competency in the remaining learning goals, e.g., for a credit in English students must be competent in nine of 11 learning goals. (We do not certify a pilot if they are brilliant at takeoffs and flying the plane, but very weak on landings.)

Make attendance and deadlines count: I agree that attendance and deadlines are important, but as behaviours, not as factors determining credits. It is necessary and reasonable to establish timelines (preferably

with student input), but penalties are not the appropriate way to deal with failure to meet timelines because they distort achievement and motivation and because, for the most part, they do not work: the same student who submits required assessment evidence late in week two is also late in week nine and week 18. What is needed is accurate assessment of the quality of the student's assessment evidence and communication of the behaviour issue, e.g., the student's paper demonstrated

competency on the learning goals but it was submitted four days late. This provides accurate information that is clearly communicated, and if the problem is chronic there can also be behavioural consequences.

Revamp the school schedule: I agree that we should examine the structures we put in place, but I disagree with the suggestion that semestering should be eliminated. I believe that semesters provide excellent learning environments when courses are well planned to fit this model. I also believe that 75-minute classes are appropriate, if teachers appropriately vary the learning activities. Many students benefit from taking only four courses at a time, as they are able to focus their learning and organize their time more effectively.

Although I disagree with the idea that 75-minute periods are too long, I am in favour of the idea of shorter school days if the additional time is used to support students who are having difficulties and/or to provide opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively in professional learning communities.

Restore vocational schools: On this, Cowans and I are in complete agreement.

Ken O'Connor
Co-author of the OSSTF/FEESO
resource books *Assess for Success* and
Quality Assessment





JAMES CÔTÉ

The kids in the hallowed halls

BY JON COWANS

There was some disturbing news out of academe this year: the Canadian university is in serious trouble. Once associated with scholarly rigour and academic excellence, the institution now finds itself increasingly characterized by trends indicative of deterioration: falling standards, grade inflation, watered-down curriculum, oversized classes, and rising numbers of disengaged students. The source of these claims is James Côté, a professor of sociology at the University of Western Ontario and co-author of *Ivory Tower Blues: A University System in Crisis*.

With 25 years of teaching experience at the university level, Côté has had both time and opportunity to observe first hand the decline he describes. Moreover, as a sociologist specializing in youth culture, he is able to view the crisis as part of a much larger cultural phenomenon, namely, North America's artificial prolongation of adolescence.

In recent decades, the Canadian uni-

versity has undergone massive expansion. Since the 1970s, attendance at the institution has quadrupled; in 2006–07, one out of every four Canadians aged 16 to 24 was in a university, a total of over one million students.

Over the same period, because of declining government funding, the hiring of professors has lagged far behind, resulting in significantly larger classes (up to 1,200 in some cases) and, appropriately, lighter, more efficient forms of evaluation.

Sadly, the increase in the quantity of students in recent years has not been matched by an increase in the quality. More and more entrants are being, in Côté's terms, "pushed" into the institution by parent and peer pressure, rather than "pulled" into it by a love of learning; as a result, many students are simply "not prepared for the rigours of the university curriculum."

A major reason for the recent push is "credentialism," the commonly held view

that the chief purpose of a university education is to get the credential (degree) needed for a rewarding job. The Canadian economy, however, has not co-operated in this quest. In the 1990s, it produced only one job requiring a university degree for every two graduates, leaving many of the latter underemployed, frustrated and disillusioned.

And as the university becomes less an ivory tower and more a corporation, a business ethos threatens to take hold: students become consumers, credentials the product. In the "credential mart," as Côté calls the new university, the student has "become much more caught up in education as a means to an end," rather than viewing it as an end in itself, an opportunity for self-discovery and intellectual development *in the moment* [sic]."

The end result of pushing so many students into university is that "those who are not interested in school are less likely to learn at the specified pace and are

more likely to fall behind in acquiring skills, creating an ever worsening situation for them, their teachers, and their classmates as they take up space, waste time, and drag standards down.”

Complicit in this trend is the high school: students entering university bring with them the habits and expectations acquired there, and increasingly, these are found wanting. In the past, one of the secondary school’s primary functions was to “sort” students, sending on to university only those deemed academically strong enough to handle its rigour.

In 2004, 61 percent of those applying to Ontario universities had “A” averages. To Côté, however, the rise in marks is the result, not of a recent improvement in Ontario high school performance, but of declining standards and easier grading. When students arrive at university with inflated marks and weak study skills, the results are predictable: shock at the new scholarly rigour demanded of them; a strong sense of entitlement to continue to get high marks for minimal work; and pressure on professors to raise marks and make curriculum and evaluation more “accessible.” Accordingly, grade averages in university, just as in the high school, keep on rising.

Why then are so many high school leavers unprepared for the academic challenge ahead? The root cause is the social development noted above. The prolonged retention of the young in an artificial state of adolescence is a trend to which the high school now strongly contributes. Historically, youth, as an extended period of life between childhood and adulthood, is a recent phenomenon.

Côté’s recent work, *Critical Youth Studies* (2006), speaks of “youthhood,” a construct of the 20th century, and the direct result of the need of industrial society to keep young people out of the full-time job market, which, because of constant technological advances, is increasingly unable to assimilate them. Denied full economic and political rights, youth are relegated to a kind of social no-man’s land. Compulsory mass public education has arisen, in part, as a response to this, serving to retain the young while they await entry into adult society—in

Ontario, the waiting period was recently extended from 16 to 18 years.

Ideologically, the exclusion of youth from the adult world is grounded in the commonly held belief that teenagers are essentially “troubled.” This idea was discovered by American psychologist G. Stanley Hall, whose book *Adolescence* (1904) argued, with little scientific basis, that adolescence was a biologically conditioned period of “storm and stress,” characterized by great emotional instability. Recently, medical researchers have tried to buttress this argument by claiming that teenagers possess an “adolescent brain” different from an “adult brain.”

“the feel-good pedagogy of self-esteem leads to neglect of basic pedagogical principles of learning and progressive skill acquisition”

Côté doesn’t buy the biological argument. He adheres to the view of adolescent behaviour established by anthropologist Margaret Mead: that the characteristics of youth were determined primarily by culture, not by biology; if North American teenagers were troubled, it was because their society conditioned them to be so. Nevertheless, the “raging hormones” theory of youth continues to hold sway among many experts and the general public, and is used to justify keeping teenagers segregated from adult society. Ironically, Côté points out, in earlier societies young people moved quickly and seamlessly from childhood into adulthood.

In current Western culture, the transition period is being both prolonged and mediated by two powerful institutions: mass media and mass education.

The former serves to create the official teenage identity, one that can be easily (and literally) sold to youth. Even teenage dissent is co-opted, commoditized, and controlled by adult society, in spite of the latter’s apparent aversion to it. With over \$200 billion a year at their disposal, North American teens are an attractive market, rife for exploitation. The average teenager consumes its offerings, in one form or another, for nearly seven hours a day, longer than he or she spends in school.

Mentally rewired by continuous exposure to this electric circus, the student comes to school distracted and disengaged, perhaps even disturbed, and is increasingly unable to relate to the institution’s subject matter and method. Says Côté, “Practice and experience in reading and writing, and the analytic skills they impart, are today eclipsed by the seductive technology of personal computers, video games, iPod and MP3 players, text messaging on cellphones, movies on DVD, and similar pursuits that...do not cultivate an appreciation for intellectual culture among young people today.”

If Côté is right, schools may wish to reconsider their policies on electronic media. In an age of declining student literacy (even Ontario’s improved—or adjusted?—Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test [OSSLT] results cannot alter this fact), does it make sense to replace library books with computers, and textbooks with videos?

In this situation, one might expect public education to act as a counterweight, providing students with the kinds of knowledge and skills lacking in the external culture. This is the “thermostat” function of education described by Neil Postman, or the platonic ideal-but-real world of academe advocated by Northrop Frye. But, as Côté observes, mass education now acts to reinforce the social order outside it and, in particular, the capitalist *status quo*: “Schools currently contain, shape and cultivate behaviours in young people; this prepares a good proportion

of them to be part of a passive and uncritical workforce, which is crucial to the functioning of industrial societies.”

Mass education thus serves the same purpose as mass media: the containment of the adolescent mind rather than its extension. In the primary and secondary systems, this function is largely abetted by the “cult of self-esteem,” as Côté calls it, whereby the school attempts to motivate pupils by providing “psychological boosting—of complimenting the child or student for exerting any effort at all—to make all feel good about themselves.” Côté asserts that the practice of coddling students backfires because “the feel-good pedagogy of self-esteem leads to neglect of basic pedagogical principles of learning and progressive skill acquisition.”

This, in turn, produces other effects inimical to education: grade inflation, student disengagement and social promotion. The latter—passing students for social reasons—is now common throughout North America. According to Côté, the practice is counterproductive and harmful: “In the face of increasingly complex material, they are placed at a compounded disadvantage over time, and the lack of learning can quickly accumulate into a sense of incompetence and of being doomed to failure.”


