



September 2018

AFTERWORDS

Newsletter of Active Retired Members
Chapter 11



AfterWords is the official publication of the Active Retired Members of OSSTF, Chapter 11 Thames Valley (ARM C11). Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM C11 or OSSTF. If you no longer wish to receive ARM communications, please reply with a message to unsubscribe.

In this September issue -

- ◆ A timely reminder from OTIP about a very important clause in our travel insurance
- ◆ A stern and informative article by Natalie Mehra about the threats posed to Ontario health care by the 'experts' behind Doug Ford
- ◆ An opportunity to be part of the rally at Queen's Park on October 23rd, 2018
- ◆ A thoughtful look at being Canadian by Joe Wilson
- ◆ Words of wisdom about unplugging from our devices and preparing for fall floods- thanks to our OTIP insurers.



President & Executive Message

A warm welcome to all the new ARM retirees! We look forward to seeing you at our ARM gatherings.

Our goals this year are to continue our donations to the community, to reach out to those about to retire and retirees who do not have a health benefit plan with OTIP/ARM and to raise awareness of the advantages of such.

Thus, your ARM executive is pleased to announce our ongoing exclusive partnership with the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP). OTIP, founded in 1977, is a **not-for-profit** insurance organization that is proudly governed by the four education affiliates and their local leaders. Being affiliate led means that OTIP understands the needs and hopes of educational workers.

Why OTIP?

Working with the best insurance companies, OTIP offers innovative products and unique services such as home, auto, life and retiree benefits that are especially built for educators, both active and retired. OTIP isn't in the business of making money to pay shareholders. Affiliate owned means all profits remain within OTIP to help fund important and unique value-added services for active and retired members, such as **CAREpath**, **FeelingBetterNow**, **Express Scripts Canada**, **Senior Care Assistance** Program and the **Edvantage** program, all at no additional cost to members.

How do you start saving?

As part of ARM Chapter 11, you have access to special programs and discounts available through OTIP. If you (or a family member, cousin, aunt, in-law) are currently shopping for home and auto insurance, you could save on your home insurance for the first year when you purchase auto insurance through OTIP. Don't miss out! Call OTIP today at **1-888-892-4935** or visit www.otip.com/ARM11

Please also check the website www.ontariohealthcoaliton for information on the continuing cuts to health care.

PLANNING TO GET AWAY THIS FALL?

The ARM travel coverage contains a stability clause which should be kept in mind before you travel. Essentially, before you travel you need to ask yourself if you are clinically stable, and have been for 90 days prior to your departure date?



What does this mean?

- Has there been a re-occurrence of a previous known health problem, or new symptoms of a health issue?
- Have you had surgery or a change in your medication, up or down, in the previous 90 days?
- Are there medical tests scheduled for after your trip?

These may cause you to be in conflict with the stability clause in the policy.

Travel insurance covers unexpected and sudden emergency medical treatments which occur while outside of Ontario.

If you have any further questions, please call the Benefits Services individuals at OTIP.

ARM Chapter 11 Executive 2018-19

President: Mary Lou Cunningham

Vice President and

Newsletter Editor: Daina Janitis

Secretary/Treasurer: Kae Ackland

PAC Representative: Bryan Smith

Facebook Administrator: Wendy Anes Hirschegger

Member-at-Large: Joe Wilson



This article by Natalie Mehra is long - but critically important to read!

Our friends at the Ontario Health Coalition are also asking for our help on October the 23rd, 2018

Natalie Mehra

September 12 at 4:00 PM ·

Saving Public Health Care & Public Services Under the Doug Ford Government

September 11, 2018

Since Doug Ford's election there has been a lot of glib talk about Ford as a buffoon, a Trump-north, an almost contemptible figure. **But this ignores the fact that the brain trust behind Ford is not ridiculous at all. They are clever – diabolical even-- and they are deeply ideological.** These people have collectively spent decades working against our social safety net and public programs, public health care included. They are sophisticated and experienced in government ¹. And they have a clear mission. A raft of Harper strategists and staffers ² populated both Ford's nomination campaign and his election team ³. Now, in government, Harper's former chief of staff has been appointed as Ford's principle secretary.

Doug Ford did not reveal an election platform but there is definitely a clear plan that is being rolled out day after day across Ontario.

