

AFTER SCHOOL

Volume 24, Issue 2—October 2022 • www.armch12osstf.ca



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MORNING REVERIE

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AFTER SCHOOL

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 2, OCT. 2022

After School is the official publication of Active Retired Members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Chapter 12 Toronto (ARM Chapter 12).

Opinions expressed in *After School* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM Chapter 12 or of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO).

Submissions are always welcome but will not be returned. All submissions are subject to editing for length and style while respecting the author's intentions.

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Cover photo: ARM photo contest winner,
Morning Reverie by Garry Herridge

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to Volume 24, Issue 2 of *After School*.

In this issue **Photo Contest winning entries by Garry Herridge and Elzbieta Muir can be found on pages 4 and 5.** ARM Chapter 12 will not be running a photo contest for the 2022–2023 publication season, but encourages the submission of striking and significant images from

members at any time. Send your photographs to afterschool.armch12@gmail.com.

On page 12 Ron Fletcher provides a fascinating glimpse in to our professional past with his compelling description of the teacher training **of his great, great grand-uncle, William Fletcher at Toronto's Normal School in 1848.**

And finally, **we give the last word to Jim Mile**, who explores the implications of the perspective of some American gun advocates in response to the current crisis of mass shootings **with his modest proposition for the National Rifle Association on page 23.**

Thank you for taking the time to read *After School*.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

All ARM Chapter 12 sponsored events are open to all members. Most of them are free, but do require registration. Go to armch12osstf.ca for more details on each event and for the registration links.

12 October: Fall Colours Ravine Tour

Join fellow ARM members for a 1-hour, guided walking tour.
11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Edwards Gardens, 755 Lawrence Ave E, North York, ON M3C 1P2

21 October: ARM Ch 12 Speaker Series: Peter Tabuns

You are invited to a meeting with

Peter Tabuns, MPP
10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Chef Mustafa, 516 Danforth Avenue,
Toronto Ontario

24 October: Municipal and School Board Trustee Elections

10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

26 October: Pub Excursion: Union Social Eatery

Join your friends and colleagues for lunch.
1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
Union Social Eatery,
4899 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario

28 November: Deadline for Submissions to the Winter '22 Issue of *After School*

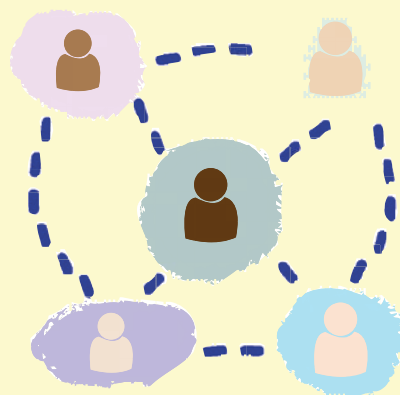
30 November: ARM OTIP Presentation

10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre
4 Credit Union Dr.
North York, ON M4A 2N8

5 December: ARM Chapter 12 Holiday Party

4:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre
4 Credit Union Dr.
North York, ON M4A 2N8

KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH ARM CHAPTER 12 NEWS AND EVENTS.



CHECK OUT NEWSLETTERS AND THE CALENDAR AT
WWW.ARMCH12OSSTF.CA

NOTIFY ARM AND OSSTF/FEESO OF ADDRESS AND EMAIL CHANGES

ARMCHAPTER12@GMAIL.COM

OSSTF/FEESO:
416-751-8300



PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS: *LIFE IN INTERESTING TIMES*

Winner in the “Places” category

Morning Reverie
by Garry Herridge

“This is the view from the dock of our family cottage on Lake Muskoka.”

Garry Herridge taught Visual Arts for the TDSB for 32 years. He was the head of Visual Arts at Eastern High School of Commerce for 20 years. He works primarily in watercolours and has a strong background in drawing.

Of the photograph, Garry writes, “In ‘Morning Reverie’ the sun is rising and the mist is almost cleared. The scene is bright. This photo evokes a

warm feeling of promise, of better days to come with those people we know and those we are about to meet.”

The judges found the photograph eye catching, especially with the use of the light shining towards the lens. The Muskoka chairs in front of a calm lake evoke fond memories of past days at the cottage, and expresses a cheery prospect for the future.

The photograph was taken at Clear Lake, Emsdale, Ontario with a Canon PowerShot SX620HS at 1/250 sec. f/9 4.5mm.



