



## Summer 2020

### AFTERWORDS

Newsletter of Active Retired Members



*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.

plus ça  
change  
plus c'est  
la même  
chose

Ben

Ah... if only this summer edition offered answers to our many concerns in June of 2020, but -it DOES offer

- A reminder of the demonstration about Bill 175, already in Third Reading. Our area's rally is at Jeff Yurek's office, 750 Talbot Street at NOON, June 24th
- A clear explanation of what Bill 175 threatens
- A chart on how privatization affects homecare in Ontario
- The comical side of living through a pandemic in our senior years
- A thought-provoking review/article by Joe Wilson
- A plea from OSSTF to share in keeping the next generation of students SAFE as they return to school in September
- Suggestions from our OTIP friends on how you could reduce the cost of your home insurance.



#Coronavirus has turned us all into dogs. We roam the house all day looking for food. We're told "no" if we get too close to strangers. And we get really excited about car rides.

And an article from



**RANKANDFILE.CA**  
CANADIAN LABOUR NEWS AND ANALYSIS FROM A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

## Ford government moving ahead with home care privatization bill

6/1/2020 By Zaid Noorsumar

Premier Doug Ford and his PC government are moving ahead with their new home and community care legislation. According to the Ontario Health Coalition, the legislation will further enable privatization of home care and remove the existing provisions of public control and accountability.

The legislation was being pushed through the Ontario legislature before the government's attention was diverted by the pandemic.

Now that Ford is determined to "re-open the economy," the government is moving ahead with its home care agenda. It has allocated three days of public hearings for Bill 175, Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act 2020, from June 15 to 17.

"This legislation has been created in the backrooms without any public consultation," said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition. "It is being railroaded through at break-neck speed before the vast majority of the more than 750,000 people impacted even know that it is happening."

### Private interests and profit margins

The Ontario Health Coalition says that the new legislation will dismantle all remaining public governance and control of home care.

Home care is currently coordinated by 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) across the province, which outsource the delivery of care to agencies – most of which are for-profit and notorious for exploitative practices.

Bill 175 will hand over the coordination to newly-formed Ontario Health Teams, which are loose coalitions of for-profit and not-for-profit agencies set to replace the LHINs. The Health Teams will be overseen by Ontario Health, a "super agency" that functions with no accountability or oversight.

"This is poor policy that benefits private interests seeking to increase their market share or their profit margins but it does not serve the public interest," Mehra said.

"The Super Agency (Ontario Health) is governed by a Board that is not subject to the Ontario public service legislation regarding conflict of interest and includes an array of pro-privatization business people, bankers and corporate executives, has no regulations for public input, open board meetings, public access to information and even less democratic protections than the LHINs," reads the Health Coalition's analysis of Bill 175.

Ontario Health's Board of Directors includes Shelly Jamieson, who was previously the executive director of the Ontario Long-Term Care Association, the lobby group that mainly represents for-profit nursing homes.

# HOME CARE IN ONTARIO

## EFFECTS OF PRIVATIZATION



### 32 PER CENT WORKERS ARE UNIONIZED

Prior to structural changes introduced by the Mike Harris government in the 1990s, which allowed for-profit corporations to win government contracts, home care was a far more unionized sector with stable employment



### 62 PER CENT OF PSWS ARE PART-TIME

Due to underfunding and for-profit ownership, part-time jobs are now rampant in the sector. This instability induces stress in (mainly women) workers, whose ability to provide care is compromised.



### CORPORATIZATION OF CARE

According to the Ontario Health Coalition, for-profits were providing 64 per cent of home care personal support services in 2011 compared to 18 per cent in 1995. Since then, for-profit delivery has only gone up



### OPERATING PROFIT MARGINS OF 7.8 PER CENT

Based on Statistics Canada data from 2017, the average operating profit margin for home care companies in Ontario was 7.8 per cent



### MORE PRIVATIZATION IN THE OFFING

Days before the COVID-19 lockdown began, the Ford government was rushing a home care legislation (Bill 175) that will further empower for-profits in the sector

**SPEAK OUT AGAINST  
HOME CARE PRIVATIZATION!**





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*THE COVID IS RAGING MY LIFE IS A MESS*  
*I LIVE IN PYJAMAS AND DON'T HAVE TO DRESS*  
*I'M IN ISOLATION JUST STAYING AT HOME*  
*AND WOULD GIVE MY LAST DOLLAR TO BE FREE TO ROAM*  
*I AM AT RISK (OR THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY)*  
*THEY TELL ME TO STAY IN; NOT GO OUT EACH DAY*  
*IN MY HEAD I'M SO YOUNG THOUGH MY LICENCE REVEALS*  
*I'M REALLY A SENIOR (BUT THAT'S NOT HOW IT FEELS!)*  
*WHEN I RUN OUT OF FOOD AND DELIVERIES ARE LATE*  
*I HAVE TO BUY GROCERIES BETWEEN 7 AND 8*  
*SO EARLY IN THE MORNING I HEAD OUT TO RESTOCK*  
*AND DISCOVER A LINE UP THAT WINDS 'ROUND THE BLOCK*  
  