In fact, Gordon Campbell, arch-privateer, former B.C. premier, and a really bad man in my personal opinion, has been appointed to do a review of Ontario's finances. Ironic, since Campbell as B.C. premier ran his province from a surplus into a deficit and increased the debt ⁴ substantially. But this doesn't matter for the anti-government ideologues. What matters is that Campbell accomplished the deepest cuts of any premier, perhaps in Canada's history. (He's in a dead heat with Mike Harris for this dubious distinction). Campbell cut every government ministry; gutting environmental programs, closing rural schools and hospitals, chopping social assistance and arts, closing women's services. He fired hospital support staff en masse and privatized their services forcing them to re-apply for their old jobs in private companies at minimum wage or drastically cut rates, rolling back fifty years of hard-won labour improvements for those workers and their families. He laid off 11,700 civil servants in one day and called it "thoughtful" and "innovative". He cut public hospital and health services and then contracted private for-profit clinics. Then he turned a blind eye as those clinics started to charge user fees for surgeries and diagnostic tests in the thousands of dollars to patients, in violation of the Canada Health Act. This summer, he agreed to testify for the private clinics in their court challenge in B.C. as they try to wipe out the laws that protect single tier public medicare in Canada. (You see what I mean? Evil.) Oh—and he overstated the fiscal "crisis" in B.C. (in fact there was a surplus) in order to soften up the public for his "innovative" cuts.

So, it seems predictable....seems the plan is for Gordon Campbell's financial review to paint a picture of fiscal crisis in Ontario. The report has already been received by the Ford government and is secret for now. Then, on September 21 the other major report -- a service review being done by Ernst and Young will be received by Ford. (This is a tactic used by the pro-privatization forces in municipalities over the last decade to bring in consulting firms to look at all services and recommend to councils program cuts and privatization.) So over the next few weeks we will see Phase II of the attack on social and environmental gains. They will roll out a set of media messaging that will be echoed up and down the country about the dire financial situation. They will use this -- instead of raising the revenue through fair taxes and the like -- to justify draconian cuts to public services and programs. And they will, at the same time, implement their own tax cuts that benefit, primarily, the wealthiest among us.

This summer Doug Ford's hidden agenda was laid bare. Huge policy changes were announced that were never once mentioned in the election campaign. But it was done in the steamy days of summer when many Ontarians were relaxing over backyard barbeques or at the lake. So Phase I was accomplished, and with the exception of the attempt to wipe out half of Toronto City Council, much of it was done without most Ontarians even knowing about it.

So Phase I is done and now Phase II is coming. This is where we come in.

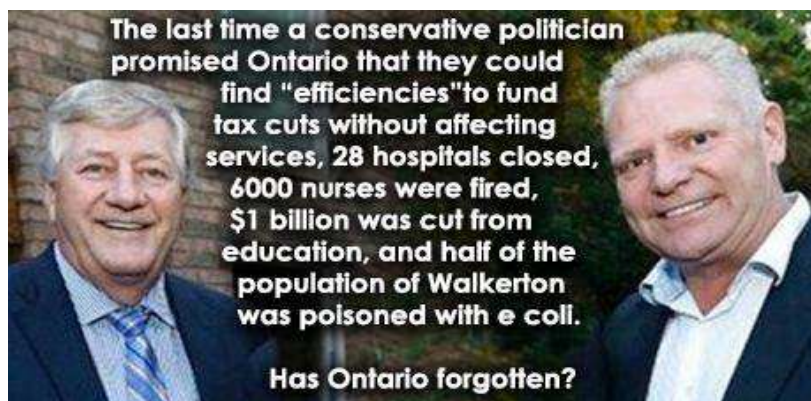
The ultimate plan is to shrink the size of "government" – in reality, the public services and programs that we all rely upon to lift our standard of living and protect against the vagaries of the market. Many will not immediately understand that this is not about finding efficiencies. It is about killing off programs run as public interest and non-profit services so that private for-profit businesses can move in and take them over. It is about removing protections so that the workforce is more flexible and compliant. It is about power, and fundamentally it will mean greater inequality and more hardship for many. They have done it in the Harris government of the 1990s and in the Harper government more recently.

The lessons from those eras is that when we have stood up and fought back we have pushed them back. The public does not support the agenda of cuts, lower standards and privatization, by and large, and public health care is one of the most cherished programs in the country. The last thing we should do is let the cuts go by invisibly, waiting until people need the service only to find it is gone. What we need to do now is make the hidden agenda visible; to illuminate the cuts for all to see and to expose what they mean for all of us, for our communities. At the same time, importantly, we need to show people a way to stand up.

In the Ontario Health Coalition we have a start. We are organizing a massive rally at Queen's Park at noon on Tuesday October 23. We know that there are thousands coming. Let's make it many many thousands. Let's make it big enough that the forces that would like to see our public health care dismantled, cut and privatized, know that it will be politically impossible to do so.