The effect of social promotion on the education system itself is significant too: “In order to maintain the illusion that all is well in a system that promotes students regardless of their competence, the material and the way it is taught must be dumbed down.” This argument brings us back to Côté’s view that the purpose of mass education is largely custodial.

As a result, the high school, an institution ostensibly designed to prepare the young for adulthood, ends up instead retaining them in adolescence. Recent changes in Ontario secondary school policies governing student discipline, attendance and evaluation would seem to support this tendency.

In place of the principle of *self-esteem*, Côté recommends *self-efficacy*: “Self-efficacy is a sense that one can accomplish things and that those things are under one’s control. From this experience follows a realistic sense of self-esteem rein-


forced with every efficacious experience built on a foundation that will feed it realistically, without self-deception and illusion.” Côté’s version of self-esteem thus distinguishes between effort and achievement; the former is encouraged, but only the latter rewarded.

The cult of self-esteem, as currently practised in schools, confuses the two, resulting in the effects Côté describes above. More significantly, it reinforces a dubious pedagogical principle: namely, that the chief function of education is the social adjustment of the student. For Côté, school has a much loftier purpose:

“Higher education is about the sculpting of the human mind and spirit; the cultivation of rounded human beings; and the facilitation of civilized discourse among them.” Whether Canada’s hallowed halls will remain loyal to this ideal is a pertinent question. 

James Côté will be a keynote speaker at OSSTF/FEESO’s Credit Integrity Symposium in December 2007. – Editor

Jon Cowans is a teacher in Durham Region District School Board and a frequent contributor to *Education Forum*.



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TOUCH THEIR HEARTS



And they'll
make the
connection
By Ruby Day

IT IS ONE THING TO TEACH, BUT ANOTHER to truly touch the hearts of students.

Two history teachers at Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute (OSCVI) are doing just that, by bringing the realities of the First and Second World Wars home to their students. Their experiences can touch the hearts of all Canadians, and remind us of the men and women who fought and the many who gave their lives.

The Somme, Vimy Ridge, Ypres, D-Day, Normandy—these are names familiar to many of us, even if just from that long-ago course in Canadian history. The 151-year-old OSCVI is also steeped in history, as it is the alma mater of Billy Bishop, Agnes McPhail and Norman Bethune.

David Alexander, head of history, and history teacher Ryan McManaman have built on both histories with their students, with a particular emphasis on the First and Second World Wars. Both teachers joined the Juno Beach Centre Association Teacher Professional Development Tour this past summer. And what a tour it was!

The places visited are of great interest not only to history teachers, but to all Canadians interested in history as well. Here are some highlights of Alexander and McManaman's trip.

A large statue of a caribou guards Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Park. It is one of the best-preserved battlefields of World War I. The actual trenches and craters are still there,

allowing visitors to visualize the men. "You can imagine where both sides fought and so many died," said McManaman. During the Battle of the Somme, 801 brave Newfoundlanders fought—only 69 survived.

Nearby, and a little off the tourist path, is the Ocean Villas Tea Rooms. This was a British regimental aid post during the First World War. The Englishwoman who owns the little pub and restaurant will take you into the cellar to the original trench room and show you other memorabilia.

Thiepval Memorial is the largest British war memorial in the world. It commemorates 73,359 British and South African soldiers who died during the Somme campaign and who have no known graves.





Alexander said that no words could describe the sight of so many military cemeteries in the Somme region.

Finally, what has become the symbol of the Great War for many Canadians—Vimy Ridge. This huge memorial sits high up on the ridge, complete with tunnels and recreated trenches. Over 35,000 Canadians died at Vimy.

Next, World War II and Dieppe. In August 1942, 6,000 soldiers—5,000 of them Canadian—landed on the coast; 2,700 were killed, wounded or captured. The tour of Dieppe included an in-depth discussion of the strategy (shock, speed and surprise), the tactics of the raid, the various landing sites on the three beaches, and the myths and the realities of

Dieppe. Historian Mike Bechtold, managing editor of *Canadian Military History* at Wilfrid Laurier University, portrayed the raid as seen through a soldier's eyes.

The sites of the D-Day landing were overwhelming. Arramanches les Bains, a small town on the coast, was chosen as the site for one of two artificial harbours, Mulberry B. A storm destroyed Mulberry A, the American beach. Once the beach at Mulberry B was secured, 15 out-of-service battleships were sunk to create a break-wall, caissons were floated across to build the outerworks of the harbour, and finally the supplies could pour into Normandy to support the landings. Once up and running, it was used to bring in up to 7,500 tons of material per day from Britain.

The Queen's Own Rifles' House on Juno Beach appears in many photos of D-Day—it was the first house liberated on D-Day. Most houses had been wiped out by artillery but this one survived. Descendants of the family who owned it during the war open it to Canadian groups, especially members of the Queen's Own Rifles Regiment. Original photos hang on the walls of every room. On the 60th Anniversary of D-Day, a veteran gave the family a bloodstained franc note, which a German soldier had been holding when he was captured in the house. That franc note is now framed and hanging on the wall.

In Le Mesnil Patry, the small town hall was decorated in Canadian colours, the group was honoured with a special





Canadian and French veterans attend ceremonies at Bretteville-sur-Laize/Cintheaux Military Cemetery



The Juno Beach Centre at Courseulles-sur-Mer commemorates Canada's contributions during World War II

lunch and presentation by the mayor, M. Alexandre, President of the Friends of Juno Beach and witnesses to the battles in the area. Alexander said at the luncheon, “We felt a little guilty because we were not the soldiers but nevertheless, so very proud.” A plaque recognizes over 100 of the Queen’s Own Rifles and First Hussars who died when surprised by a German unit while advancing through this area.

Jacques Vico, a former member of the Resistance and witness to the battles in this area, guided the group through the Abbaye d’Ardenne. In the days following the D-Day landings, 27 Canadians, some of whom were members of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, were captured, led into the courtyard of the Abbaye, shot and buried in shallow graves. A garden stands there now, and photos and plaques of the dead hang on the walls around the yard. “We walked the same

steps as the captured soldiers—up the stone stairs and stood in the square as they would have as they awaited death. Seeing the photos of these men gave me an eerie feeling—very emotional,” remarked McManaman.

At Bretteville-sur-Laize/Cintheaux Military Cemetery, there is an annual recognition of the Canadian liberation of the area, south of Caen, in July and August 1944 during the Battle of Normandy. Alexander remarked that, even after all these years, the French still recognize the sacrifices our soldiers made. “It’s their history; it’s our history.”

A farewell dinner was held on the final evening of the tour. Garth Webb, President of the Juno Beach Centre and a veteran, emphasized not only how teachers can use the Juno Beach Centre, but also how teachers and Canadians can become involved in continuing the legacy.

Both Alexander and McManaman

returned with nothing but praise for the professional development tour. As McManaman said, “Seeing Juno Beach first hand can give a perspective that the history books can’t—being able to see it, present it and talk about it to students adds to the passion and usefulness of it all.” Added Alexander, “Seeing is believing. I have been fortunate to know a few World War II vets, some who were directly involved in D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. We can never fully comprehend, because that was not our experience, but a trip like this provides the opportunity to understand more.”

But this is not all that Alexander and McManaman have done to enrich the teaching of the two wars.

They have taken two student trips to France—the first in June, 2004 for the 60th Anniversary of Normandy; the second in 2007 for the 90th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge. They are planning another trip in

The Juno Beach Centre Courseulles-sur-Mer, France

- Several World War II veterans started the Juno Beach Foundation about 10 years ago. Through fundraising, they established the Juno Beach Centre, the only Canadian museum in France that commemorates Canada’s contributions during the Second World War. The centre officially opened in 2003, and in 2004, celebrated the 60th Anniversary of D-Day. www.junobeach.org
- The Juno Beach Centre website, www.junobeach.org, is an excellent

resource, not only for teachers and students, but also for all Canadians. It offers a number of links and resources, descriptions of D-Day, photos, in-depth analysis and virtual activities.

- The Juno Beach Centre Teachers Professional Development program is a battle tour that exposes teachers directly and their students indirectly—or, even better, encourages teachers to bring their students to Juno. The application process begins in

November; it consists of a letter explaining why and how the applicant would connect to the classroom and requires the principal’s approval. The Juno Beach Centre accepts about 35 teachers from across Canada each year.

- A major Juno Beach Centre fundraising effort is the purchase of ceremonial bricks, which sit on kiosks in front of the Centre. The veterans’ bricks are inscribed with the person’s rank, name, decorations, unit and date of service. The donors’ bricks are inscribed with the person’s name, town and province of residence.





Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Park; Students climb the top of the memorial to view the battlefield



Mayor Alexandre of Le Mesnil Patry (left) and Dave Alexander (right) at the luncheon hosted by the locals for the touring teacher group

two years. They say that every five or 10 years there will be a commemoration, and they will be there with their students.

On both trips, students were visibly affected by being able to imagine, in a small way, what soldiers endured and why they died. Alexander said that when the students entered a cemetery, they suddenly became quiet. They may have been laughing and joking beforehand, but it hit home when they entered the cemetery. They walked through quietly, reading the names and inscriptions.