*SOCIAL DISTANCING SENIORS ALL 6 FEET APART*  
*MAKE ME WONDER JUST WHEN I BECAME AN OLD TART*  
*MY MEALS ARE REPETITIVE (A LOT LIKE MY GAS!)*  
*AND I'M TIRED OF DISCUSSING WHY TRUMP IS AN ASS*  
*MY LATEST NEW OUTFIT IS GLOVES AND A MASK*



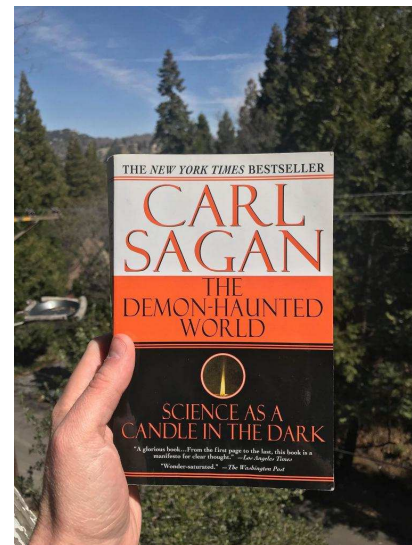
AND I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF I'M UP TO THIS TASK  
 I WASH ALL MY GROCERIES ALL FRUIT, MEAT AND VEG.....  
 WILL THIS EXTRA PRECAUTION TIP ME OVER THE EDGE?  
 MY BEAUTIFUL HAIR HAS WIDE ROOTS OF GREY  
 NO HAIRDRESSERS AROUND TO HELP WASH THEM AWAY  
 I'VE TALKED TO MYSELF NOW I'M ANSWERING BACK  
 IS IT MONDAY OR FRIDAY I'VE REALLY LOST TRACK  
 I'VE STOPPED DOING HOUSEWORK IT'S WEEKS SINCE I'VE DUSTED  
 AND I KNOW WITHOUT VISITORS I'LL NEVER GET BUSTED  
 I FACETIME MY FRIENDS OR WE GROUP CHAT ON ZOOM  
 AND TRY TO PRETEND WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME ROOM  
 THANK GOD LIQUOR STORES ARE CONSIDERED 'ESSENTIAL'  
 WITHOUT DAILY DRINKS THIS WOULD DRIVE US ALL MENTAL  
 EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE IT IS GOOD TO REFLECT  
 ON WHAT THIS ALL MEANS AND WHAT TO EXPECT  
 IT'S A TIME TO BE GRATEFUL FOR ALL THAT WE'VE GOT  
 LIKE A WARM HOUSE AND FOOD THAT OTHERS HAVE NOT  
 THE BOTTOM LINE HERE BY THE TIME THIS ALL ENDS  
 IS THAT WE'LL GET THROUGH IT WITH OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
 SO EVEN IF YOUR PARTNER IS A BIT OF A GRUMP  
 YOU CAN REALLY BE GRATEFUL YOU'RE NOT MARRIED TO TRUMP!



...

By Joe Wilson

I am currently reading Carl Sagan's "The Demon-Haunted World", published to significant positive response in 1996, the year of his sadly premature death. In it, the late "astronomer, planetary scientist, cosmologist, astrophysicist, astrobiologist, author, science popularizer, and science communicator" (Wikipedia) attempted to elucidate the social importance of good science and reliable information, and (as the jacket blurb said) to demonstrate that "the siren song of unreason is not just a cultural wrong turn but a dangerous plunge into darkness that threatens our most basic freedoms". In particular he affirmed that in an age of mass media and readily accessible information (much of it of a profoundly dubious nature), a strongly functioning democracy needs a citizenry able to grasp the rudiments of proof and reason, a citizenry able to practice what he dubbed "the fine art of baloney detection".



Note that this book was written 24 years ago, before the current tsunami of social media and internet domination of information. He was very prescient, a seriously intelligent scientist and insightful social observer. In fact, reading this book is helping me better understand what seems to be inexplicable: the cult-like rise of Donald Trump, the co-opting of the Republican party, and the incredible dumbing down of the political process in America and across the world.

Let me focus on one part of his book, in a chapter entitled "Obsessed with Reality". He starts the chapter by listing "typical offerings of pseudoscience and superstition", and gives an amazing *partial* list of some 45 separate examples.