Winner in the “Nature” category

Finding Tranquility in Nature of a Changing World
by Elzbieta Muir

The photograph was taken with a Sony cellphone camera while skiing last March in the Okanagan Region of British Columbia.

“The majestic beauty of the Englemann spruces with the slim, conical shapes and pointy tops after a fresh snowfall is captivating,” said Elzbieta of her work.

The judges found the subtlety of tone and textures soothing and expressive, and the quality of the image rather remarkable considering the simplicity of the camera.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT—MANFRED NETZEL

As we look forward to another school and Federation year, I hope that this new issue of *After School* finds you relaxed and energized for the ongoing challenges facing our public education and health care systems. Of course, the June 4th election was a great disappointment with the increased majority of the Doug Ford-led PCs, at the expense of both major Opposition parties and the lowest voter-turn-out in a generation. A further indignity was the Premier's appointing of 73 MPPs to Cabinet and as Parliamentary Assistants at increased salaries over base MPP salaries of \$116,500...and arguably a B-Team of expertise and competence including Ford's nephew Michael Ford and former CFL star Neil Lumsden. I won't even get into a discussion in this piece about the totally inept skills of both the new Health Minister Silvia Jones or her new Long-Term Care Minister colleague Paul Calandra. A quick perusal of the hypersonically passed BILL 7 in the Legislature in late August related to the aggressive re-location of hospital-based seniors into LTC facilities up to 70 km from Toronto and with punitive daily care billings for those who refuse a re-location willingly is chilling. Really, such a policy goal never mentioned in the Ontario election and with only about 20 per cent of an electoral mandate??

At the time of this writing, the new school year has entered its third week and there have been NO interruptions due to the education unions, rather because of school bus driver shortages and staffing shortfalls resulting from less online learning subscribers and higher levels of retirements in June. According to the TDSB, 607 teachers (3.7 per cent of the compliment) retired

which was the highest total in 4 years. A similar trend was seen in other GTA Boards with over 2,000 educators leaving the profession at an average age of 59. Combine this situation with the ongoing chronic underfunding of public education by the Fordites, the situation continues to look bleak. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), taking inflation and enrollment into account, Ontario public school boards received \$1.6 billion less for the 2020–21 school year than they did in 2017–18...an equivalent of \$800 less per student. For an average-size high school this meant a budgetary reduction of \$600,000. Clearly, a world-class public education system must continue to improve and grow through rigorous debate and serious policy decisions, not political spin and photo ops by Minister Lecce and his boss.

The attacks on our public health care system also continue with Bill 124 imposing salary increases of 1 per cent for nurses, nursing aids and PSWs working with seniors and those with acute health issues. The results are obvious such as massive numbers of retirements, part-time assignments using temp agencies at higher costs and inadequate recruiting of non-Ontario trained doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals. The ultimate goal of politicians like the current Premier and his followers is to privatize public health care (and other public services) despite clear research evidence that costs will increase and levels of service will decrease. Led by Natalie Mehra, expert advocacy groups such as the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) continue to



inform, organize and activate fellow citizens, the labour movement and NGOs to fight the “innovation” agenda of the current Ontario Government. Although our health care system is already 40 per cent private, according to our activist friend and journalist, Linda McQuaig, the Premier's plans to allow private medical companies (paid for by OHIP) isn't the way to solve waiting times and backlogs in hospitals and other public facilities. “This is just silly corporate-speak.” Thus, we in ARM Chapter 12 continue to maintain our affiliation fee with the OHC and promote their activities whenever possible through email blasts, webpage postings and attendance at both online and in-person events.

Finally, you are likely aware that the third election in the past calendar year is fast approaching, namely the municipal election on October 24. Although, this level of political engagement usually has the lowest voter turn-out (30-35 per cent), it is certainly not wise to diminish yet alone ignore. Although the mayoralty campaign is often the catalyst for heightened interest in Toronto and elsewhere, campaigns for local City Council and school boards can make big differences in ‘bread and butter’ issues ranging from taxes, zoning and quality of public services. Despite

the re-election of John Tory as Toronto Mayor seeming to be a foregone conclusion, the need to counter the increasing powers of our Mayor (and Ottawa's) as "strong" mayors henceforth demands a strong and progressive set of City Councillors. Similarly, the set of TDSB Trustees elected next month can soften the damage being inflicted

by the underfunding and illogical policy directions of those at Queen's Park. Your leadership team in Chapter 12 will work closely with our colleagues at District 12 and Labour Council to inform you of the endorsed candidates worthy of your consideration on October 24. Please check our webpage (armch12osstf.ca) during the pre-election

period to keep yourself informed. There will also be updates on the OSSTF Toronto webpage and on the Toronto and York Region Labour Council website (labourcouncil.ca).