On the Vimy trip, the students held a memorial service where each read aloud the name of a student from OSCVI who died in the Great War.

James Thompson Robb, a student at OSCVI, died on the first day of battle at Vimy Ridge. The students made the pilgrimage to the cemetery where he is buried, not far from Vimy. They found his marker and held a small ceremony in his remembrance. Seeing his name every day on the school memorial plaque, and then his actual burial marker, brought home a reality that no amount of classroom teaching could replicate. The visit to Robb's marker occurred on April 8; the next day was the anniversary of Vimy Ridge. The students were overwhelmed to know he died on that morning 90 years earlier.

At another cemetery, many students stood in shock as they viewed the marker of a 15-year-old, who was only a year younger than most of them. Another student saw the grave of his great-great-grandfather, who was killed near the end of the Battle of the Somme. At yet another

cemetery, a student found the marker of his great-great uncle. "And that was one of our goals," stated Alexander, "to make the connection."

Back in Owen Sound and home from the trips, students did not forget. They produced booklets based on their insights to commemorate each trip.

After the first trip, one student, a budding graphic artist, designed a pin that commemorates Billy Bishop and Vimy at 90. He also designed a commemorative coin showing Billy Bishop and King George V on one side, and the Vimy Ridge Memorial on the other. Queen Elizabeth II's grandfather presented several military awards to Bishop. Alexander and McManaman wrote to the Queen, explaining they were from the school Bishop attended and about the awards, and requested an audience to present the commemorative coin. On their second school trip, the students presented a wooden plaque with the coin embedded, together with photos of King George V with Billy Bishop at Buckingham Palace, to one of the Queen's representatives. Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 6 in Owen Sound, No. 464 in Chatsworth and the OSCVI Alumni Association provided the funding to develop the coins.

A local D-Day veteran comes to the school to share the very real experiences he had with the history classes. A soldier from the nearby Meaford Tank Range, who just returned from Afghanistan, also visits and brings the present-day experience to the classroom.

So, do all these activities have any effect on students? Alexander said that when

students read of a Canadian casualty in Afghanistan, they now have a context of what it was like. Adds McManaman, "When we look at the *Owen Sound Sun-Times* issues published around the time of the Great War, three or four soldiers were reported dead and a number injured every day. Students get the feeling of the enormity of the deaths—over 60,000 in World War I."

Are Alexander and McManaman truly touching the hearts of their students? Here are some comments:

"This was a day I will never forget. I've walked where soldiers walked and fought and died. I've seen where shells, bombs and bullets exploded and I have taken this in. This was a day that I'll tell my children about..."

"Upon seeing the Vimy monument, along with many veterans and fellow Canadians, I felt truly Canadian because I realized then how much I appreciate what sacrifices were made..."

"The ceremonies at Beny-sur-Mer and Juno Beach have had a larger impact on me as a person that I ever would have guessed."

"We have all seen the old videos of Canadian troops rolling through small European villages after liberating them... What blew me away was, 60 years later, when we went to Juno Beach that spirit is still in the air. Canadian flags flew everywhere."

Enough said. 

Ruby Day is a Life Member of OSSTF/FEESO and a former OSSTF/FEESO Director of Communications and Political Action.

THE BATTLES, THE WARS, THE VICTORIES

A history of perseverance, determination and leadership *by Rod Albert*



DEFENDING PUBLIC EDUCATION OCTOBER 27 – NOVEMBER 7, 1997

Ontario teachers and educational workers mobilize in defence of public education, leave their workplaces and confront the government in the largest political protest by any group against any government in North America



Monday morning. Cold, wet, dark, but exhilarating. Ten years ago, over 125,000 teachers and educational workers mobilized in defence of public education across Ontario. Virtually every public school was closed. October 27, 1997 to November 7, 1997 marked the longest and largest political protest by any group in North America.

The political protest demonstrated that solidarity is OSSTF/FEESO's greatest strength, and democracy within our union our greatest means of maintaining that strength.

Only OSSTF/FEESO held an all-member vote before the protest. More than 84 percent voted, by secret ballot, to support a province-wide walkout to protest the Government of Ontario's deliberate efforts to destabilize public education.

The political protest was unprecedented in Canadian history. It focused on two pieces of proposed legislation—Bill 136, *The Public Sector Transition Stability Act* and Bill 160, the government's cynically named *Education Quality Improvement Act*. Bill 136 dealt specifically with trade union status, seniority provisions, and the establishment of first collective agreements for educational workers in newly created district school boards.

In early 1997, the Harris government reduced the number of school boards from 129 to 72, reduced the number of trustees from 1,900 to 700, removed the right of school boards to levy taxes and promoted the contracting out of thousands of jobs then held by office and clerical workers, plant support staff, educational assistants and other professional support staff.

There was nothing either new or shocking about the Tory initiatives. The Harris government was following American policies implemented during the Reagan/Bush Senior years. Education Minister John Snobelen deliberately, and cynically, set out to manufacture a crisis that would damage the reputation of Ontario's public schools—in order to smooth the path to privatization.

Bill 160 further intruded into free col-

lective bargaining. Class size and teaching time were mandated for teachers, forcing heavier workloads on secondary school teachers, while reducing the number of teachers in Ontario's schools by over 15 percent. It would take more time, but eventually the public came to understand that Bills 136 and 160 were never about improving public education. The government's goal was really about extracting \$1 billion from Ontario's schools—primarily through staffing cuts.

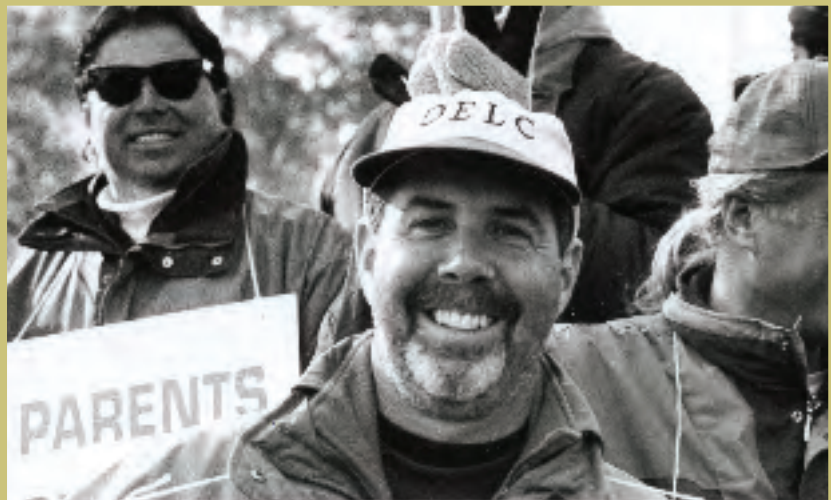
The May 2001 budget for Ontario provided final evidence of the government's ideologically driven fervour for two-tiered education. The Conservative government's 2001 budget introduced tax credits for parents whose children attended private schools.

The Harris and Eves governments removed over \$2 billion from Ontario's public schools—an amount confirmed by the government's own appointed investigator, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski. The Harris government weakened local

“To save money, perhaps to pave the way for privatization of schools, the government seems hell-bent on destabilizing the education system, demoralizing teachers, panicking trustees and confusing parents. It is a sure-fire recipe for disaster and our kids and our province will be the big losers.”

Gerald Caplan

**Co-Chair, Royal Commission on Learning
November 15, 1996**



**DEFENDING
PUBLIC
EDUCATION**

DEFENDING PUBLIC EDUCATION OCTOBER 27 – NOVEMBER 7, 1997





DECEMBER 18, 1973 QUEEN'S PARK
Teachers walked off the job to protest Bill 274

school boards and educational unions. Bargaining rights for all educational employees came under relentless attack. Public education was deliberately kept in a war zone of unending turmoil as the Tories attempted to dictate every working minute in every school. They even threatened to legislate compulsory “voluntary” extra-curricular duties.

Neither the political protest nor the exposure of the government’s real agenda to cut a billion dollars from publicly funded education stopped the government’s agenda. It would take until the provincial election of 2003 for the people of Ontario to grow exhausted with the Tories’ reckless public policies intended to provide instability and “in-your-face” government.

The 1997 political protest was not the only time that members of OSSTF/ FEESO demonstrated their solidarity to secure and enhance collective bargaining rights.

It seems incredible today, but it wasn’t

“You [teachers and educational workers] may have unmasked a real bona fide conspiracy to eliminate publicly funded education.... In short, American-style neo-conservative values are determining our children’s futures.”

Charles Pascal

**Former Deputy Minister to John Snobelen
November 1997**

until July 1975 that Ontario’s teachers won the legal right to strike.

The early 1970s had seen the rise of teacher militancy across the province.

Without procedures for teacher/school board bargaining, with cutbacks imposed by provincial spending ceilings and declining enrolment already evident, the background was being set for what was, up to that time, the biggest teacher walk-out in Ontario’s history.

