

# ESPecially Yours

Volume 14, Issue 3

March 2014

## Message from Your President:

I hope that everyone has had a good start to the new year!! Hopefully everyone had a chance to find a warm spot to sit back and relax with friends and family over the holiday season despite the cold. Thanks to a last minute agreement reached with the employers of OSTA, we were not out walking the picket line during that time!

I wanted to let you know about the new campaign that the Canadian Labour Congress has launched called "Together Fairness Works". This campaign, supported by OSSTF, is designed to have members learn about and become involved in their union. Please take the time to read and listen to information that will be coming forward. It's important for you to understand your contract and to understand the role your union plays in ensuring that you have good working conditions, good pay, vacations, leaves and other support. The OSSTF website has more information here:

<http://www.osstf.on.ca/togetherfairnessworks>

Leif and I and some of our executive members will be attending AMPA from March 8 to March 10 in Toronto. AMPA is the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly. There are 3 days of resolutions and reports to deal with as well as some speakers. My favourite part is watching the awards for *Student Achievement in the Arts* being presented. They are always inspiring! It will be a busy 3 day weekend for those of us attending. In between our annual meetings, Presidents (or their alternates) also attend Provincial Council meetings six times a year in Toronto to deal with OSSTF/FEESO business.

Leif and I have been busy this year with member support.



Grievances are not the only support for members. We help members who are having conflicts with other staff, members who have questions about pensions, leaves, salary, concerns about changes in their positions and all the other needs and challenges members face daily.

As always, please feel free to call either myself or Leif regarding issues, concerns or questions you may have. We do our best to ensure that you have a happy, respectful and safe workplace. You can contact us at the OSSTF District Office by phone at 613-729-7211 or in person at 67 Jamie Ave.

Nancy: [nancy.akehurst@d25.osstf.ca](mailto:nancy.akehurst@d25.osstf.ca)

Leif: [leif.walther@d25.osstf.ca](mailto:leif.walther@d25.osstf.ca)

ESP Webpage: <http://tinyurl.com/ESP-BU>



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# The Latest from Leif

It's hard to believe we are over the half way mark in the school year already, but it's also very good to know that spring weather will be coming soon to help us ease into the final stretch.

It has been a pleasure again this year to assist our ESP membership in the various issues, both large and small, that can arise during the course of work life. While I am always glad when I am able to provide help and support to individuals dealing with work difficulties, I do sometimes find it necessary to remind them that a bit of attention and due diligence on their own part goes a long way in helping to prevent and resolve many problems, whether with or without assistance from union representatives.

With this in mind, I thought I would take the opportunity in this issue of our newsletter to bring that message to the larger ESP membership with a few notes on specific issues...

## PERIODICALLY CONFIRM YOUR PAY, BENEFITS AND WORK ENTITLEMENTS

It is a good idea to log into Employee Enquiry occasionally to examine your pay stub and check your recorded leave usage and other stats on the Board's Employee Enquiry site. Particularly when you have changed your employment status (for example, going from a Regular position to a Term or back again), check your allocation and usage of sick days, vacation days and other entitlements. If you think an error has occurred, your first line of enquiry should be with the HR Administrator for your Superintendency ... most often there is simply an oversight or clerical error involved that can be easily and quickly corrected when discovered. Should you encounter any problems having such an error corrected, or on those occasions

where a matter of interpretation of the employment contract or policy needs to be discussed with the employer, your union is always available to assist you in seeking a resolution. In almost all cases, the earlier a problem is found, the easier it is to solve.

## REPORT ALL PERSONAL INJURIES

All injuries that occur at work, no matter how trivial they may appear, should be reported to your Principal or Supervisor. Failure to do so could have financial implications to you later on and can negatively impact your sick leave. The consequences of some injuries do not always manifest themselves immediately, sometimes not even until years later, and having a record of any injury is important in this regard. When reporting an injury, make sure that you complete the OCDSB Incident Reporting Form. If you seek medical attention, clearly indicate that this is a work-related injury and make sure that your practitioner completes the necessary form for Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

## IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF A SITUATION AT WORK, ASK

It may be a new task that you are being asked to do, it may be a change in policy or practice at your worksite, it may be an unusual way that a manager/principal is dealing with you. If something does not seem "right" to

you in any of these situations, you should ask about it. If the situation or relations are such that you are not comfortable dealing directly with your manager/principal on the matter, you may wish to discuss it with a workplace colleagues. If you are still unsure, you should always feel free to contact one of your Union reps.