Best regards,

Manfred

FINANCIAL REPORT JULY 1, 2021 TO JUNE 30, 2022

—MICHELLE BARRACLOUGH, TREASURER, ARM CHAPTER 12, TORONTO

Our major funding comes to us from the Provincial OSSTF, based on \$22.50 per member rebate. The total amount rebated in 2017/2018 it was \$12,260, in 2018/2019 was \$12,180 and \$11,740 in 2019/2020, and \$12,847 in 2020/2021 and \$12,204 in 2021/2022. There has been a slight increase in the per capita rebate of \$2.50/person. This will be offset by a decrease in membership numbers. However, as this amount is transferred through District 12, we depend on the transfer process to access this money. On the Executive, we are working to increase our numbers, by doing presentations for both teachers and administrators, of course due to the pandemic these activities have had to be curtailed. If any of you have friends who belong to another teacher's group, please encourage them to consider our program. We have the ARM booklets that would explain the advantages of our program.

That being said, I would like to thank our sponsors, OTIP and Educators Financial for their generous support. Last year OTIP made a donation of \$7500. Educators Financial gave us a generous donation of \$1000

However, because of the construction at Mobile we are no longer able to

access their facilities, at this time. Additionally, due to COVID-19, all of our meetings up until now have been on Zoom. Depending on when we go back to in person meetings and luncheons, this will drive up our costs, as other facilities will need to be rented.

The combination of an online magazine and one print edition and the Zoom events have allowed us to have a surplus in our bank account. We have recently updated our website, and hired an editor, Ronda Allan, to facilitate communication with the membership. Additionally, we now have a YouTube account, so you will be able to access presentations at your leisure. These items have costs associated with them and are reflected in the report. We hope that you have taken advantage of the website, the online version of the magazine and our brand new YouTube account. Our Web master is Christos Aslanidis, and I would like to thank Christos for totally revamping the website and setting up the YouTube channel. I would also like to mention, that both Chris and Ronda have taken on a much larger responsibility with the sad passing of our friend, Ed Preston.

The Events are run as close to reve-

nue neutral as possible. And, in some cases, we have subsidies to keep the social events as affordable as possible. I would like to urge you and your friends to read the Calendar of Events in *After School* or to check out our website, for upcoming events www.armchapter12.org. Additionally, if one of you would be interested in starting a social group (eg. movie club, book club, etc) please get in touch with our president to talk about advertising in the newsletter and website.

We are hoping that perhaps we will be getting back to in person events in 2022/2023, so stay tuned to find out what is upcoming, hopefully, in the near future. All updates will be on the website and in the seasonal magazine.

The Executive has supported a number of charities over the years, and in that vein the following charities were supported: \$1500 Red door shelter, Massey Centre, and Rosalie Hall. A donation was also made to the Ontario Health Coalition of \$750 and to UN-HCVR of \$150. In the past two and a half years the challenges facing most charities increased with the COVID-19 Pandemic and now with the Ukrainian invasion. On behalf of the membership we are happy to support community

shelters and those advocating for the rights of seniors, particularly in the health care field.

As always, the Chapter is at the disposal of Jim Spray (Provincial OSSTF/FEESO assistant General Sec-

retary and Chief Financial Officer) for oversight in financial matters.

OSSTF ARM Final Financial Statement for July 2021—June 30, 2022

Income Statement	ARM Chapter 12		July 2021–June 2022	
Balance from 2021			\$15,394.56	
	Balance	Expenses	Revenue	
OSSTF Rebate Fees			\$12,204.16	
Educators financial Contributions				Pending \$1000
OTIP contribution			\$7,500.00	
Executive Lunches		\$2,816.71		
Luncheon Meeting Expenses				
Luncheon Meeting Revenue				
Newsletter Expenses		\$6,749.11		
Newsletter Editor		\$2,700.00		
Website expenses		\$226.00		
Golf and Curling Activities Expenses				
Golf and Curling Activities Revenue				
Theatre and Excursion Expenses				
Theatre and Excursion Revenues				
Gifts, Cards, Membership & Charities		\$7,476.00		
Office & Miscellaneous expenses		\$118.15		
Election expenses		\$336.73		
Totals	\$0.00	\$20,422.70	\$35,098.72	
Net Income over the period		\$14,676.02		