THE BIRTH OF BARGAINING LEGISLATION

Prior to the passage of *The School Boards and Teachers’ Collective Negotiations Act* (long referred to as Bill 100) the Conservative government of Bill Davis had established a committee of inquiry, known colloquially as the Reville Committee. The *Reville Report*, released to the public in September 1972, was intended to help regulate negotiations between teacher federations and school boards. The report’s bias is clear from the following excerpt alone:

“The concept of professionalism must, by necessity, imply a sense of obligation to one’s work. The teacher concentrates on the efficiency of his technique and on constant improvement of his performance. Matters such as remuneration...are relegated to a position of secondary importance.”

The report recommended that:

- teachers be denied the right to strike;
- negotiations be limited to compensation only;
- a permanent provincial adjudication tribunal be established.

OSSTF was outraged at these proposals limiting free collective bargaining and advised the government that “limiting the

scope of negotiations, as recommended, will only ensure more confrontation rather than less.” Far from turning back the clock, the Reville Report was soon followed by mass resignations of members in Essex County. Without the legislative “right to strike,” teacher unions succeeded in organizing mass resignations in support of their bargaining objectives. By December 1973, mass resignations were planned in 17 areas, five led by OSSTF negotiators.

The stage had been set for confrontation. OSSTF also led a mounting political campaign of massive opposition to the government’s attempt to implement the Reville Report. The campaign culminated in the largest political demonstration in Ontario (to that time), on December 18, 1973. Teachers across Ontario walked off the job in protest against the proposed legislation. Ever courteous and well organized, teachers participating in the walkout advised the principals in their schools that: “We, the undersigned, will be absent from school on Tuesday, December 18 as a protest against Bill 274.”

Against this background, the Davis government backed off and agreed to a new set of principles fundamental to real bargaining:

- that there would be no restrictions on the scope of bargaining;
- that the parties would be required to bargain in good faith;
- that there would be a right to strike by teachers and a right to lockout by school boards.

That political protest on December 18, 1973, led directly to Bill 100, a fundamentally sound piece of labour legislation, which served the public, the government, teachers and school boards well for over 22 years. After the 1973 protest, the government never looked at OSSTF the same way again.

FIGHTING FOR PENSION PARTNERSHIPS

Until 1989, the Ontario government fully controlled the pension benefits, the contribution rates and the asset investment policy of what we now call the Teachers’ Pension Plan (TPP). Under the David Peterson Liberal government, teachers worked to establish a jointly sponsored





APRIL 1, 1989 COPPS COLISEUM, HAMILTON
Fighting to establish an equal pension partnership with government

pension plan with the “pension employer,” the Government of Ontario.

The concept of an “equal” partnership was to provide:

- a process for negotiating benefits and contribution rates;
- an equal responsibility for sharing risks (deficits) and rewards (surpluses);
- a third-party dispute resolution process should the parties disagree.

Needless to say, attempting to establish an equal partnership with sovereign Ontario was incredibly difficult.

To illustrate their commitment to pension fairness, one out of every six Ontario teachers rallied in downtown Hamilton, outside a Liberal Party Convention on April 1, 1989. It was an overwhelming reply from more than 25,000 demonstrators to the Premier, who had earlier said that teachers concerned about their pensions were just “being silly.”

And while the Liberals never entered into an equal partnership with the teachers of Ontario, the declaration of war with the government in Hamilton would fuel the fire for a new government. In September 1990, Bob Rae and the NDP were elected with a majority government. The new NDP government quickly delivered on its election promise and established a true and equal pension partnership with the teachers of Ontario. Like December 18, 1973, April 1, 1989, was another day to remember.

Following the success of the TPP partnership, OSSTF/FEESO lobbied for over a decade to secure a similar governance

structure to allow our members who contribute to the Ontario Municipal Employees’ Retirement System (OMERS) the same pension rights and voice in determining their pension future as our teacher members. Finally, in 2006, the Ontario government revised the OMERS Act to give employers and employees control over OMERS pensions.

The OSSTF/FEESO lobby and the success of our organizing efforts since the mid-’80s resulted in OSSTF/FEESO securing one of the seven permanent seats on the OMERS Sponsors Corporation. OSSTF/FEESO will be able to use its expertise and experience to help set the contribution levels and pension benefits for OMERS contributors for years to come.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

From its founding in 1919 until 1944, membership in OSSTF depended upon voluntary sign-ups and dues payments. In 1944, the provincial government established statutory membership for Ontario’s teacher federations. By that time, over 90 percent of Ontario’s public secondary school teachers had already joined OSSTF voluntarily.

For the next 40 years, statutory teachers constituted the full scope of our membership. Then, in 1984, the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly acted and set a new direction for OSSTF/FEESO. The 1984 Assembly determined to use the provisions of the *Ontario Labour Relations Act* to organize and represent occasional, summer and night school teachers.

The exhilaration, the hard work and the success of organizing these teacher groups led to further debate within OSSTF/FEESO. Psychologists, educational assistants, office and clerical personnel, custodians and maintenance staff also recognized OSSTF/FEESO’s strength and professionalism and actively sought to be a part of that strength. This led to further constitutional changes and revisions to the OSSTF/FEESO Letters Patent in 1987 and 1988. OSSTF/FEESO expanded its vision of membership to recognize the community of interest of all the people who work to make schools possible for students.

Since those historic decisions, OSSTF/FEESO has conducted one of the largest organizing drives in the recent history of the Ontario labour movement. Today, OSSTF/FEESO represents over 15,000 members in 66 bargaining units, organized under the provisions of the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*.

The job of organizing and representing educational workers, envisioned by previous annual meetings, continues. Recently, OSSTF/FEESO has welcomed a number of new colleagues from the university sector. Support staff at Brock University, Algoma University College and the University of Ottawa—all of

“It was back to the basics; it was affirmative action; it was a brave decision.” [1988]


Jim Forster

OSSTF President 1974–1976

Associate General Secretary

1976–2001

whom contribute to the high quality of public education in Ontario. They are now a part of our strength.

The continued expansion and the increasing diversity of our membership will ensure that our future remains strong and bright. 

Rod Albert recently retired as General Secretary of OSSTF/FEESO, a post he held from 2004 to 2007. He was also President of OSSTF/FEESO from 1985–88, and President of OTF from 1988–89. Rod joined the professional staff of OSSTF/FEESO in 1989.



LE RECRUTEMENT

Quelle course!

Par Pierre Côté et
Colombe Beauregard

ADHÉRER À UN SYNDICAT EST TOUT à fait normal pour la plupart des membres d'OSSTF/FEESO. Les membres du personnel enseignant deviennent automatiquement membres lorsqu'ils décrochent un poste en enseignement dans un conseil scolaire public ontarien. En fait, l'affiliation est même garantie par l'article 277.3 de la *Loi sur l'éducation*. Les membres du personnel de soutien deviennent également membres lorsqu'ils obtiennent un poste au sein d'une unité de négociation du personnel de soutien qui est représentée par OSSTF/FEESO, mais à un certain moment de leur histoire, ils ont confirmé OSSTF/FEESO comme leur choix de syndicat, par voie de scrutin. Nous sommes un syndicat recruteur. Les campagnes de recrutement sont fréquentes. Voici l'histoire d'une telle campagne.

Tout a débuté le 6 juin 2006 alors que Colombe Beauregard a fait une visite de politesse à Hélène Labbé, présidente de l'Association des employés de l'Université d'Ottawa (AEUO). Malheureusement, Colombe n'a pas pu parler directement à Hélène, mais elle lui a laissé sa carte professionnelle et un stylo d'OSSTF/FEESO portant la mention : FEESO, un syndicat fort. Les personnes qui donnent de petits cadeaux en récoltent



L'équipe de syndicalisation interne de l'université d'Ottawa, de gauche à droite, à l'arrière : Gilbert Desgranges-Adam, Lucie Desjardins, André Fillion, Richard Hogan et Diane Perreault; à l'avant : Pierre Bertrand. N'apparaissent pas sur la photo : Diane Bélanger-Brisson, Linda Arsenault et Daniel Morin



ORGANIZING

What a ride!

By Pierre Côté and
Colombe Beauregard

FOR MOST OSSTF/FEESO MEMBERS, JOINING the union was a matter of course. Teachers automatically become members when they secure a secondary school teaching position with a public school board in Ontario. In fact, membership is even guaranteed by article 277.3 of the *Education Act*. Support staff also become members when they get a job with a support staff bargaining unit represented by OSSTF/FEESO, but at some point in their history a vote had taken place—confirming OSSTF/FEESO as their union of choice. We are an organizing union. And organizing drives are ongoing. Here is a story of one such drive.

It started on June 6, 2006, when Colombe Beauregard made a courtesy visit to Hélène Labbé, the president of the Association des employés de l'Université d'Ottawa (AEUO). Unfortunately, Colombe was unable to speak directly to Hélène, but left her business card and a token OSSTF/FEESO pen, which bore the caption: "*FEESO, un syndicat fort.*" Sometimes, those bearing small gifts reap huge rewards. This was one of those occasions.

