

ESPecially Yours

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June 2013

From your president

This has been one tough year for OSSTF and education workers across the province, including all of us at the OCDSB. Even before our contracts expired in August 2012, OSSTF and other unions were fighting for the right of education workers across Ontario to negotiate new contracts with our employers. Instead of negotiating, the Liberal government chose to pass legislation (Bill 115) that



imposed working conditions on all education workers in January 2013.

OSSTF refused to accept those imposed working conditions. Leif and I, along with a few other members of our bargaining unit attended many local rallies of protest to represent ESP. We attended multiple meetings in Toronto and participated in conference calls with other OSSTF leaders from across the province. We gathered in solidarity with 30,000 other members of labour in Toronto outside the provincial



Photo: Rick Lee

Liberal leadership convention.

It took a change at the very top - new Premier Kathleen Wynne - to finally ensure that OSSTF was able to reach

an acceptable Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government. Although it did not restore everything that had been lost it did improve the conditions that had been imposed. A very basic summary of the changes to

STANDING UP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
DÉFENDRE L'ÉDUCATION PUBLIQUE



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Nancy Akehurst, Leif Walther, Margaret Elson at Toronto demonstration

our contract with the OCDSB as a result of Bill 115 and the MoU are on page 3 of this newsletter.

Although this particular struggle is at an end, we face a continued attack on unions at the Federal and Provincial level. One of the OSSTF goals this year is to highlight what the union has done and what it still does for members. Keep your eyes open for information about what rights you have because of unions and why the union is important to all of us.



30,000 demonstrators pack the streets in Toronto

At the same time all of this was going on, we had to start negotiating a first contract for our members employed by the Ottawa School Transportation Authority (OSTA). I would like to send kudos to our Chief Negotiator, Leif Walther for his dedication to the hard work of researching, writing, attending meetings and all the other preparations required for negotiations with both the OCDSB and OSTA. Local negotiations with the OCDSB are complete but OSTA negotiations continue.

My regular duties have also kept me busy -- supporting members at discipline meetings, return to work meetings, WSIB accommodation meetings, mediations with fellow members or colleagues, and working with OCDSB Labour Relations to make improvements to the working conditions at our Board. I enjoy working with our ESP members and feel that I am having an impact and helping those members through some (often) difficult times.

Working conditions have become more and more of an issue. Member workload due to Ministry initiatives

has increased over the years, while support staff numbers have decreased. This is evident across the Board. In 1998, we had 600 front line school office staff. This year, we have 330. Central staff have also felt the impact of reductions.

The staff at

elementary schools has been particularly hard hit. The introduction of school security measures (buzzers, cameras) and increased implementation of Full Day Kindergarten added to existing ministry initiatives such as OnSIS/Ministry Report, Ministry Report Cards and new Ministry Financial Regulations has been overwhelming. Their duties are often interrupted due to the needs of younger students, staff and parents. I believe that their workload is equivalent to a secondary school of the same size and the staffing formula should reflect that.

Trying to set the school year calendar for 2013-2014 during such uncertain times led to the disappearance of a Board-wide PD Day in February 2014. Our PD



Committee will be working hard to find alternate ways to offer professional development to our members for next year.

I have heard concerns over the past year about the lack of acknowledgement for Support Staff in the media. In order to be acknowledged, you must be seen and heard. I have spoken on behalf of our members at rallies, but we have not had much participation. I find it very disheartening to see how few

How can we tell them that
DEMOCRACY
is worth fighting for
if we don't fight
for it ourselves?



forum to send thanks to some people:

ESP executive members: It has been a pleasure, as always, to work with such a great team.

Pat Lam, ESP Educational Services Officer: Thanks for all of your hard work to provide professional development opportunities for our members. Enjoy your retirement!

Connie Bedard: After many years working on the executive and on the PD Committee, Connie has decided to take a break. Thanks for all you have done over the years!

