

# ESPecially Yours

Volume 18, Issue 2

April 2018



Spring!!! Is it ever going to arrive? Winter just seems to go on forever and ever this year.

As usual, your ESP executive has been busy planning and assisting members.

Leif and I take care of individuals who need assistance, either with grievances, Return to Work Plans, Accommodation Plans, mediations or discipline issues. This keeps us busy.

The rest of the executive is busy dealing with other issues that are part of their roles.

Margaret Elson, our secretary, takes care of communication and is the editor of our fantastic newsletter.

Lana Lotan, our Health and Safety Officer attends monthly meetings of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee along with other bargaining unit representatives with our Employer.

Kelly Mills, our treasurer, is the money person and must sign and record cheque requisitions. Our ESP Budget Committee will begin meetings for next year's budget soon.

Judy Soifer, our Educational Services Officer, attends Education Services Conferences and is the Chair of our PD Day

Committee. More about it on page 7!

Saul Mogelonsky is our Vice President, and is involved in political action initiatives as well as assisting members with questions.

Our Executive officers, Angela Scavone and Melodie Gondek from the OCDSB and John Grochot and Jacquelin Hodgson from OSTA, are available to take care of questions or forward them on to Leif and I if needed. Jacquelin has become very active on the political front and is an OSSTF D25 delegate to the Ottawa District and Labour Council.

We are a great team and do our best to serve the needs of our members. Please feel free to contact any member of the executive if you have a question. They will either provide an answer or direct you to someone who can help.

Recently Leif, Judy, Margaret, Saul, Jacquelin, Melodie, Lana and I attended the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly in Toronto on the first weekend of March Break. Thanks to all for taking the time to deal with OSSTF/FEESO business along with 500 of your closest colleagues from across the province. There are some pictures on page 4 and please be sure to read Melodie's article as a first time attendee, page 5.

We are trying to arrange for a Member Get together evening. We sent out a google survey asking for interest in a May the Fourth Be With You event here at our District Office but did not get many responses. If you have any ideas about events you might be interested in or think others might like to attend, please send me an email at [nancy.akehurst@d25.osstf.ca](mailto:nancy.akehurst@d25.osstf.ca).

I have been busy attending Provincial meetings with other leaders across the province on a monthly basis. I also sit on the Provincial Educations Services Committee and attend meetings about 6 times a year to look at educational issues for our members.

Our Annual General Meeting is coming up soon. Please plan to attend and think about what role you might be interested in.

*Nancy*



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# The OSSTF Election Platform

On June 7, 2018 there will be a provincial election. OSSTF leaders both in District 25 and provincially have met with MPPs to share our concerns about educational issues affecting our members. OSSTF has developed an education platform that will let all parties know what they feel the priorities are for education in Ontario. It can be found on their website here:

<http://www.osstf.on.ca/public-education/it-s-for-everyone.aspx>



- UNIVERSALITY—access for everyone
- COMPREHENSIVENESS—opportunity for everyone
- PROFICIENCY—achievement for everyone
- ACCOUNTABILITY—value for everyone

Ontario's public education system is perhaps the province's most important asset. OSSTF/FEESO members continue to dedicate their time and energy to protecting and enhancing that system, just as we have for almost 100 years. And we believe it's important for Ontario's government to have a similar commitment to ensuring that public education works for everyone."

There are sections dealing in more detail with these issues:

- Early Learning
- More Professional Support for All Students
- Professional Judgement and Collaboration
- Funding Formula
- University Funding and Oversight
- One Public Education System in Each Official Language
- School Boards Collective Bargaining Act