Doug Ford's biggest weakness is this: he has no mandate. His agenda was shielded from public scrutiny through the election. The people of Ontario believed him when he said he would "solve hallway medicine" which, to most of us, means reopening closed and privatized services and restoring cut beds. His party said they would support improved care standards in long-term care. Our local coalitions even taped Ford at a rural donut shop promising them that he wouldn't privatize.

So let's hold him to that. Let's organize in a way that cannot be ignored. Let's be fully aware of what is happening behind the scenes, but let's never drop the call for what we really need: a reopening of public hospital beds and services; improved access to long-term care and a real improvement in the levels of care in the homes for seniors; and a public home care system for all of us.



Years ago, former Alberta Premier Ralph Klein called public health care the “electric third rail” of Canadian Politics. He was referring to the ground rail on a railway or subway that carries the power. If you touch it, you get electrocuted. I like that. I see our job as to electrify that third rail. Let’s make them afraid to touch public health care with their plan of dismantling, cuts and privatization, so that we can protect it for all Ontarians for generations to come.

¹ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com>

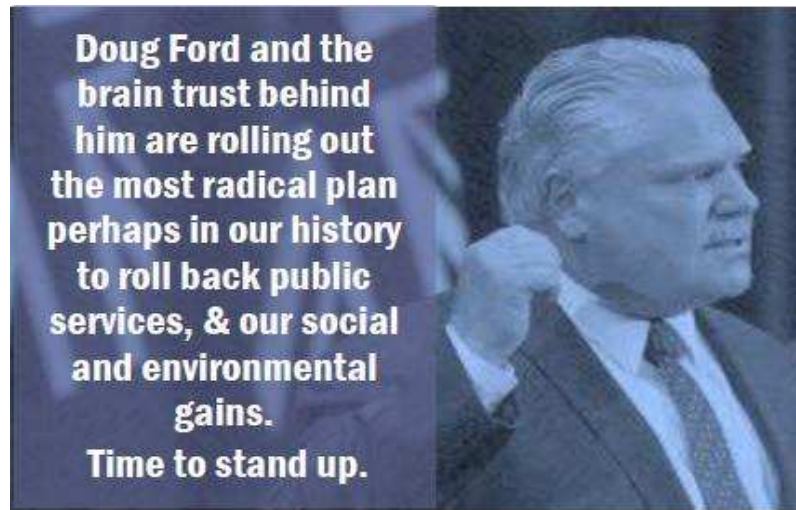
² [https://www.thestar.com/.../doug-ford-steals-a-page-from-step...\)](https://www.thestar.com/.../doug-ford-steals-a-page-from-step...)

³ <https://ipolitics.ca/.../ex-harper-mps-and-staffers-win-big-.../>

⁴ <https://thetyee.ca/Views/2005/04/20/CampbellMisledPublic/>

⁵ <https://www.ctvnews.ca/.../doug-ford-s-plan-is-furthest-away-...>

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ARM Chapter 11 Facebook Group

Do you have a Facebook profile?

If so, PLEASE accept the invitation to join the
OSSTF ARM Chapter 11 Facebook Group.

Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ARMChapter11ThamesValley/> and click the “Join” button. It is a “Closed Group” which means that only members of the group can see the postings there, but others can find it on Facebook and see the description of the group.

We will be posting information about upcoming ARM meetings/events, links to websites and resources provided by speakers at those meetings, and ARM Chapter 11 newsletters, as well as information from the OSSTF provincial office, including links to new issues of *Update* and *Education Forum*, media releases and various other important communication to help keep you informed.

Hopping the Bus for Health!

October 23rd will be a momentous day at Queen's Park, and an important one for ARM members! Health and hospital care are already in dire straits in Ontario, and are now under a hiring freeze with the new government. This will likely push back delays for eye, hip, and knee surgeries. These cannot wait for the Ministry of Health to add quotas to regions, when the need is large, the backlog growing.

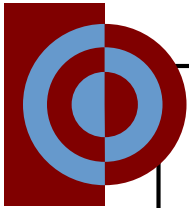
Reduced vision and mobility are no retirement gift. In Ontario, it is a long time since our medical system was based on needs, not arbitrary numbers. In the recent election, the government promised an end to hallway medicine too. People should not lie on gurneys for days in hospital halls. People should not wait in parking lots for emergency rooms to finally allow the unloading of the sick and injured because the staff have been cut so deeply.

That is why London and area ARM members are invited to hop on a bus with Jeff Hanks and the London Health Coalition to Queen's Park. Contact Jeff at 226-448-3067 or 519-473-6191. By email, contact jeffryhanks@gmail.com.