As fate would have it, the timing of Colombe's visit was ideal. Ms. Labbé, as president of her staff association, had just been through a very difficult time. The staff had recently tried to gain status as an independent union. The employer had quashed this

University of Ottawa internal organizing team, from left to right, rear: Gilbert Desgranges-Adam, Lucie Desjardins, André Filion, Richard Hogan, Diane Perreault. Front: Pierre Bertrand. Absent: Diane Bélanger-Brisson, Linda Arsenault and Daniel Morin



parfois d'énormes récompenses. Il s'agit de l'une de ces histoires.

Le sort a voulu que la visite de Colombe tombe au bon moment. Hélène Labbé, présidente de son association du personnel, venait tout juste de vivre des moments très difficiles. Le personnel avait récemment tenté d'obtenir le statut de syndicat indépendant. L'employeur avait étouffé leur rêve de devenir un syndicat en montant des objections juridiques agressives qui ont été, en fin de compte, retenues par la Commission des relations de travail de l'Ontario (CRTO). L'accréditation en tant que syndicat indépendant était en fait la quatrième tentative de syndicalisation pour ce groupe. Les trois précédentes, menées par d'autres syndicats, avaient également échoué. Compte tenu des plaies encore récentes causées par la campagne ratée, la carte d'OSSTF/FEESO laissée derrière a eu l'effet d'un baume d'espoir pour Hélène.

Un sentiment de désespoir s'était abattu sur les membres et ils ne

dream by mounting aggressive legal objections that were in the end upheld by the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). Organizing as an independent union was actually the fourth attempt for this group; three past efforts with other unions had ended in failure. Given recent developments and the hardships caused by the failed drives, the OSSTF/FEESO business card Colombe left behind served as a beacon of hope for Labbé.

A sense of gloom had enveloped the membership, and they did not know where to turn. Because of previous visits by OSSTF/FEESO, there was some familiarity with our union. Labbé's first question to Colombe after reaching her by phone was, "OSSTF/FEESO is a strong union. What can you do for us?" Colombe's response was straightforward, "Come and see us during our Summer Leadership Conference in August, and we will show you."

At the conference, Labbé was so impressed that her response urged us to start an organizing campaign as soon as possible. And the adventure began.

Compte tenu
des plaies encore
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par les campagnes
ratées, la carte
professionnelle
d'OSSTF/FEESO
laissée derrière a
eu l'effet d'un
baume d'espoir



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3 winners will be announced on Law Day April 17, 2008.
3 winners and their teachers will be flown economy class to Ottawa May 11-13, 2008.

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Entries are to be submitted no later than March 31, 2008 to:

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Ottawa, ON K1L 8L9
fmcandle@cscja-acjcs.ca



savaient pas vers qui se tourner. Puisque des représentants d'OSSTF/FEESO les avaient déjà visités, ils étaient un peu familier avec notre syndicat. Après l'avoir rejointe par téléphone, la première question qu'Hélène a posée à Colombe était : « OSSTF/FEESO est un syndicat fort, comment pouvez-vous nous aider? » La réponse de Colombe a été directe : « Venez à notre conférence de Leadership d'été en août et nous vous le montrerons. »

Lors de la conférence, Hélène Labbé a été tellement impressionnée par notre syndicat qu'elle a insisté pour que nous mettions en place une campagne de syndicalisation le plus rapidement possible. Et l'aventure a commencé.

Les travaux préliminaires ont commencé au Bureau provincial. Des dépliants ont été créés, des brochures ont été rédigées, des vidéos ont été produites et des stylos, bloc-notes et macarons ont été commandés. Menée par un comité de recrutement stratégique interne sous la direction de Paul Elliott, vice-président, l'équipe de recrutement pour la campagne de l'Université d'Ottawa a été réunie. Colombe était l'organisatrice en chef.

Given recent developments and the hardships caused by the failed drives, the OSSTF/FEESO business card left behind acted as a beacon of hope

Preliminary work began at the provincial office. Pamphlets were created, information booklets were written, videos were produced and pens, pads, and buttons were ordered. Directed by the in-house strategic organizing committee under the leadership of Paul Elliott, the executive officer, an organizing team for the University of Ottawa campaign was assembled. Colombe was lead organizer; Dave Moss joined as communications officer; and Pierre Côté rounded out the group as special advisor and resource. The team had three important things going for them. They knew each other well, had worked together during past organizing drives and were all fluently bilingual—a must for this campaign. As an official bilingual university, the University of Ottawa's support staff consists of approximately 80 percent francophone members.

The team scheduled its first meeting in early November. A few brave souls showed up. Our presentation was greeted with tepid reaction, but all agreed that another meeting should



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Dave Moss s'est joint à titre d'agent des communications et Pierre Côté a complété le groupe à titre de conseiller spécial et de personne-ressource. L'équipe avait des atouts importants qui jouaient en sa faveur. Ils se connaissent tous très bien. Ils avaient collaboré à d'autres campagnes de recrutement dans le passé. En plus, ils étaient parfaitement bilingues, un avantage très précieux pour cette campagne. Étant une université officiellement bilingue, le personnel de soutien de l'Université d'Ottawa est composé d'environ 80 pour cent de membres francophones.

La première rencontre de l'équipe a eu lieu au début de novembre. Quelques braves personnes se sont pointées. Notre présentation a été accueillie par des réactions mitigées, mais elles ont accepté qu'il y ait une deuxième rencontre. À cette occasion, un membre a demandé : « Qu'est-ce qui différencie OSSTF/FEESO? Nous avons tenté de nous syndiquer avec d'autres syndicats dans le passé et cela a toujours échoué. » Notre réponse a été qu'étant un syndicat puissant, qui se spécialise dans le domaine de l'éducation et qui représente près de 60 000 travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation de partout en Ontario, nous étions le meilleur choix pour eux. L'équipe locale était du même avis. À partir de ce moment, la motivation et l'énergie n'a jamais diminué.

Un groupe d'environ 20 membres dévoués du personnel de soutien de l'Université d'Ottawa a entamé de longues heures de travail, y compris plusieurs soirées et fins de semaine, afin de compiler des listes, de faire signer des cartes, de participer à des rencontres, de persuader leurs collègues, de discuter et surtout de maintenir l'espoir et le moral à un niveau élevé. Aucune campagne ne peut réussir sans la collaboration substantielle d'une équipe de recrutement locale interne ou, dans ce cas, d'un comité révolutionnaire, comme elle préfère être connue.

Le 3 janvier 2007, la campagne a été rendue publique grâce à un envoi à tous les membres. La stratégie patronale, dont nous ne connaissions pas encore les ramifications, a testé la détermination des membres de

Un groupe d'environ 20 membres dévoués du personnel de soutien de l'Université d'Ottawa ont consacré de longues heures, plusieurs soirées et fins de semaine, à persuader leurs collègues, à discuter et à maintenir l'espoir

A dedicated group of about 20 University of Ottawa support staff members worked long hours —many nights and weekends— to convince colleagues, debate issues and keep the hope alive



follow. At the second meeting, one member asked, "What makes OSSTF/FEESO different? We have tried to organize with other unions in the past and it always failed." We responded that as a powerful union that specializes in education and represents almost 60,000 education workers from all over Ontario, we were the best choice for them. The local team agreed. From that meeting on the motivation and the energy never let up.

A dedicated group of about 20 University of Ottawa support staff members started working long hours, putting in many nights and weekends, to compile lists, sign cards, attend meetings, convince colleagues, debate issues and, most important, keep morale and the hope alive. No campaign can be successful without significant collaboration from an internal local organizing team or, in this case, the comité révolutionnaire, as they liked to be known.

The campaign became public with a mailing to all members on January 3, 2007. Management strategy, unbeknownst to us at the time, was going to test the members' resolve in ways we had never imagined. In fact, on February 27, 2007, more than 1,000 employees waited in line for up to two and half hours to cast their ballot to join the union, only to see the ballot boxes sealed at the end of the day. The employer had mounted objections at the OLRB that, if carried to their logical end, would have had the effect of negating the democratic right of employees to choose OSSTF/FEESO as their union.

Because of management's objections, the ballots would not be counted for another four months, as OSSTF/FEESO would make its case at the Ontario Labour Relations Board. We awaited a decision. During that same period, out of conviction, almost 700 University of Ottawa support staff signed and presented a petition to the president of the university, asking him to respect the members' rights to choose their union, and to withdraw the university's objections at the vote.


The OLRB did, finally, agree with OSSTF/FEESO and allowed the ballots to be counted. When the ballot boxes

manières que nous n'aurions jamais imaginées. En fait, le 27 février 2007, plus de 1 000 employés ont attendu en ligne plus de deux heures et demie pour exercer leur droit de vote afin d'adhérer au syndicat uniquement pour qu'à la fin de la journée, les boîtes de scrutin soient scellées et qu'aucun vote ne soit compté. L'employeur avait déposé des plaintes à la CRTO qui, si elles avaient suivi leur cours normal, auraient eu pour effet d'annuler le droit démocratique des employés de choisir OSSTF/FEESO pour les représenter.