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STATE OF THE UNION—MICHELLE TEIXEIRA, PRESIDENT, OSSTF TORONTO

While it is true that this school year began with more certainty than the previous two, there are still some genuine challenges ahead. Living and working in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be our reality. Ignoring the occupational health and safety needs of its employees, the TDSB has unilaterally reduced the number of Health and Safety Inspectors working for each of its unions. A recently re-elected Ford majority government threatens to impose their agenda of privatizing public education and other public services. We are entering a new round of bargaining with a government that is intent on securing its ultimate goal of defunding public education on the backs of education workers. Municipal school board trustee elections are on the horizon. The outcome will be critical to our fightback against the Ford Government and our ability to secure a fair Collective Agreement.

Health and safety in schools and worksites continues to be top of mind for many of you. We continue to advocate, as we always have, for safe working conditions for our Members. Last year, while many of our members engaged in legal work refusals, the TTBU together with other affiliates pressed the employer at our Joint Health and Safety Committee, and by involving the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, to secure N95 masks for employees, to continue testing and reporting of COVID-19 cases in schools, to provide portable air filtration in all instructional spaces, and to increase and report on fresh air changes in mechanical ventilation systems.

Yet, with all of this in the back-

ground, in June, the TDSB decided to unilaterally reduce the number of Health and Safety Inspectors in each Bargaining Unit. For the TTBU, this means a reduction from four to two Health and Safety Inspectors. Across the TDSB, the reduction is from 20 Inspectors to 13. At a time when health and safety should be of utmost concern for the TDSB, their response is to reduce the number of Inspectors available to address worker concerns, available to attend work refusals, or available to conduct inspections of worksites, without any consultation or rationale. This decision makes it clear that the Board's commitment to occupational health and safety, and even to public health itself is questionable.

Also top of mind for many and a major priority for the Executive this year is bargaining. At the central level, bargaining has begun - dates have been set and talks are ongoing. Locally, we are just beginning the process. We have already seen how Education Minister Stephen Lecce is trying to pit

education unions against each other, spin mendacious narratives, and try to trap us into bargaining against ourselves. But we are smarter than this. We will be the ones who work to maintain stability in our schools while also working to achieve a fair agreement.

Critical to the successful outcome of bargaining, centrally but especially locally, are the upcoming Municipal Trustee elections on October 24, 2022. We are in the unique position of having the ability to elect the trustees to make the final decisions around our contract. We cannot take that for granted. Together with the Campaign for Public Education, we are endorsing several progressive, education-friendly candidates for trustee. Those endorsements can be found [here](#).

And so—a new school year begins, busy as ever, and filled with potential challenges. I am confident, however, that we, as a District, can rise to meet these challenges and I am optimistic about the days ahead.



Michelle Teixeira, OSSTF Toronto President

MUNICIPAL AND TRUSTEE ELECTION ENDORSED CANDIDATES

ELECTION DAY IS OCTOBER 24.

For those Members who are interested in supporting candidates that have been identified as progressive, in particular trustee candidates who have been vetted by OSSTF Toronto and the Campaign for Public Education, please find below the list of endorsed candidates as published by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council.

NB: Municipal ward boundaries may not necessarily match School Board ward boundaries.

2022 TYRLC ENDORSED MUNICIPAL CANDIDATES LIST

Ward	Ward Name	Candidate Endorsed	Candidate Website
1	Etobicoke North	Charles Ozzoude	https://www.charlesozzoude.ca/
3	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Amber Morley	https://ambermorley.com/
4	Parkdale-High Park	Councillor Gord Perks	https://www.votegordperks.ca/
5	York South-Weston	Chiara Padovani	https://www.chiarapadovani.ca/
7	Humber River-Black Creek	Councillor Anthony Perruzza	https://www.voteanthonyperuzzza.com/
9	Davenport	Alejandra Bravo	https://www.bravodavenport.ca/
10	Spadina-Fort York	Ausma Malik	https://www.ausma.ca/
11	University-Rosedale	Norm Di Pasquale	https://www.votenorm.ca/
13	Toronto Centre	Chris Moise	https://www.electchrismoise.ca/
14	Toronto-Danforth	Councillor Paula Fletcher	https://www.councillorpaulafletcher.ca/
15	Don Valley West	David Ricci	https://www.davidricci.ca
16	Don Valley East	Stephen Ksiazek	https://www.votestephen.ca/
17	Don Valley North	Councillor Shelley Carroll	https://shelleycarroll.ca/meet-shelley
23	Scarborough North	Jamaal Myers	https://www.jamaal4scarbto.com/