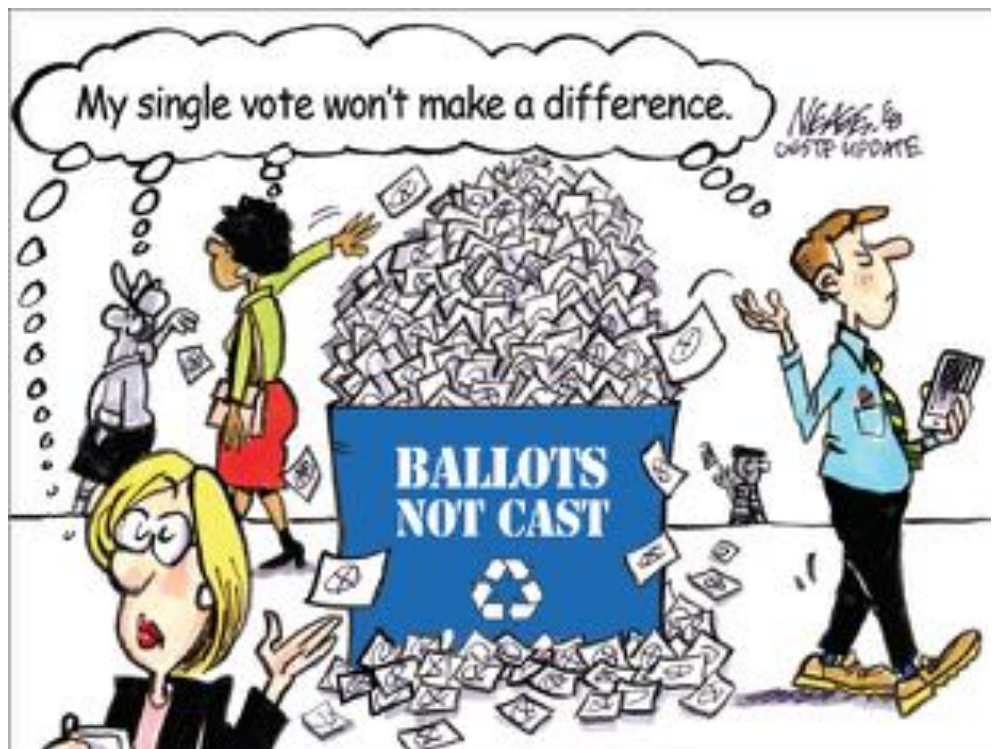
Get engaged - find out what your candidate thinks about education, and plan to vote.

Here is the preamble:

"Public education in Ontario has a long tradition of providing students with the knowledge, skills and sense of community they need to find success and contribute in a meaningful way to the social and economic fabric of a prosperous and dynamic province.

OSSTF/FEESO believes strongly in that tradition, but we also recognize that in a rapidly growing and changing Ontario, there's always more work to do to ensure that public education continues to meet the needs of all who rely on it.

We believe that the publicly funded education system should recognize the following principles:





# Day of Pink



Some members of the ESP executive are seen here wearing pink on February 28, designated as a day to unite against homophobia and bullying in our workplaces and communities.

You still have a chance to show your support. The International Day against Bullying, Discrimination, Homophobia, Transphobia, and Transmisogyny is April 11, 2018.

Everyone is invited to celebrate diversity by wearing a pink shirt and by organizing activities in their workplaces, schools and communities.

*Left: Margaret Elson  
Middle: Kelly Mills  
Right: Nancy Akehurst*



## VIP Event - The Annual Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly (AMPA)

Every year dedicated delegates from District 25 spend the first weekend of their March break in Toronto taking care of business - the business of OSSTF.



*District 25 delegates at the district office on Saturday the week before March Break doing their "homework" - preparing for the meeting.*



*OSSTF President Harvey Bischof addresses a packed house at AMPA*



*OSSTF executive at the Annual Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly (AMPA) in Toronto*

*L to R: Judy Soifer, Jacquelin Hodgson, Melodie Gondek, Leif Walther, Nancy Akehurst, Margaret Elson, Lana Lotan, Kelly Mills, Saul Mogelonsky*



## The Basics

As a first year executive officer at my first AMPA meeting, I felt excited and, at times, overwhelmed. The Sheraton Toronto hosted 581 of 582 eligible delegates in their Grand Ball Room from March 9-12. Spirits were high and everyone seemed happy to participate in three days of Provincial reports, motions and amendments. The key to getting through the weekend was finding someone to mentor me as things went along. That person was Margaret Elson (Secretary D25, ESP), whose wealth of knowledge and experience kept me afloat as we sailed through the ocean of motions.