It may just be a matter of needing a

sympathetic ear to hear your frustrations.

Sometimes it is just a need for a bit of clarification. Occasionally some informal intervention may be required. Or perhaps a more formal path of complaint and

resolution is required. In all cases, it is important that you talk to somebody when you have a concern.

While your Union does have tools in place that allow us some oversight, we also rely on the our members to let us know when they are aware of something that is not right, or even when they are not sure, both for their own individual sake and for the sake of their fellow members.

We do hope that you will choose to exercise your right to the fair exercise of the rules

Continued from page 2

and conditions of your employment, both those of your Collective Agreement and those mandated by the various Labour, Health and Safety, Human Rights and other Federal and Provincial laws which apply to the workplace.

It is disheartening when a member comes to us with a serious difficulty but is unwilling to pursue a formal path of resolution, as there is often little recourse available otherwise. While we understand why such hesitancy and fear may exist, the irony is that in such situations it is often exactly that fear of exerting your rights in the workplace that most needs to be corrected.

It is important to remember that with the sheer number of managers, principals and supervisors employed by the OCDSB, they of course carry widely differing levels of skill, ability, qualifications and experience required by their positions, and this can occasionally manifest itself in issues for their staff. We are fortunate in OSSTF District 25 to be able to rely on the cumulative experience of 7 different Bargaining Units to allow us a collective familiarity with some of the managers /principals that can add very useful insight in some cases.

Your ESP President and myself are here to support you in all aspects of your work life in any way we can, and we will endeavour to have your back whenever we can. That said, please always remember to cover your own back as well.



Educators Financial Group welcomes Steven Soule, AMP as Regional Director Eastern Ontario, Ottawa/Carleton. A resident of Eastern Ontario and bilingual to boot, Steven is ideally suited for serving education members in this region with all of their lending needs. Steven studied at Concordia University in Montreal and has over 15 years of experience as a mortgage development

representative at several leading credit institutions. After joining Educators Financial Group, he furthered his professional development by obtaining his AMP designation. Steven has several

friends and family members in the education community and enjoys helping first-time homebuyers realize their dream of home ownership. "I also enjoy seeing the faces of people who were struggling financially before meeting me and then through a joint effort, putting them into a much better cash flow position." he shares. No matter where you are in your career, Steven can help you make smart borrowing choices to achieve your short- and long-term goals. To connect with Steven, call 1.800.263.9541, extension 3578 or email

[ssoule@educatorsfinancialgroup.ca](mailto:ssoule@educatorsfinancialgroup.ca)



Educators Financial Group has been offering financial planning plus a wide selection of investing and lending products and services exclusively to teachers, educational workers, and their families since 1975. We were created by OSSTF/FEESO and are still OSSTF/FEESO-owned to this day. This history helps us understand your needs better than any other financial institution. To learn more about how we can help you reach your financial goals, book a one-on-one consultation today.

## Professional Development Day - March 7, 2014

PD Day planning got off to a rough start this year. Because of Bill 115 and the imposed MoU, our regular February PD Day was cancelled. Our Educational Services Officer, Judy Soifer, called for volunteers to help plan a PD Day on another date, but with very little response. So after some discussion among the ESP Executive, we decided to hold a PD Day for our Bargaining Unit on March 7, 2014.

Were you there? If not, you really missed a great day!!!

Thanks to some great advice and initial contact from Margaret Elson, we managed to get a GREAT presenter for our morning seminar. Doc Calm, otherwise known as Dr. David Posen was our morning presenter. As it says on his website: "As a best selling author and one of the top-rated Stress and Change Management speakers in the market today, David delivers the sage advice of an MD, packaged with the wit and wisdom only a motivational speaker can offer.

Doc Calm takes direct aim at the bane of the beleaguered twenty-first century citizen: stress, burn-out, non-stop change and the elusive balance between work and life."

The title of his presentation was 'Stress Mastery - You have more control than you think'. He promised us wisdom and wit and he delivered. The members who were in the auditorium were engaged, entertained and learned about how to control stress not

only at work, but in their personal life as well. It was a great morning!

The lunch that followed was prepared and served by the Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School culinary class, led by their teacher Kent Van Dyk. We enjoyed an amazing East Indian style lunch with delicious cookies and brownies for dessert. And we made sure to include gluten free and vegetarian options as well. Thanks and kudos to the Raven's Catering team!