Margaret Elson, ESP Secretary: Thanks for your many years of service to ESP. No, she's not leaving!! But Margaret received recognition for her years of voluntary service by being awarded the OSSTF Norm Snyder Award.

More on page 5.



I hope you all have a great summer, with time to relax and enjoy good times and good weather with family and good friends.

Nancy

members take the time to learn about their contract or about their union. While I am happy to work on your behalf, I would like to encourage our members to get more involved in Union activities such as committees, PD, union events, meetings.

Finally I would like to use this

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

As imposed by Bill 115

- No pay increase for the duration of the MoU (2012-2014)
- Grid movement for all ESP members will be delayed for half a year for each of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

Improvements in the MoU

- All banked sick days are gone and a new sick leave plan has been created. The sick leave plan includes 11 sick days at 100% of your salary and 120 sick days at 90% of your salary. These days can be topped up to 100% by using sick days remaining from the previous year. One unused sick day will allow you to top up 10 additional days to 100% of your salary. These sick days are renewed each year. These days can be used for medical appointments. The sick leave benefit is available to all employees. For term employees, the number of days will be pro-rated for the length of the term.
- Sick leave benefits will be extended to cover the waiting period for Long Term disability where necessary.
- The gratuity has been frozen at your salary level and number of days in your sick bank (to a maximum of 200) as of August 31, 2012 for members with 10 years of service or more to be paid out at retirement. Those with less than 10 years of service will receive a windup payment at a reduced rate by the end of June.
- Job security such that no positions will be lost except for changes in programs or reduced enrolment.
- Maternity benefits for all employees.
- Option for Voluntary Leave of Absence without Pay (VLAP): employees can take up to 5 unpaid days in each of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. The days for 2013-2014 must be requested in advance by June 26, 2013 in order to have pay equalized throughout the year. If an employee takes less than 6 sick days, one day will be paid back. NOTE: Taking these days can affect your pension. You will need to pay the employers portion of pension payments.
- There will be no compulsory unpaid days.
- Opportunity for local negotiations prior to the end of June 2013

From your chief negotiator

Here we are in the last days of the 2012-2013 school year and you are just now reading your first, last and only *ESpecially Yours* newsletter of the year.

From OSSTF, District 25, ESP Bargaining Unit perspective, to say that this was a frustrating year for many of us is clearly an understatement.

Things were a little dark at times, and situations seemed to change just about every time we turned around -- so often, in fact, that for most of the year Nancy and I felt at somewhat of a loss as to what we could say in a newsletter that was going to hold up to the test of time.

At one point we considered publishing a "Black Issue" of *ESpecially Yours* with an entirely black front page.... black to signify the mood that we were put under for much of the year, black to represent the uncertainty and lack of clear information we all seemed to suffer, and black to express our mourning over what appeared at times to be the death of a legitimate local collective bargaining process.

In the end we find ourselves in a situation where there is no new "Contract", as no actual contract was ever signed, and there is no new "Collective Agreement" as our membership never collectively agreed to anything. Instead, what we have is a set of "Conditions" imposed by the Government over top of the 2008-2012 contract, defined in a Memorandum of Understanding essentially stapled to the back of that existing document, as well as a series of new Ministry of Education

Regulation changes to the Education Act that codify some of these conditions. And even much of this continues to be subject to interpretation by the parties involved and the official Provincial Interpretation Committee for the MoU.

All this without even mentioning the other member group represented by your D25 ESP Bargaining Unit, the employees of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA), who are still without a FIRST contract with their non-school board employer, with negotiations continuing on into this summer.

In the meantime, though, here we are in the last days of the 2012-2013 School Year. We all survived, and we still have a newsletter! We all deserve a pat on the back and at least three good cheers for giving our best throughout a complicated year.

And we all deserve a little break.

Whether you are laid off while school is closed or are working through as a 12 month employee, let's all have fun while the summer is here (don't blink too long!), relax and enjoy friends and family, and take advantage of the long days to pursue our pleasures away from the job.