## Day One Highlights

There's an initial culture shock in grasping Roberts' Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure. The speakers for the house were able to maintain the floor's etiquette and process, so by mid-morning, I was on track and ready to vote. The provided explanation in our AMPA binders helped me understand how red, yellow, blue and white cards are to be used when speaking on a motion, amendment or asking questions on a report. Margaret helped me out when things seemed repetitive.

Student Achievement Awards: Students from various school boards within OSSTF were awarded for their contributions to the Arts. Works of poetry, digital media, and visual arts

were presented by students who were on hand to receive acknowledgement for their hard work and innovation. I was really touched by these teenagers' ability to express themselves in a time when even adults are having difficulty knowing what to say and if what they feel is "normal".

## Day Two Highlights

Kathleen Wynne: Premier Wynne spoke to OSSTF one day after Doug Ford was announced leader of the Progressive Conservative party. She shared her empathy for those facing workplace violence, mentioned upcoming new curriculum and new progress reports. The Premier took questions from the floor, then it was back to work for members.

Farrah Khan: A second guest speaker arrived to speak about sexual violence and harassment. Farrah Khan is the Sexual Violence Support and Education Coordinator

at Ryerson University. She had two main messages for us to take away. First, we have to start using clear, open dialogue with correct words so that everyone can understand what we mean when speaking about sex. The second is that sexual violence and harassment can happen to anyone, regardless of gender.

President's Dinner: President of OSSTF, Harvey Bischof, hosted a President's Dinner on Sunday night. It was a great opportunity to mingle and meet new people. After dinner, the dance floor opened up and people who had spent most of the day in their seats finally got a chance to boogie and stretch out to some tunes.

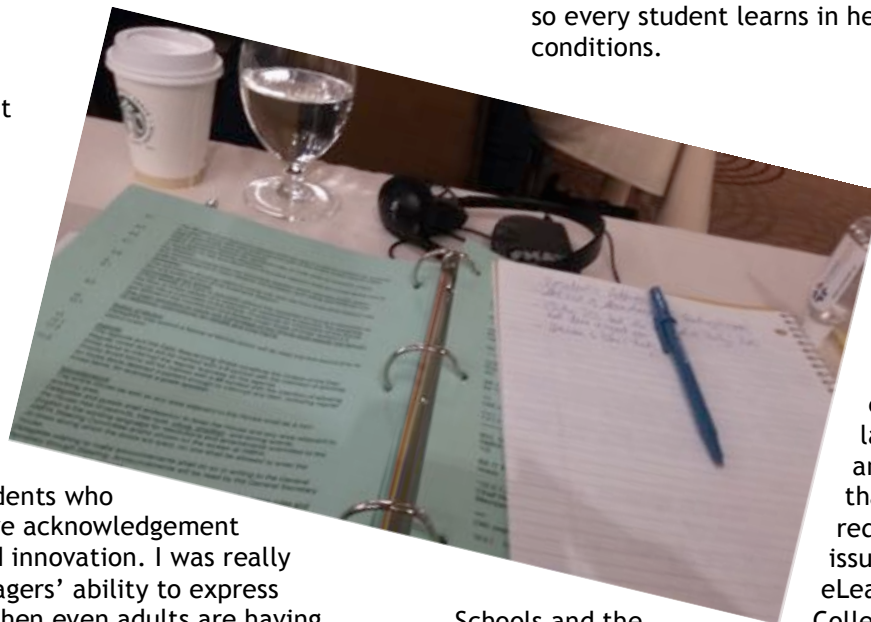
## Day Three Highlights

Andrea Horwath: Like Kathleen Wynne before her, Andrea Horwath said more has to be done for education workers who face increasing violence in schools. The NDP leader also committed to eliminating the EQAO for more randomized testing. Finally, she felt that infrastructure in all schools must be improved so every student learns in healthy, safe conditions.