[Let me semi-digress to one of them: dousing or water witching. I have personal experience of this arcane art, in that, drawing on some rudimentary training, I doused the location of the well on our rural property. The location I found featured the forked stick I held moving forcefully in my hands to clearly, strongly, indicate where the well should be drilled. At a depth of only 37 feet (some drilled wells have to go down hundreds of feet) a strong flow was found, and the well has now been flourishing for over 30 years, never running dry, and providing a bountiful flow. So, because of my personal experience I believe dousing can work – or at least seem to work. I didn't fake it, and the result was perfect. But... the rational part of me wants to know WHY it worked. I would agree wholeheartedly with Sagan that one anecdotal example does NOT provide proof that water-witching works. A testable theory is needed, one explaining and demonstrating the real physics of the matter. I do NOT believe in magic and I DO firmly believe in science and the scientific method. So, I'll continue to enjoy my bountiful water supply, will continue to vividly remember the forked stick twisting in my hands - and will continue to hesitate telling this story (please DON'T pass it on!): it sounds like spurious BS, and I want people to think of me as a rational person. But I sure would like to broach the subject with Professor Sagan, and have him try it out!]

Now, let's get back to politics and the rise of Trumpism.

Sagan describes an elaborate hoax perpetrated by a magician named James "The Amazing" Randi. He devoted much of his life to debunking charlatans and frauds. As Sagan explains, "Magicians [unlike scientists] are in the deception business. They practice one of the many occupations – such as acting, advertising, bureaucratic religion, and politics – where .... lying is socially condoned" .... [Randi] is angry...about...how uncritical acceptance of mysticism and superstition works to defraud, to humiliate and sometimes even to kill" (Sagan, P. 228).

Randi worked with Australia's TV program "Sixty Minutes" to "generate a hoax from scratch" to prove how easy it is to fool the public, but much more important, the media and officialdom. The fraud was to present a well-prepared young man, Jose Alvarez, who, allegedly as a result of a motorcycle crash, could channel a 3000 year old entity called Carlos. The fraudsters provided documentation of the impact Jose/Carlos created in the United States, were successfully interviewed by several Australian TV shows and news services, and presented a highly successful, extremely persuasive and well covered live event.

When Sixty Minutes revealed the hoax, the duped Australia media were incensed. But, they had done no checking of the spurious background material, of the reliability of the "Teachings of Carlos" created in a few hours by Randi, of the real identity of "Jose" or his "manager", and had done no rigorous investigations of the rigged events Alvarez and Randi created. And, remarkably, many of those who attended the live event continued to believe in "Carlos", and wished to be disciples.

As Sagan notes, Alvarez and Randi proved "how little it takes to tamper with our belief, how readily we are led, how easy it is to fool the public when people are lonely and starved for something to believe in" (Sagan, P. 240).

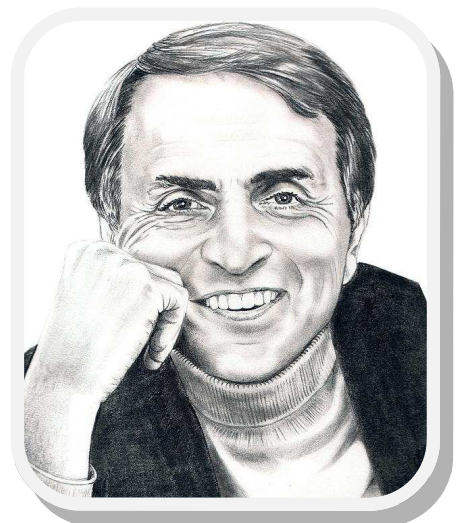
So, do you start see the connection to the rise of Trump? As Sagan noted (P. 241) – decades before Trump's rise to power:

One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back".

And further (P. 244):

Skeptical scrutiny is not only the toolkit for rooting out bunkum...It is also a timely reminder that mass rallies, radio and television, the print media, electronic marketing, and mail-order technology permit other kinds of lies to be injected into the body politic – to take advantage of the frustrated, the unwary, and the defenseless in a society riddled with political ills that are being treated ineffectively if at all.

Baloney, bamboozles, careless thinking, flimflam, and wishes disguised as fact are not restricted to parlour magic and ambiguous advice on the matters of the heart. **Unfortunately, they ripple through mainstream political, religious, and economic issues in every nation** (bolding mine). Consider how powerfully the current epidemic of social media fits in with and emphasizes Sagan's analysis and concerns. If Trump read, I'd perhaps suggest he devoured Sagan's book and took his concerns and cautions as an instructional manual.



So, in the simplest terms, is Trump merely a master con artist and charlatan who used tools readily available to bamboozle a large portion of the world's most powerful nation?

Did he succeed partly because his critics were not able to apply a Sagan-like anti-baloney kit?

Are his followers the bamboozled who can't acknowledge they've been taken?