During lunch we held a draw for door prizes. This year's big door prizes were two gift certificates to Future Shop for \$500.00 each, won by Philip Bradley, ISST at AY Jackson and Pamela Thistle, Office Assistant at Briargreen ES. We also purchased 15 of Dr. Posen's books for door prizes and members were quite excited to receive them.

Our afternoon session was presented by Barry Scott, HR Officer, with the

assistance of Brittany Hudson and Andrea Findlay. They gave us a brief overview of ApplyToEducate, which ESP will be using to apply for new positions starting sometime after mid-April. There was also a workshop on Behavioural Interview skills.

Thanks to Nancy Akehurst, Bev Charles, Margaret Elson, Roseann Perry and Judy Soifer for all their work to make it a truly successful day. Please keep your eyes open for our PD Day survey - coming to your mailbox soon.

To learn more about the kind of advice Dr. Posen has to offer check out his website where you can find a selection of helpful articles.

<http://www.davidposen.com/tipsadvice.html>



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, OSSTF STYLE

Even before OSSTF's Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) starts, there is work to do. District 25 holds a meeting the Saturday before (March 1) in order to prepare for what will be presented. They invite other neighbouring districts as well. There are several hundred pages of motions to become familiar with!

AMPA is a big deal in every respect. Over 500 delegates come from bargaining units across the province to attend this meeting, which is held at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto from March 8 to March 10. There are also many staff members, invited guests from other unions, other provinces in Canada, overseas guests, and students from the different teacher's colleges around the province. It's a busy place!

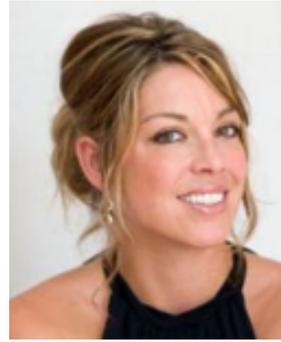
Such a large meeting has to be run according to rules, and in this case it is Roberts Rules of Order. That means there is a Speaker of the House who chairs the meeting. There are four microphones scattered around the room and the Speaker

will recognize those wishing to speak. Luckily the Speaker also enforces time limits for each speech!

This year there was controversy right from the start when there were a number of motions to amend the agenda. Premier Kathleen Wynne was a featured speaker and there were many delegates who were still angry about Bill 115 and unwilling to listen to her. Andrea Horvath, the Official Leader of the Opposition, was also scheduled to speak and they didn't want to hear from her either. After vigorous debate the amendments failed and we did in fact hear from those two speakers.

We were also lucky enough to hear from a very inspiring speaker, Candace Carnahan. Candace was in her third year of studies at the University of Fredericton, 21 years of age, and working as a summer student at a local paper mill when

she lost her left leg in a terrible workplace accident. It was an incident that could have taken her life, and an accident that could have been prevented. She shared her story as a reminder to prevent needless workplace injuries and increase occupational health and safety awareness.



From the start of the meeting at 9 a.m. on Saturday to the motion to adjourn at 4 p.m. on Monday there was almost an overload of information to listen to, read and think about, discuss and debate. It is democracy in action!

**And speaking of Annual General Meetings, be sure to save the date for the ESP Bargaining Unit AGM on May 14!**



# WHO'S WHO IN DISTRICT 25

As part of our ongoing series about OSSTF District 25 Bargaining Units, in this issue we will highlight PECCS.

## WHAT IS PECCS?

PECCS stands for Professional Educators and Child Care Staff. They are the newest bargaining unit in District 25. They were just certified under the Labour Relations Act in 2004. The 120 members come from several groups of employees in the Continuing Education Department of the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.



*One enthusiastic newcomer to Canada*

They are:

- Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC) and English as a Second Language (ESL) Instructors in both day and night programs;
- Literacy and Basic Skills Instructors;
- Adaptive Learning Instructors;
- Support Instructors;
- Supervisors and Assistants in the Early Learning and Child Care Centres; and
- Parenting and Family Literacy Centre Program Facilitators.

They work at 20 different sites, serving hundreds of adults who have children in our regular school system and providing child care for their pre-school children.

## WHAT DO THEY DO?

They support families in the OCDSB by:

- providing English as a Second

Language training to newcomers to Canada;

- increasing literacy skills for OCDSB adult students thereby increasing their chances to succeed in school settings;
- providing young children of

adult students with ESL with school readiness skills before they enter the 'regular' system thereby

- developmental disabilities; providing access to educational and personal counselling services; and
- overseeing Parenting and Family Literacy Centres which promote Family Literacy through parenting education and an early childhood education program within OCDSB elementary schools.