Hopefully we will all find ourselves healthy and happy and ready to give our best as we always do when the show starts up again in the fall.

Take good care and enjoy the summer.

Leif

ESP WINNERS!

Congratulations to two ESP members who won Director's Citation awards, presented at a ceremony at 133 Greenbank on June 10. As well, the team in Printing Services won the Innovation Award for the quality of their technical support and advice. You can read more in the program that was prepared for the event (copies produced by Printing Services!), available online at http://www.ocdsb.ca/ab-ocdsb/awards/Award%20docs/Directors_Citation_awards_2013_revised.pdf (Photos are also from the program.)



*Janet Publow
Office Administrator,
Berrigan Elementary
School*



*Celina Smith-Vadneau
Office Assistant,
Glebe Collegiate
Institute*



Innovation Award Recipient for 2013
Printing Services
OCDSB Central Administration



Steve Carr



Frank Cloutier



Gilles Martin



Jeff McLaurin



*Harvey Bischof (OSSTF VP), Paul Elliott (OSSTF VP),
Ken Coran (OSSTF President) presenting the Norm
Snyder Award to Margaret Elson*

In an award ceremony in Toronto on May 31 Margaret Elson received the OSSTF Norm Snyder award. The award was created in 1986 to commemorate Norm, an active OSSTF member and leader in what was then District 29, who was tragically killed in a boating accident. Each year the selection committee receives nominations from districts and chooses the member best thought to exemplify selfless and outstanding service to the union and its members.

Getting to know your ESP executive

Up close and personal!

In this issue we introduce you to Amir Ismail. Principals love him because he can make their phones do what they are supposed to do! Here are some other facts about Amir.

WORK THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ME

I am an End User Analyst helping staff with computer and phone issues.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING FOR THE BOARD?

More than 22 years

WHAT DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL ARE YOU IN NOW?

Business & Learning Technology

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM ON YOUR DESK?

My computer of course!

ON BREAKS I LIKE TO ...

... Read on the computer and go for brisk walks.

ESP THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ME

I have ESP (Extra Sensory Perception)



... just kidding! I am a newbie to the post and still learning the ropes

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ON THE ESP EXECUTIVE?

Almost a year now

MOST SATISFYING ESP MOMENT

When some union members were commenting positively on PD day, about the workshops they had just come out of.

THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN WORK OR ESP

I volunteer for The World Partnership Walk, the Shepherds of Good Hope and Focus Canada charitable organizations.

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD IS ...

Scotia Bank Centre (or should I say Canadian Tire Place)

WHAT "DRIVE-TO-WORK" RADIO STATION DO YOU LISTEN TO?

Hot 89.9

What is the last book you read or movie you saw?

Argo

ARE YOU A PET OWNER?

Yes my babies are Raja, a cockatiel, and Casey, a Quaker parrot.

IF YOU WERE ASKED TO NAME A SCHOOL AFTER SOMEONE, WHO WOULD IT BE?

Perhaps the Aga Khan, who is known for opening schools in almost every developing country in the world.

IF YOU COULD BE IN ANY PROFESSION, WHERE WOULD YOU BE?

Computers!



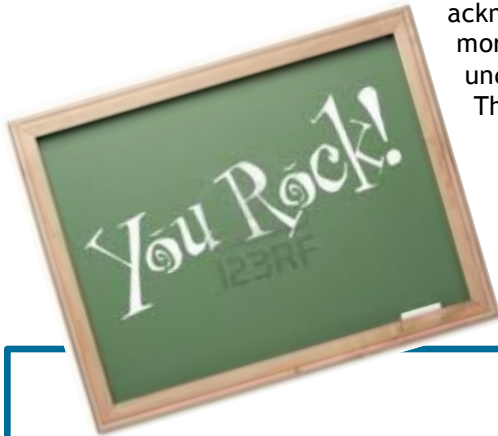
Capital Pride Parade

Last year there were over 200 participants from the OCDSB including the Director, Associate Director, Superintendents, and Trustees. Join them on Sunday, August 25, 2013. The parade travels through downtown, along Wellington Street. Although the Parade starts at 1 pm, those wishing to walk with the OCDSB are asked to meet in front of the National Archives building on Wellington Street at 12pm.