En raison des revendications de l'employeur, le scrutin n'a pas été déposé pendant quatre autres longs mois alors qu'OSSTF/FEESO présentait son point de vue à la Commission des relations de travail de l'Ontario et attendait une décision. Durant cette période, près de 700 employés du personnel de soutien de l'Université d'Ottawa, plus convaincus que jamais, ont signé et présenté une pétition au président de l'Université lui demandant de respecter le droit des membres de choisir leur syndicat et de retirer leurs objections au vote.


La CRTO a enfin donné son assentiment à OSSTF/FEESO et a permis le décompte du scrutin. Lorsque les boîtes ont été finalement ouvertes par une journée chaude de juillet, plus de 80 pour cent des membres dont les bulletins ont été comptés avaient choisi OSSTF/FEESO pour les représenter.

D'une visite de politesse et d'un stylo-souvenir, OSSTF/FEESO a été récompensé par une nouvelle unité de négociation du personnel de soutien de l'université engagée, convaincue et

énergique. Malgré les nombreuses tentatives et les épreuves, le travail chevronné de l'équipe de recrutement locale et l'ensemble des membres a porté ses fruits. Les 1 200 nouveaux membres francophones du secteur universitaire confirment qu'OSSTF/FEESO est le défenseur le plus puissant et le plus diversifié pour les travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation de la province. Nous sommes fiers d'être un syndicat recruteur et de représenter cette nouvelle unité du milieu universitaire. 

Continued from page 32/

were eventually opened, on a hot July day, more than 80 percent of those who voted chose OSSTF/FEESO as their union.

From a chance visit, a business card and a token pen, OSSTF/FEESO was rewarded with a new bargaining unit of dedicated, energized and committed university support staff. Despite some trials and tribulations, the hard work put in by the local organizing team and the whole membership paid off. Twelve hundred new francophone members from the university sector confirm that OSSTF/FEESO is the most diverse and powerful voice for education workers in this province. We are proud to be an organizing union and to represent this new unit from the university sector. 

Pierre Côté is the newly appointed Associate General Secretary and **Colombe Beauregard** is a member of the organizing staff at OSSTF/FEESO.

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A Canadian Panorama

With his Fuji S9000 in hand, and a lot of camping gear in tow, OSSTF/FEESO executive assistant Joe Hirschegger and his wife, Wendy, set off on an adventure that took them west across Canada to Vancouver and then north to Alaska. On their travels, they encountered beautiful lakes, fantastic sunsets, spectacular mountain ranges and even raging forest fires. Out of the hundreds of photos he shot, Joe submitted these three to share with *Education Forum* readers.

Top, centre spread: Lake Moraine in Banff National Park, near Lake Louise, Alberta. If it looks familiar to you, it should as it is the scene from the old \$20 Canadian bill.

Lower left: a fabulous sunset seen over Lac Pelletier, Saskatchewan.

Top right: Joe captured the clear water reflections from the Twin Bridges Trail in Chutes Provincial Park, near Massey, Ontario. Thanks for sharing Joe. /MC





Edited by Marianne Clayton

Forum Picks

Alexander Wlasenko,
Untitled, 2007



OUTINGS



THE MACLAREN ART CENTRE: PEOPLE TO ART

An hour's ride north of Toronto on Hwy. 400 is the bustling community of Barrie,

a city of 133,900 people. It is a city that has undergone rapid growth; in fact, it is Canada's second fastest growing community. As in most cities, with this growth also comes the desire to establish and promote the arts, and in 1983 the Barrie Gallery Project was initiated. When philanthropist Maurice MacLaren donated his home and art collection to the project, the MacLaren Art Centre was born.

The MacLaren Art Centre is a not-for-profit gallery that features visual arts

and it is strongly supported by the community. An innovative adjunct to this gallery is the MacLaren ArtCity, where components of the city's parks, the waterfront and public spaces have been designated as an international sculpture park displays both permanent and temporary artworks.

The first permanent piece in the ArtCity collection was *The Spirit Catcher*, a large, mythological thunderbird created in iron by artist Ron Baird for Vancouver's Expo '86. It was purchased

PHOTOS: COURTESY MACLAREN ART CENTRE



Ron Baird,
The Spirit Catcher,
1986



PHOTO: CORTEN STEEL

by the Peacock family, who then donated it to the City of Barrie. Installed on a historic native and coureur-de-bois travel route on Barrie's waterfront, *The Spirit Catcher* has become an iconic symbol of Barrie.

In 2001, the Barrie Carnegie Library was renovated to the tune of \$5.9 million and became the new home of the MacLaren Art Centre. Today, the Centre boasts a



Sadko Hadzihasanovic, *Under the Plum Tree*, 2006

collection that is worth over \$25 million and houses over 26,000 permanent pieces.

As a regional leader in the promotion of the arts, the Centre provides a curriculum-based art program for both elementary and secondary schools in Simcoe County. A clever play on words—VanGo—has been applied to the elementary program where artists are sent via van to the schools. The secondary program includes both in-class and in-gallery visits. The upcoming secondary program is called *Is It Art or Is It Fashion?*

On view in the Art Centre, now through to November 4, 2007, is a series of four Soviet themed exhibitions.

Broken Promises: Soviet Photography in the Age of Stalin is a selection of vintage black and white press photographs from the Sovfoto Archive in the MacLaren permanent collection. These 82 state-sanctioned photographs define the

Soviet nation through photography.

Artist Sadko Hadzihasanovic created the artwork in the *Under the Plum Tree* exhibit. It consists of large, mixed media layered imagery from Western popular culture with autobiographical traces of the artist's life in the former Yugoslavia.

Artist Olexander Wlasenko responds to the Sovfoto Archive with large-scale drawings that shed light on the collective farming and work industry implemented in the Soviet Ukraine in the 1930s in the series *As We Slept*.

Artist Robin Pacific revisits the Russian revolution of 1917 and offers a reminder of the utopian project of communism before Stalin in the exhibit *Zaum Zaum*.

The MacLaren Art Centre is located at 37 Mulcaster Street in downtown Barrie. Hours are: Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday noon until 4 p.m. For more information: e-mail maclaren@maclarenart.com, or telephone 705-721-9696, or visit the website at www.maclarenart.com. /MC

BOOKS



THE END OF IGNORANCE: **Multiplying Our Human Potential** by John Mighton

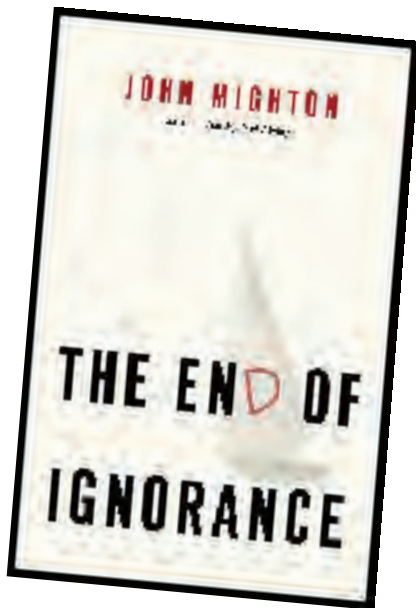
Published by Alfred A. Knopf,
Canada, 2007

320 pages, \$29.95

Reviewed by Larry French

Imagine that a visionary teacher had perfected a method of teaching mathematics that allowed all students in the regular school system, even significant under performers, to achieve success. Imagine that he had developed learning materials that enabled other teachers to implement his method. Imagine that the materials were pilot-tested and implemented with





success in schools in Western Canada, the US, Australia, South Africa and England. Imagine that schools in several boards in Ontario had tried the method and enjoyed significant improvement in test scores. Imagine that the teacher himself was from

Ontario and developed his method and materials in our province. One would then imagine that, surely, the Ministry of Education and math consultants in school boards across Ontario must be leaping over one another to ensure that our students benefit from this innovative home-grown breakthrough.

Wrong. John Mighton and his JUMP program—Junior Undiscovered Math Prodigies—have been rejected in large part by the Ontario math establishment, despite the fact that learning theorists and practising teachers here in Ontario and elsewhere have validated his method. The JUMP program, which covers the Ontario math curriculum, Grades 1 to 8, is described as “a balance of shared, guided and independent learning strategies and tools,” that breaks learning into micro steps that guarantee success. Mighton’s book, and its message that no student need be left behind, is inspiring reading for everyone involved in education. It

should be required reading for math consultants.

Larry French is a Life Member of OSSTF/FEESO and a former Director of Communications and Political Action at OSSTF/FEESO’s provincial office.