The President of the PECCS Bargaining Unit is Larry Iveson. He works half time at his job and is on half time release to do bargaining unit business.

- offering them the best chance of success in their academic experience;
- preparing adult learners for further education, such as high school, college and university;
- providing academic preparation for high school, including Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) preparation;
- providing workplace and volunteer preparation for adults with



*Having fun at a Parenting and Family Literacy Centre*

The Editor of *ESpecially Yours* is Margaret Elson. Comments, suggestions and contributions may be sent to her by BEAM anytime. Next issue - June 2014

# Health and Safety - Everyone's Business

## Occupational Hygiene

Yawnnnn - Uh Oh!

You've slept well, but find yourself yawning even after several cups of coffee and its only 10:00 a.m. You've got that nagging headache again and you're finding it hard to focus. It can't be boredom, you like your work and find it challenging.

Those of us without lung diseases take the air we breathe for granted. But there could be something in the air you are breathing. Not everything in the air that affects us negatively has an odour. Carbon monoxide has no odour and is very deadly which is why we have carbon monoxide detectors in our homes. The person with the low immune system who is always sick or the person who is often away with headaches, the co-worker who needs to take their puffer often during the day ... these could be the canaries in the coal mine.

What is in the air we breathe at work? Is the air fresh or recycled? Does the duct work and filters perform properly? Is the thermostat doing its job or is another spot in the building affecting it? Is there a new carpet or countertop off gasing? Is there some chemical or minute particles in another part of the building that are working their way through the duct work and into your area? These are some of the mysteries that Occupational Hygienists solved.

The indoor climate and quality of air that we breathe can affect us at

work. Symptoms can include



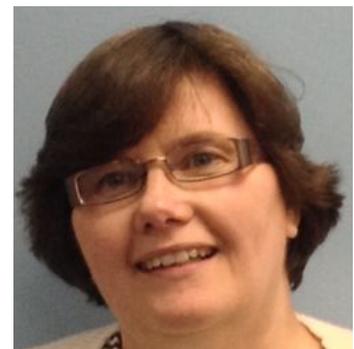
unexplained fatigue, feeling heavy headed, headaches, nausea and dizziness, difficulty concentrating, itchy burning eyes, stuffy or running nose, coughing, dry or flushed skin on the face, scalp, ears and hands.

If you experience these symptoms in the workplace, but not outside or at home, or you have a sense that something just isn't right, you are

probably not alone. Bring your concerns to your supervisor. You and your co-workers should fill in an Occupational Health and Safety Concern form. An Indoor Climate worksheet from Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc. is available from me, your ESP Health and Safety Officer.

Breathe easy and breathe happy!

Bev Charles



## International Day of Pink April 9, 2014

OSSTF members take seriously their responsibilities to address all forms of bullying and harassment in our schools and workplaces. The International Day of Pink on April 9, 2014 provides an opportunity to take positive action to end discrimination and

bullying while celebrating diversity. Internationally, people have been inspired by the actions of a group of students in Nova Scotia following an incident of bullying when a grade 9 student faced homophobic taunts and threats of violence for wearing a pink shirt. Other students at the school purchased pink t-shirts and wore them as a proud gesture of solidarity, sending a message that homophobia and bullying will not be tolerated.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE ...

### The Plows Must Get Through!

One winter morning a couple was listening to the radio over breakfast. They hear the announcer say, "We are going to have 8 to 10 inches of snow today. You must park your car on the even-numbered side of the street so the snowplows can get through." Norman's wife goes out and moves her car.

A week later while they are eating breakfast and again, the radio announcer says, "We are expecting 10 to 12 inches of snow today. You must park your car on the odd-numbered side of the street so the snowplows can get through." Norman's wife goes out and moves her car again.

The next week they are again having breakfast when the radio announcer says "We are expecting 12 to 14 inches of snow today. You must park---" and right then the power goes out.

Norman's wife is very upset, and with a worried look on her face she says, "Honey, I don't know what to do. Which side of the street do I need to park on so the snowplows can get through?"

With the love and understanding in his voice that all men who are married to blondes exhibit, Norman says, "Sweetie, why don't you just go ahead and leave it in the garage just this once?"



Luckily for us, spring is just around the corner!

*Disclaimer - Although care has been taken in preparing the information contained in this publication, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The opinions and views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of OSSTF, or District 25.*