Resolutions Wrap-Up: Last minute motions and amendments had to be completed. Overall, members remained fiscally conservative throughout the weekend, asking for explanations for large-ticket items and defeating motions that seemed redundant. The top 3 issues discussed were eLearning, Violence in Schools and the Committee's renewal report. You can log into the OSSTF website to learn more about these issues.

## Time To Go Home

As Margaret reminded me, democracy can be messy. Votes didn't always go my way, but I left AMPA feeling as though my opinions and work experience had some value in the proceedings. I learned how OSSTF functions as a whole and took away a lot to chew on for next year. I want to learn as much as I can before AMPA's 100th anniversary in March 2018. If any of this interests you, even a little bit, I strongly encourage you to reach out to your bargaining unit to learn how you can participate next year. Don't be shy, be bold. There's room in the boat for you, too.



# Health and Safety - Everybody's Business

Many of us spend most of the day sitting at a desk in front of a computer. Make sure your work habits are not harming your health.

## 1. Give your monitor a second look.

If your screen is planted directly on your desktop, it's time to ask management for a raise – for your computer's display. According to Dr. Jim Sheedy, director of the Vision Performance Institute at Pacific University, the top of your the screen should be level with your eyes. The idea is to get the eyes looking down about 10 degrees. If it's any lower or higher, computer users will adapt to it by moving their head. If your screen is too low, your head points down, causing neck and back aches. High displays, meanwhile, contribute to dry eye syndrome.



## 2. Poor posture? Take it on the chin.

Poor posture is something that every office-based employee should be conscious of throughout their day. Most people sitting at a computer get drawn into the screen, which means they crane their necks forward. This imbalance puts strain on the neck and spine. It's like holding a bowling ball with one hand, says Dr. James Bowman, of Portland, Ore.-based Solutions Chiropractic. If your arm is vertical underneath, it puts less strain on the muscles, but lean that ball forward and your muscles have to compensate to keep it aloft. Sitting at a desk, that bowling ball is actually our head, so Bowman recommends chin retractions, or making a double chin, to keep the neck and spine lined up underneath. "It's probably the most effective single exercise you can do for the upper back and neck," he says.

## 3. Stand up for yourself.

Don't spend your whole day sitting! Take frequent mini-breaks by getting to your feet for a few minutes, at least

once every hour. You can set an alarm on your phone or take advantage of one of the many apps that will remind you when it's time to move.

## 4. The next step (s)

Feel like you want to do more? Try some stair climbing! Studies show:

- Climbing just eight flights of stairs a day lowers average early mortality risk by 33%
- Seven minutes stair climbing a day can halve the risk of heart attack over 10 years
- Just two minutes extra stair climbing a day is enough to stop average middle age weight gain
- Stair climbing delivers these benefits by improving your cardiovascular fitness. It's officially classed as a 'vigorous' form exercise and burns more calories per minute than jogging.



Stair climbing can be easy to adopt as a daily habit since it fits in with modern urban life, over 90% of which is spent indoors. Reasons for its growing popularity include:

- It does not require any special skills, training or sporting prowess
- It's extremely time efficient, saving us time rather than eating into it
- It makes use of the world around us and does not cost anything
- You can start with just a few flights and build up over time
- No need to get dressed up in Lycra or perform in front of others!

Perhaps the best way to think of stair climbing is as a more powerful form of walking. Both are good for you but because stair climbing requires you to pull your weight against gravity, its health benefits accrue much more rapidly.

Even when climbing stairs at a normal pace, you will burn two to three times more energy than walking on the flat at a brisk pace. This extra benefit is reflected in health outcomes. You can read more about stair climbing at [stepjockey.com](http://stepjockey.com)

## **School Council Funds**

A Report was presented at the OCDSB Committee of the Whole on March 20, 2018 entitled Approval of a Consultation Plan on Recommended Changes to P.133.FIN, Management of School Council Funds. What it means is that the OCDSB is looking into having School Councils do all their financial work through the OCDSB, specifically school offices.

I expressed my concern, during the informal consultation phase, regarding the additional workload and responsibilities for the school office staff.