If wishing to board a bus in Oxford, just east of London, call 519-456-5270 or email bryasmit@oxford.net to reserve a spot on the Oxford Coalition for Social Justice bus.



...-by Joe Wilson



I sometimes get asked why I continue to work with the NDP and Organized Labour in support of various “progressive causes”.

- “What’s so wrong with life in Canada?”
- “Do you think you can fight the people who really run our world?”
- “Why not relax and just enjoy your retirement?”

Well, as to the last question, I have these three great (fully-grown) children, and now three amazing grand-daughters. Retirees like me (with that wonderful OSSTF pension!) will make out ok, but as for my kids and grandkids – I want to be able to look them in the eye. I’m currently wearing a T-shirt with the caption (of a little girl talking to her father), “What did *YOU* do to stop Stephen Harper?” (Substitutes for Harper: Trump, Ford, Scheer, the 1%, etc. etc.) I’ll “relax” when we arrive at some real answers.

The middle question? On my wall is a poster of our greatest Canadian, Tommy Douglas, with his famous quote, “Courage my friends. It’s not too late to build a better world.” As usual Shakespeare has something to say:

"What is a man

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed?

A beast, no more. Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,

Looking before and after, gave us not

That capability and godlike reason

To fust in us unused" (Hamlet 4.4.32-38).

So – it is our world too. Of course we have to earn our privilege, and fight (if need be) to make it better – for everyone.

The first question? Canada is such a wonderful country. We are so privileged to live here. Except, is racism growing in Canada? Have our First Nations people achieved their proper place in Canadian society? Have we solved poverty, especially child poverty? Real action on climate change? and, unfortunately, on and on....

This August holiday weekend underlined more directly for me what it is we need to fight for. The amazing Scott Moir and Tessa Virtue hosted their “Thank-you Ilderton” party this weekend (I live near Ilderton). A small town parade, and a happy civic festival (food, entertainment, beer-tent) afterwards. Small-town Canada gathering (with no politics in mind) to celebrate, with our greatest ever figure skaters, their wonderful accomplishments. Scott and Tessa wanted to underline their appreciation for what their home-town (Ilderton has adopted Tessa!) has done for



them (this wonderful pair, Canadian to the core, honour their roots, and don't forget who they are).

Before the big parade, my wife and I got to be the two geezer-guests at a barbecue hosted by one of my daughter's closest friends. A house full of thirty-somethings and a horde of little kids, all having a good time, getting along and happily enjoying a hot summer day. Something that should be routine, and can be, as long as people have secure jobs and income, can take care of their families, are able to live in stable communities that quietly and thoroughly value everyone.

In a sense, an ordinary quintessentially Canadian summer day. But it is also a big part of what we "ordinary Canadians" want – a society where our political and economic leaders work toward a world where it's not all about how the 1% can get even more filthy rich and powerful. Rather, an achievable world where our local communities are strong, and opportunities are readily available for our children. A world where we can celebrate and enjoy our lives together. If you want, the post-war world of 1945 – 1975 in which we fortunate retirees grew up. As Jack Layton used to say, "A Canada where no-one is left behind".

So there are complicated "big picture" answers to the question I started with, but I prefer the simpler answers implicit in a recent hot summer day in Ilderton, Ontario.



Let Joe Wilson inspire you!!

Please consider a submission to YOUR newsletter. *AFTER-WORDS* needs articles, an opinion piece on a topic that concerns you, a report on an interesting trip or person you've met while travelling, a poem or a book review. Articles should be about 600 words or less and sent to me at armpresident@osstf11.com Editing may be done for clarity or space limitations

And...some words of wisdom from our OTIP
RAEO
Insurance Brokers



How to Deal with Floods

Floods are a common – and often costly – natural hazard in Ontario that can happen at any time of year. Overland water flooding can be caused by melting snow, ice jams, fresh-water hurricanes, breaking dams and heavy rainfall that oversaturates the ground. Summer thunderstorms in particular can pose a major flood risk in Canada.

Overland water flooding can leave you and your family at risk for serious injury, and your property at risk for extensive damages. Below are some tips to help you and your loved ones stay safe and mitigate potential losses from overland water flooding before, during and after the flood occurs.

To learn more, visit www.otipinsurance.com/article23



5 Reasons You Should Consider Unplugging

Between texts, emails, phone calls, calendar alerts and notifications from multiple social media platforms, being connected can seem like a full-time job. So much so that it's easy to forget that an off switch even exists.

It's a good idea to periodically re-evaluate your relationship with technology and consider making the choice to 'unplug' yourself from your devices more often.

To learn more, visit www.otipinsurance.com/article24