Is the Republican Party a sorry collection of cynical hypocrites who choose to share in the spoils of the bamboozlement, rather than stop it?

And, the remedies, according to Sagan? No easy ones. We need a citizenry well enough equipped with anti-baloney detection kits – essentially the desire and ability to think skeptically, to demand real proof, evidence and facts. As a former teacher, I must cite the need for good education in science and the scientific method, and also training in the careful reasoning of applied philosophy.

So, we need some positive changes in the populace at large, changes that may be more possible as we struggle against COVID19. But, as always, we especially need that small but mighty group of citizens who are willing to use the anti-baloney toolkit, and to do the hard work necessary to keep our society on track, and the demons at bay.

Sagan's book is entitled "The Demon-Haunted World. Would he ever have speculated that, 24 years after his death, one of the worst demons we face, literally and symbolically, is represented by an orange conman with funny hair. It is to laugh, though there's really not much here to laugh about.







Supporters,

Today, Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced that his government is considering three possible scenarios for re-opening schools in the fall noting that they would make a final decision on how to proceed in August ahead of the start of the new school year.

What the announcement didn't provide was details.

Amid all the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, parents, students and educators are looking for more than just what the new school year might look like. **They want to know what our government is planning to do to keep our kids safe** and how they intend to ensure every student, regardless of ability or circumstance, has equitable access to resources and supports they need to learn and grow.

There are no easy answers to those questions and no one-size-fits-all approach to the problem. But before our government makes a final decision, they need to talk to our frontline educators whose experience and expertise will be critical in identifying and developing the kind of flexible and equitable solutions we need to support a safe return to the classroom.

Our educators have been waiting for government to accept their offer to consult and collaborate on a plan for re-opening schools and parents want educators to play a key role those discussions.

[Which is why OSSTF/FEESO has released their framework for re-opening schools.](#)

Titled [A Safe Return For All](#), the document provides in-depth recommendations on how we can keep our students and families safe while delivering an equitable and accessible curriculum with the supports and resources our students need to succeed.

We encourage you to read the recommendations and let government know that they need to listen to what educators are saying when it comes to deciding on a plan for re-opening our schools.

[Share the recommendations on social media today](#) and let government know you want a safe and equitable plan for re-opening our schools.

It's important to have enough coverage on your home insurance policies to help you get back on your feet in the event of a total loss. In order to provide this level of coverage security, insurance providers continually review and adjust their rates in response to increasing claims costs. As a result, many Canadians are finding their home insurance rates increasing when their policies come up for renewal.

There are several ways you can save. Be sure to ask your OTIP broker about your eligibility for the following discount options. Please note the list of discounts is subject to change—call your broker to see what discounts are available to you.

And now, helpful words  
from the insurers that take  
such good care of us!



### 1. Multi-policy discount

Bundling your home and auto policies with the same provider could result in significant savings. With OTIP you can save up to 50 per cent on your home insurance premiums when you bundle a new home insurance policy with your auto insurance policy for the first year. As a bonus, having the same provider for multiple policies makes it easier to know who to contact in the event of a claim.

### 2. Claims-free discount

While your insurance coverage is there to protect you in the event of a loss, a history of claims can increase your premiums. Before making a claim, consider your deductible amount and whether it makes financial sense for you to file a claim and risk your rates increasing. Typically, you will qualify for a claims-free discount if you have not filed a claim in the past few years.



### 3. Alarm discount

Increasing safety measures for your home will help keep you and your loved ones protected and can also reduce your insurance premiums. Safety improvements such as installing a centrally monitored home security system could qualify you for reduced premiums. Be sure to notify your insurance provider of any safety improvements.

### 4. Mortgage-free discount

Many insurance providers offer a mortgage-free discount once a homeowner's mortgage has been paid off. If this applies to you, contact your insurance broker to discuss your discount options.

### 5. Mature homeowners' discount

Some insurance providers will offer a mature homeowners' discount based on your age at the time of renewal. The age of maturity varies from one insurance provider to the next. OTIP members will be considered for a mature homeowners' discount once they are 50 years of age or older.

### 6. New home discount

Aging infrastructure often results in more frequent (and costly) repairs. That's why some insurers will offer a discount on insurance policies for newer homes. OTIP members may be eligible for a discount on their home insurance if their home is less than 30 years old.

### 7. Renewal discount

If you choose to keep your insurance policy with the same provider for a set number of years, you may be eligible for a renewal discount on your home insurance. OTIP members may be eligible for this discount if they have been with OTIP for three consecutive years or more years.

If you want to review your coverage, check if your insurer offers these common discounts or discuss your eligibility, contact your OTIP insurance broker at [1-833-615-9326](tel:1-833-615-9326) to see how we can help you get the best rate.