IN OUR OPINION: MORE THAN 100 YEARS OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS

Edited by Don Sellar

Published by Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2006

290 pages, \$24.95

Reviewed by Richard Young

To be sure, newspaper editorials have long been a staple resource in many high school classrooms. They can be



used to provoke discussion on current issues, teach essay structure and thesis development, analyze bias, or open windows on past attitudes. A recent publication, *In Our Opinion: More Than 100 Years of Canadian Newspaper Editorials*, will certainly satisfy the appetite of fans of the newspaper editorial and provide further fodder for classroom discussion. Selecting and compiling the 210 editorials that comprise this very readable and entertaining collection was obviously a labour of love for editor Don Sellar, himself a career jour-

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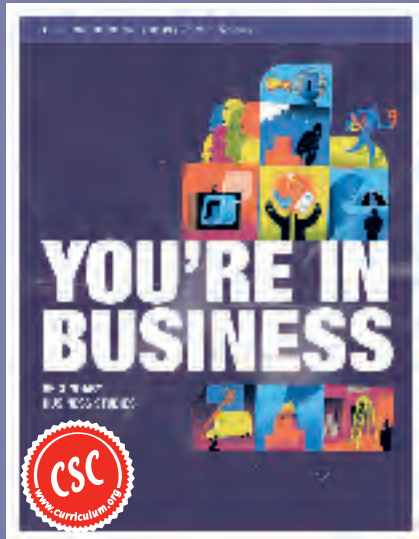


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nalist, and former editorial writer and ombudsman for *The Toronto Star*.

In his introduction, Sellar cautions readers that his collection is not a history book that focuses on landmark events and pivotal figures, but rather a mix of opinion reflecting the attitudes, heart and soul of Canadian newspapers, and Canadians, from the last 120 years or so. "Newspaper editorials," he claims, "are sober, passionate, reflective, witty, disturbing, prescient and often as nutty as the people who write them." After giving readers an overview of what they can expect, Sellar ends the introduction by wondering aloud about the future of editorial pages in the new highly competitive multi-media universe, where they have become economic "targets of opportunity" for cost cutting.

Sellar organizes his selections into 22 categories, ranging from anniversary celebrations and farewells to "Our Proudest Moments," sports, and Canada's justice system. In short, one can find an editorial on just about any topic imaginable. For example, want an editorial on Terry Fox? It's in here; an editorial on the flag debate of 1965 is here, too; as is an *Edmonton Journal* editorial on Wayne Gretzky's departure to the US in 1988. Indeed, most readers will not read this book from cover to cover in a couple of sittings. It is the quintessential bedside table or academic office reference book that can be consulted for serious study and/or light entertainment and diversion whenever the need arises.

Change and continuity are important themes in history. The assembled editorials reveal how dramatically things have changed in some areas, such as gender relations and cultural tolerance, while how little they have changed in others, such as concerns about the next generation of young people and Canada's military role in the world. Readers will come away with an appreciation for the communities and local newspapers that pro-



duced the editorials. It is hoped that the locally produced editorial will remain a mainstay of Canada's daily newspapers, although the trend toward corporate-written editorials is evident.

Thanks to the Internet, bloggers—many using anonymous usernames—can post their opinions about anything, anytime and anywhere. While many justifiably welcome this so-called “democratization of public opinion,” it has come with a price, including misinformation/disinformation, product/commercial promotion and endorsement masquerading as information, and further trivialization of public debate. Which begs the question: Is there still a place for the newspaper editorial in the 21st century, where anyone who can master a keyboard is a potential arbiter of public opinion? You bet—and this fine collection of newspaper editorials reinforces that notion. 🐦

Richard Young teaches history at Sir Frederick Banting SS in London, Thames Valley District, and is a frequent contributor to *Education Forum*.

HOT LINKS



ADOBE CONNECT:
A tool for colleague collaboration and student learning
Reviewed by Patrick Boulos

What is Adobe Connect? Adobe Connect is a web communication tool designed for the future—in business and in education. I find it particularly useful for online training, curriculum planning and design and colleague collaboration. I'm starting to envision how to use it with my students.

I was introduced to Adobe Connect out of necessity when developing implementation supports for the

Ontario Association for Mathematics Educators (OAME) in July 2007. As one of 10 writers of the Grade 12 Mathematics for Work and Everyday Life (MEL 4E) supports, I saw the necessity of collaborating with others as paramount. There was much to do and little time to get it done!

My writing partner and I decided to try Adobe Connect to minimize face-to-face meetings—we live approximately 200 km apart. Being able to work from home and to collaborate with my partner in “real time” was truly exciting, and almost

effortless. After only one session, we were on our way to creating a working document to support mathematics educators across the province.

What can Adobe Connect do? While I am still experimenting with this web conferencing tool, I cannot claim to be an expert in the field. One thing I know, however, is that this form of communication can facilitate colleague collaboration. Even with limited knowledge of this web application, anyone could be up and running after 15 minutes of training.

To use Adobe Connect, you need



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a computer and a reasonably fast Internet connection. I also highly recommend a microphone in order to fully capture the “real time” effect.

The platform has several features. These include various pods for chatting (text style), leaving notes, and even sharing documents and computer screens. One of the most fascinating features for me is the ability not only to share a file with someone else, but to edit documents in real time. Wow! Having someone 200 km away being able to edit the document with you is a real selling point.

Advantages of using Adobe Connect

- Collaboration with others at scheduled times
- Minimal training needed
- Variety of uses—curriculum development, meetings, etc.
- Minimal resources required
- Professional growth opportunity
- Minimize time wasted driving to meetings
- Inexpensive
- Supportive website
- May be used in a variety of ways, such as file sharing
- Interactive
- Integrates well with software such as SMART View or SMART Ideas.

Another advantage is that more than two can collaborate. The free trial version of the software allows up to five people to collaborate, while the fully licensed version, available to all school boards in Ontario, allows for up to 40 connections.

For more information go to www.adobe.com/products/connect. 

Patrick Boulos is a curriculum leader and teacher for the Lambton Kent District School Board. He teaches at Northern CI&VS in Sarnia.

CONFERENCES



Nov. 9 to 10

Historical Consciousness: Critical Thinking & the Law
The Ontario History and Social Science Teachers’ Association’s annual conference will be held at the Holiday Inn, 970 Dixie Rd., Mississauga. OHASSTA welcomes Peter Siexas, Faculty of Education, UBC; The Honourable Roy McMurtry, Chief Justice of Ontario; and Gary Clement, Editorial Cartoonist, *The National Post*. The line-up of exciting workshops and best practices makes this conference a must attend. Visit the OHASSTA website for more details and to register: www.ohassta.org.

Nov. 9 to 10

Safeguarding Our Rights
The 2007 Occupational Health and Safety Conference is sponsored by the OSSTF/FEESO Collective Bargaining Committee. This conference will be held at the Renaissance Toronto Airport Hotel, 801 Dixon Rd., Toronto, and will explore a variety of topical issues affecting educational workers. The workshops are designed to provide information and training to district/ bargaining unit health and safety representatives. Visit the OSSTF/ FEESO website for more details and to register: www.osstf.on.ca.

Nov. 15 to 17

Honor the Past—Forge the Future
The annual American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association convention will be held at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, 415 Summer St., Boston, Mass. As well as educational sessions, there will be a celebration of the 35th anniversary of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association. Visit the ASHA website

for more details and to register: www.asha.org.

Nov. 16

Striving for Success: Students-at-Risk
The Ontario Association for Students At Risk will be hosting its sixth annual conference at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, 100 Main St. W., Hamilton. Dr. Bruce Ferguson of the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children is the keynote speaker and will speak on Early Leavers. Visit the OASAR website for more details and to register: www.oasar.org.

Nov. 22 and 23

Shoulder to Shoulder... Putting Students First
Sponsored by OSSTF/FEESO, with support from the Ontario government, this conference will be the pièce de résistance of professional development for all educational workers. It’s an opportunity to network with colleagues across the province on best practices, essential skills, transitions and connections. Keynote speakers include Anthony Williams, Heather Clayton and Paul Huschilt. For more details and to register online visit: www.osstf.on.ca/putstudentsfirst. Contact Mike Budd or Diane Laurie at 1-800-267-7867.

Nov. 23, 24

Sharing Our Success: Promising Practices in Aboriginal Education
This two-day national conference, an initiative of the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education, is set to engage 300 participants from across Canada in examining and sharing promising practices in K–12 aboriginal education. The program, which will take place at both the York Hotel, 161 Donald St., Winnipeg, and the University of Winnipeg, will feature over 60 workshops and presentations by prominent experts and practitioners. Don’t miss this exchange of field-based Canadian research, policies strategies and resources. Visit the Society’s website for more details and to register: www.sae.ca.



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The Centre for the Study of
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www.learningwork.ca is a portal that provides access to a range of courses, resources, research projects and public activities on learning and work. Based at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, the Centre's mandate is to bring together educators from university, union and community settings to understand and enrich the often-under-valued informal and formal learning of working people. The content is being constantly updated, and the participating organizations can be accessed directly through the website.

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Continuing the tradition of strong collective action

With a new school year well underway, I want to express my best wishes to all OSSTF/FEESO members for a good year.

I am especially delighted to welcome to OSSTF/FEESO our newest bargaining unit, comprising 1,200 (mostly francophone) support staff workers from the University of Ottawa who were officially certified as OSSTF/FEESO members in July.

I also want to congratulate the following current staff who have been appointed to new positions: Wendy Bolt has been named General Secretary, replacing Rod Albert, who retired at the end of August; Pierre Côté replaces Wendy as the new Associate General Secretary; and Lori Foote was promoted to the position of Director of Communication and Political Action. I look forward to working with all of you in your new roles; I know that you will be strong advocates for our members.