The Editor of *ESpecially Yours* is Margaret Elson. Comments, suggestions and contributions may be sent to her by BEAM anytime. Next issue - October 2013 (I think)

Annual General Meeting: May 15, 2013

This year the ESP Bargaining Unit held its Annual General Meeting at the District 25 office. The purpose of this meeting was to take care of the business of the bargaining unit. Changes made to the Constitution and Bylaws created the new position of Health and Safety Officer, the budget for 2013-2014 was accepted and the new executive for 2013-2014 was elected. Finally there was a presentation to and acknowledgement of those ESP members for whom the bells won't be ringing any more. The meeting ended with a wild scramble as everyone checked underneath their chair to see if a door prize ticket had been hidden there! Thanks to everyone who took the time to attend.



OLGA ANDERLA
ANN DORE
CORY DOWNIE
LISE FORTIN
LYNDA JOHNSON
BETH JOHNSTON
PATRICIA LAM
GAYLE LUTH
PATRICIA MAHERAL
BETH MASON
LINDA MATTINSON
NANCY MILLER
PATRICIA MYLES-HODGSON
DIANNA PAYNE
PATRICIA PORTER
CATHERINE QUIGLEY
MARGARET ROCHELEAU
MARGARET RULE
SUSANNE RUSSELL
GERRI SCOTT
DONNA SMITH

We thank them for the contribution that each one has made.

2013-2014 Executive (who ya gonna call?)

President:	Nancy Akehurst
Chief Negotiator	
and Member Services Officer:	Leif Walther
Vice -President:	Roseann Myers
Secretary:	Margaret Elson
Treasurer:	Kelly Mills
Education Services Officer:	Judy Soifer
Health and Safety Officer:	Bev Charles
Executive Officers:	John Grochot
	Amir Ismail
	Chouy Johnston
	Shelly McQuillen



... and thanks again to retiring members of the executive Pat Lam and Connie Bedard. Their contributions will be missed.



... to Chouy and Shelly, the newest members of the executive.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE ...



"Tom, this is Kate from the office. Boy, you're a hard person to reach when you're on vacation!"

Please Save the Date!

You probably haven't been thinking very much about Labour Day yet, but District 25 has a suggestion. Come to the Ottawa Labour Day Parade! Kick things off with a tailgate breakfast at Lisgar Collegiate, then march with labour brothers and sisters to McNabb Park. Check the D25 website for details which will be posted mid-August.

International Signs

In a Budapest zoo:

"PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS. IF YOU HAVE ANY SUITABLE FOOD, GIVE IT TO THE GUARD ON DUTY."

From the brochure of a car rental firm in Tokyo:

"WHEN PASSENGER OF FOOT HEAVE IN SIGHT, TOOTLE THE HORN. TRUMPET HIM MELODIOUSLY AT FIRST, BUT IF HE STILL OBSTACLES YOUR PASSAGE THEN TOOTLE HIM WITH VIGOR."

From the Soviet Weekly:

"THERE WILL BE A MOSCOW EXHIBITION OF ARTS BY 150 SOVIET REPUBLIC PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS. THESE WERE EXECUTED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS."

In a Copenhagen airline ticket office:

"WE TAKE YOUR BAGS AND SEND THEM IN ALL DIRECTIONS."

In a Norwegian cocktail lounge:

"LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR."

In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a cemetery:

"YOU ARE WELCOME TO VISIT THE CEMETERY WHERE FAMOUS RUSSIAN COMPOSERS, ARTISTS AND WRITERS ARE BURIED DAILY EXCEPT THURSDAY."

Outside a Hong Kong tailor shop:

"LADIES MAY HAVE A FIT UPSTAIRS."



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