2022 TYRLC ENDORSED TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATES LIST

Ward	Ward Name	Candidate Endorsed	Candidate Website	Incumbent
4	Humber River-Black Creek	Matias De Dovitiis	www.matiasdedovitiis.ca	
5	York Centre	Angela Brandt	www.facebook.com/angelabrandttrustee	
6	York South-Weston	Lanny Ferreira	www.lannyferreira.ca	
7	Parkdale-High Park	Debbie King	www.debbieking.ca	
9	Davenport and Spadina-Fort York	Alexis Dawson	www.alexisdawson.ca	
10	University-Rosedale and Toronto Centre	Deborah Williams	www.votewilliamsto.ca	
13	Don Valley North	James Li	votejamesli.com	Yes
15	Toronto-Danforth	Sara Ehrhardt	www.SaraForTrustee.ca	
17	Scarborough Centre	Neethan Shan	www.neethanshan.ca	
18	Scarborough Southwest	Guled Arale	www.guledarale.com	
19	Scarborough-Guildwood	Zakir Patel	www.facebook.com/votezakirpatel	Yes
20	Scarborough-Agincourt	Manna Wong	www.mannawong.com	Yes
21	Scarborough North	Yalini Rajakulasingam	www.yalinifortrustee.ca	Yes
2022 TYRLC Endorsed TCDSB Trustee Candidates List				
5	North York	Gianfranco Cristiano	https://gianfrancocristiano.com/	
6	York	Frank D'Amico	https://www.tcdsb.org/page/ward-6-york	Yes
9	Toronto	Cameron Miranda-Radbord	https://www.cameronfortrustee.ca/	
10	Toronto	Daniel Di Giorgio	https://www.tcdsb.org/page/ward-10-toro	Yes

WILLIAM FLETCHER AT TORONTO TEACHERS' COLLEGE, 1848

—RON FLETCHER

My great, great, great grand uncle, William Fletcher, trained as a teacher in 1848 and wrote letters to his brother describing his experiences. These letters are now in the Ontario Archives. They make for fascinating reading.

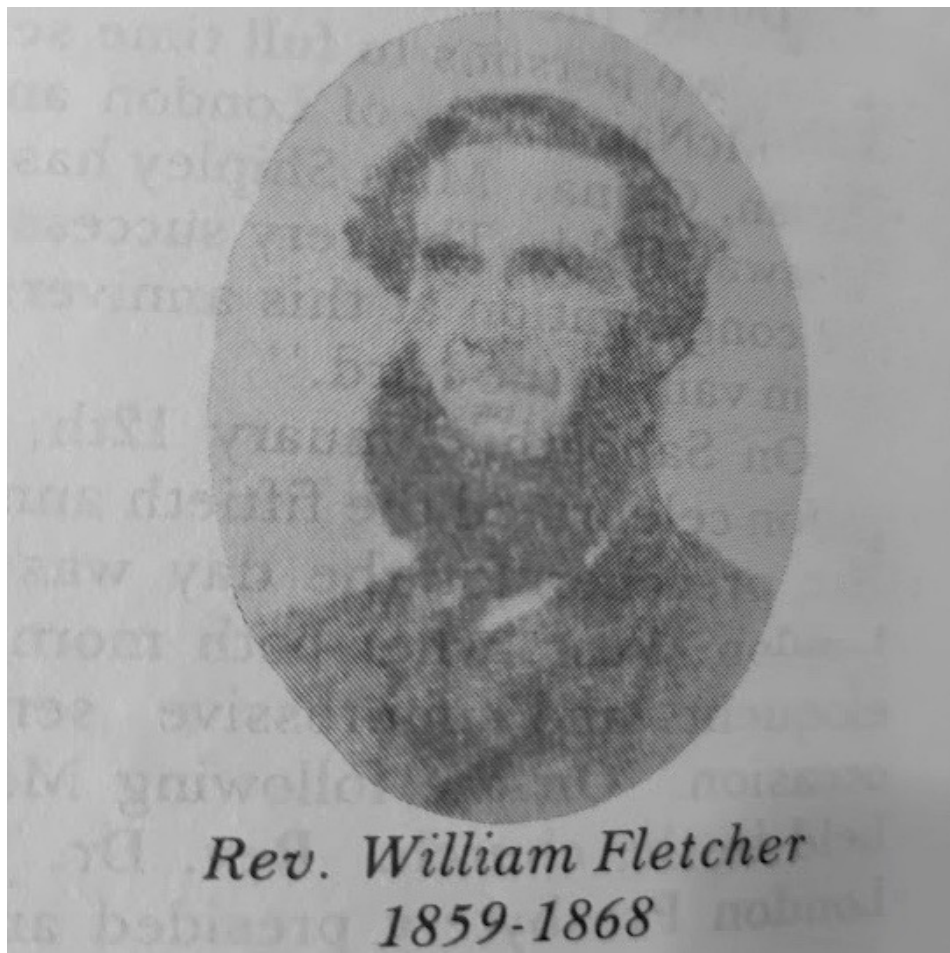
First of all, back then it was called Normal School, not Teachers' College. And it was a new institution, freshly minted to provide some normalcy to the hodge-podge that was education way back then.