Some of the concerns raised in the report include:

- Additional workload for office staff, and no practical way to relieve that load, even if additional staffing dollars were available;
- The possibility that management of school council funds would not be done in a timely way and could become unworkable due to the competing and complex priorities of school-based staff;
- The risk that this process could strain relations between school councils and office staff;
- Concern that the added cost of administration which would be incurred by the District would reduce dollars that could be better used to serve schools;
- Concern that school councils would lose control over the use of funds and that the District might introduce differential funding for schools based on their ability to raise money; and
- The District would be seen as not valuing the significant contributions of volunteers, resulting in a reduction in participation and ultimately, fundraising activities.

For now the issue has been referred back to staff. I will continue to advocate on your behalf and hope that you will share your concerns during the consultation process.

**Nancy**



**Don't forget ...  
ESP PD Day  
Friday, April 27, 2018**

**Colonel By Secondary School  
2381 Ogilvie Rd, Gloucester**

If you have not pre-registered you are still welcome but the entrance fee will be \$15 at the door. Again this year we will be collecting toiletries and socks on behalf of StreetSmarts, a local organization supporting homeless people.

**ESP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018  
5:30 PM  
OSSTF DISTRICT 25  
TRAINING CENTRE  
9 CORVUS COURT, NEPEAN, ON**

For more information see the posting in the OSSTF-ESP Conference google group on March 28, 2018.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

If you are getting close to retirement or turning 65 (within 180 days) you can ask that your LTD payments be cancelled. You will not be eligible for LTD after that time so why make payments? Contact HR to take care of this.

A memo regarding the Summer Benefit Deductions schedule was posted in the OSSTF-ESP Conference google group on March 29, 2018.

**The Editor of *ESpecially Yours* is Margaret Elson. Comments, suggestions and contributions may be sent to her by GEM anytime. Next issue - June 2018**

# On the lighter side ...

What exercise equipment should REALLY be called



"WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF FITNESS AS VERY FIT, SOMEWHAT FIT, FIT TO BE TIED OR NOT FIT TO STAND TRIAL?"



DREADmill



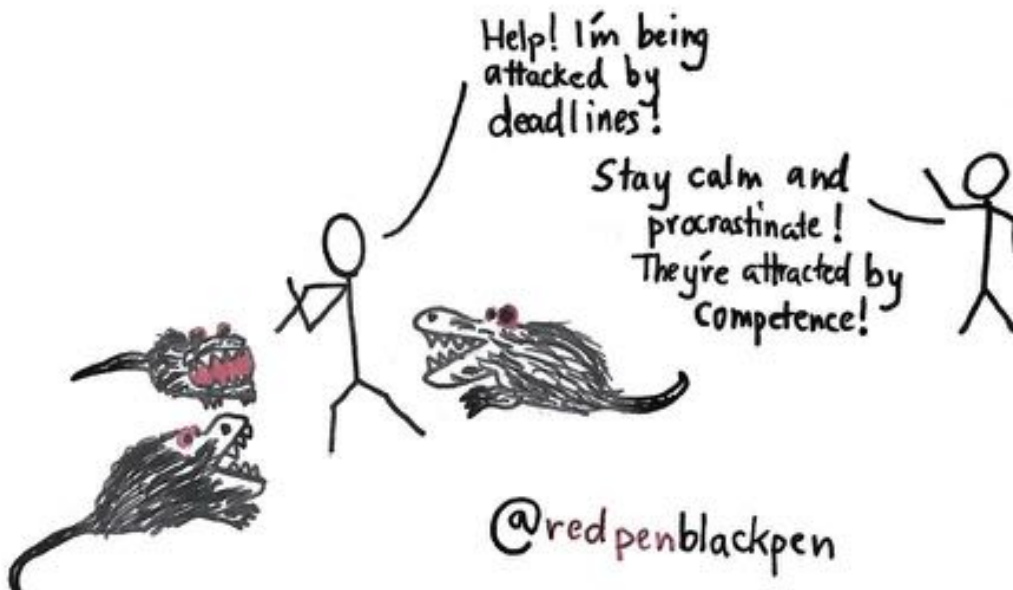
SWEARmaster



NordicTRICK



Personal DRAINING



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