By the time you read this, the provincial election will be over and the 39th Parliament of Ontario will be in place. As I write this, the outcome is as yet unknown; however, it is my hope that we will again have a public education-friendly government. I want to thank all of you, all our members, for whatever role you played in the election, whether simply by voting or by working on a campaign.

In September, we began negotiating for almost 30 bargaining units across the province, including the first collective agreement for our newest bargaining unit at the University of Ottawa. These will be joined by more than 70 bargaining units in the spring of 2008.

As we prepare to meet these challenges, it is important to remember what OSSTF/FEESO is all about. As a group, as a union, as a collective, we have lived and we have made history. Ten years ago, in 1997, we participated in the Political Protest from October 27 to November 7.

It was the biggest protest and mass job action in North American history to date. More than 125,000 educational workers walked off the job to protest Bill 160—the Conservative government's draconian education legislation that had one objective in mind: to cut services to the bone and to cut costs. The Political Protest brought education issues to the forefront of public debate and, as such, was a very powerful demonstration of the effectiveness of collective action.

Likewise, a strong collective voice is essential this year as we head into negotiations. In bargaining, OSSTF/FEESO's strategy

Poursuivre la tradition d'une action collective forte

EN ce début de nouvelle année scolaire, je veux souhaiter une bonne année à tous les membres d'OSSTF/FEESO.

Je suis tout particulièrement ravi de souhaiter la bienvenue à la toute nouvelle unité de négociation d'OSSTF/FEESO qui représente 1 200 travailleuses et travailleurs du personnel de soutien de l'Université d'Ottawa, dont la plupart sont francophones, et qui a été accréditée officiellement comme unité d'OSSTF/FEESO en juin dernier.

Je désire aussi féliciter le personnel qui a été nommé à de nouveaux postes : Wendy Bolt a été nommée au poste de secrétaire générale en remplacement de Rod Albert qui a pris sa retraite à la fin d'août, Pierre Côté remplace Wendy au poste de secrétaire général associé et Lori Foote prend la direction des communications/action politique. J'ai bien hâte de travailler avec vous dans vos nouveaux rôles. Je sais que vous serez de fervents défenseurs pour nos membres.

Lorsque vous lirez ces lignes, l'élection provinciale sera chose du passé et le 39^e Parlement de l'Ontario sera en poste. Au moment de les écrire, le résultat n'est pas encore connu, mais j'espère que nous aurons à nouveau un gouvernement favorable à l'éducation publique. Je veux remercier chacun de vous, nos membres, pour le rôle que vous avez joué dans le cadre de cette élection, que ce soit simplement en exerçant votre droit de vote ou en participant à la campagne.

En septembre, nous avons entrepris les négociations dans près de 30 unités de négociation à travers la province, y compris la première convention collective de notre toute récente unité de négociation de l'Université d'Ottawa. Au printemps 2008, plus de 70 autres unités de négociation entameront leurs négociations.

Dans nos préparatifs en vue de relever ces défis, il est important de se rappeler la raison d'être d'OSSTF/FEESO. En tant que groupe, syndicat, et collectivité, nous vivons et nous avons contribué à l'histoire. Il y a dix ans, nous avons participé à une manifestation politique, du 27 octobre au 7 novembre 1997. C'était le plus imposant moyen de pression dans toute l'histoire nord-américaine. Plus de 140 000 travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation ont débrayé pour manifester contre le Projet de loi 160, la loi draconienne en matière d'éducation du gouvernement Conservateur qui avait un seul objectif, soit de sabrer dans les services. La manifestation politique a propulsé la question de l'éducation au centre du débat public et, de ce fait, a



Last Word *continued/*

has never been about closing the gap, it has always been about leading the way. This year will be no different.

Our overall priorities are straightforward. We must improve our working conditions, get better pay and protect our jobs. Our detractors will see these priorities as self-serving. However, it is vital that the public understands that our actions and negotiations benefit not just our members, but also education as a whole. Our members' working conditions are our students' learning conditions.

Ultimately, collective bargaining improvements enhance student success. Our students deserve and require improvements to their learning conditions. The government must make sure that education is funded appropriately in order to pay for the full-range of programs and support services that contribute to a vibrant and dedicated board-employed education team.

**We create our own history.
We must adapt and evolve
to continue to be the strongest
and most respected voice
for public education**

The Liberal government listened, to a certain extent, to OSSTF/FEESO and educational workers. The announcements in August, 2007 of \$309 million in education funding enhancements were welcome news. It is important to note, however, that these announcements followed a wave of OSSTF/FEESO political action throughout the past year: press conferences on funding issues; incessant lobbying by provincial office staff and local leaders; a first-ever OSSTF/FEESO lobby day held in early spring at Queen's Park; and an innovative ad campaign that targeted specific boards and their issues, and more importantly, that enabled local leaders and members to get the support necessary to mount effective fight-back and political action campaigns.

In order to be successful, we must all be well-prepared and well-informed and we must be involved. We must also ensure that we are all working toward the same goals. We must be an effective and efficient team. Throughout the coming year, I ask you to stay informed, to get involved at your local branch or bargaining unit, and to support your local leaders and bargaining teams.

We create our own history. We must adapt and evolve to continue to be the strongest and most respected voice for public education. To quote our motto, "let us not take thought for our separate interests, but let us help one another." Our actions will become tomorrow's legacy.

Mot de la fin *suite/*

prouvé l'action collective.

Une voix collective forte est également primordiale cette année, car nous entreprenons les négociations. La stratégie d'OSSTF/FEESO en matière de négociation n'a jamais été de combler l'écart; elle a toujours été d'être le chef de file. Cette année ne fera pas exception.

Nos priorités globales sont explicites. Nous devons améliorer nos conditions de travail, obtenir de meilleurs salaires et protéger nos emplois. Nos critiques percevront ces priorités comme intéressées. Il est toutefois crucial que les autres comprennent que nos actions et nos négociations ne profitent pas seulement à nos membres, mais aussi à l'ensemble du milieu de l'enseignement. Les conditions de travail de nos membres sont les conditions d'apprentissage de nos élèves.

À ce titre, les progrès négociés augmentent en fin de compte la réussite des élèves. Nos élèves méritent et ont besoin d'améliorations de leurs conditions d'apprentissage. Le gouvernement doit s'assurer que l'éducation est financée adéquatement afin de couvrir les frais d'une gamme complète de services de soutien et de programmes auxquels prennent part une équipe scolaire engagée et dynamique à l'emploi du conseil scolaire.

Le gouvernement Libéral a écouté jusqu'à un certain point OSSTF/FEESO ainsi que les travailleuses et les travailleurs en éducation. En août, l'annonce de 309 millions de dollars pour améliorer les fonds alloués à l'éducation a été la bienvenue. Il est cependant important de noter que ces annonces font suite à une série d'actions politiques menées par OSSTF/FEESO tout au long de la dernière année : des conférences de presse sur la question du financement, du lobbying constant par le personnel du Bureau provincial et les dirigeants locaux, la toute première journée de lobbying d'OSSTF/FEESO organisée au printemps à Queen's Park et une campagne publicitaire novatrice qui visait des conseils scolaires spécifiques et leurs problèmes et qui a surtout permis aux dirigeants locaux et aux membres d'obtenir l'appui nécessaire pour mener des campagnes d'action politique et des ripostes efficaces.

Si nous voulons réussir, nous devons être bien préparés, bien informés et nous devons nous impliquer. Nous devons aussi nous assurer que nous ciblons tous les mêmes objectifs. Nous devons être une équipe efficace. Pendant la prochaine année, je vous demande de vous tenir au courant, de vous impliquer au sein de vos unités de négociation et d'appuyer vos dirigeants locaux et vos équipes de négociation.

Nous faisons notre propre histoire. Nous devons nous adapter et nous développer afin de continuer d'être les défenseurs les plus respectés et les plus forts de l'éducation publique. Comme le dit notre devise : « Ne pensons pas à nos intérêts individuels, mais plutôt à nous entraider. » Nos actions deviendront l'héritage de demain.



OSSTF has established the ARM (Active Retired Members) Organization allowing retired members to remain actively involved with their colleagues politically and socially.

Why join ARM?

- Provincial mailings such as OSSTF Education Forum, Update and the Pocket Planner
- Newsletters to inform members about pension, legal and financial matters
- Retirement information
- Pension information
- Local social and other community activities
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More details on ARM and the ARM health plans can be found by visiting www.osstf.on.ca and clicking on the ARM logo. For more information on the ARM Organization, please call the OSSTF provincial office at 1-800-267-7867.

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Why OTIP you say?

Because you know us, you trust us, you own us. Because you'll reach a live person, who will walk you through the various plans and options that are available to you, to make sure that your personal goals and financial security needs are met. Request a free, no-obligation quote by calling an experienced OTIP representative at 1-800-267-6847 or by visiting us online at www.otip.com.