And people actually got paid to be trained. Not much, mind you, but something. William writes in 1848, "I got to Toronto in time for the commencement of the Normal School. It opened on the 15th of last month. I have agreed to attend five months and I receive 5/ per week; my board costs 7/6 a week and washing 2/ per dozen."

The " / " symbol indicates shillings and pence, so perhaps "subsidized" would be more accurate than "paid". To make up the shortfall, William "went out to Vaughn 24 miles and sold (his) grey pony at considerable loss; but you must know it requires money to live a gentleman."

And who were these trainees? "There are over 100 of us at School, the ages varying from 16 to 45. The system is new and I think such as will not fail to improve the common schools in Canada. We have the use of books free. We have two teachers from the Old Country, talented and experienced."

"Our hours are long. From nine to one we are taught by the Head Master, Mr. Robertson, Reading, Spelling, English, Grammar and Geography. From 2 to 5, Arithmetic, Algebra, Book



Keeping and mathematics by Mr. Hind. From half past six to half past eight, lectures on Chemistry, Electricity and Animal Physiology."

It doesn't sound like they spent much time playing bridge or lolling around.

"There has been a good deal of sickness in our class, but I have had good health. We are kept close to the house and it is generally 12 o'clock before we get to bed. We know little of what is doing in Toronto."

Unfortunately, our man has financial difficulties. Previous to Toronto he had taught in Goderich but his pay had not come through. "The Trustees were unable to pay in full, as the Sup't had absconded."

To remedy this, he suggests his brother pawn his deed to his bush farm, but agrees to teach in Chinguacousy Township for three months at 60 pounds per annum." At that time his nearest post office was the Village of Brampton, pop. 500 (today it is 650 000).

By late 1852 William is taking lectures with Dr. Taylor at "The Hall". This can be very confusing unless one realizes he is talking of "The Temperance Hall" which once stood at 21 Temperance Street (running off Yonge Street south of Queen Street).

Normal School for its first year was located in the Old Government House at King and Simcoe. The second year, 1848, they renovated the stables and

had a Model School with real children to practise on.

But in 1849 everybody had to move to the aforementioned Hall. Why? The Government was moving to Toronto and needed their building back.

Remember this is before there is a country called Canada. Why was the Government of the Province of Canada moving back here?

The Parliament Buildings in Montreal were burned by rioting mobs on April 25. If you think Canadian history is boring you may want to Google, "The Rebellion Loses Bill". When firemen tried to put out the fire, arsonists ripped holes in the firehoses. The Governor General Lord Elgin's carriage was pelted with stones and rotten eggs, and armed thugs shot thru the

Prime Minister Lafontaine's window. Enough drama? Makes truckers honking horns seem pretty tame.

Our teachers-to-be did end up with a new building though. The School Act of 1846 had provided \$6000 (that's thousand not million) for such, and a whopping \$6000 annually for maintenance. New Normal School was built at Church and Gould, and a fine building it was. Today, all that is left of that structure is the old doorway which forms the entrance to Ryerson's Athletic Facility and underground parking.

But what of William? He writes in 1855, "Yesterday's mail tells us that the bombardment of Sebastopol (the Crimea, plus ce change) had been actively carried on for six days....and

many thousand bodies have been laid to mingle with their kindred dust, and the immortal spirits hurried before their Creator and Judge".

From this newfound flowery language we may surmise that he has benefited from his academic pursuits. If we concluded from his reference to things spiritual that he was going to pursue a career outside of teaching, we would be correct. William left Toronto and teaching to become a missionary in the Northwest Territories. He needed, and got, a new pony to cover the miles between his several churches.

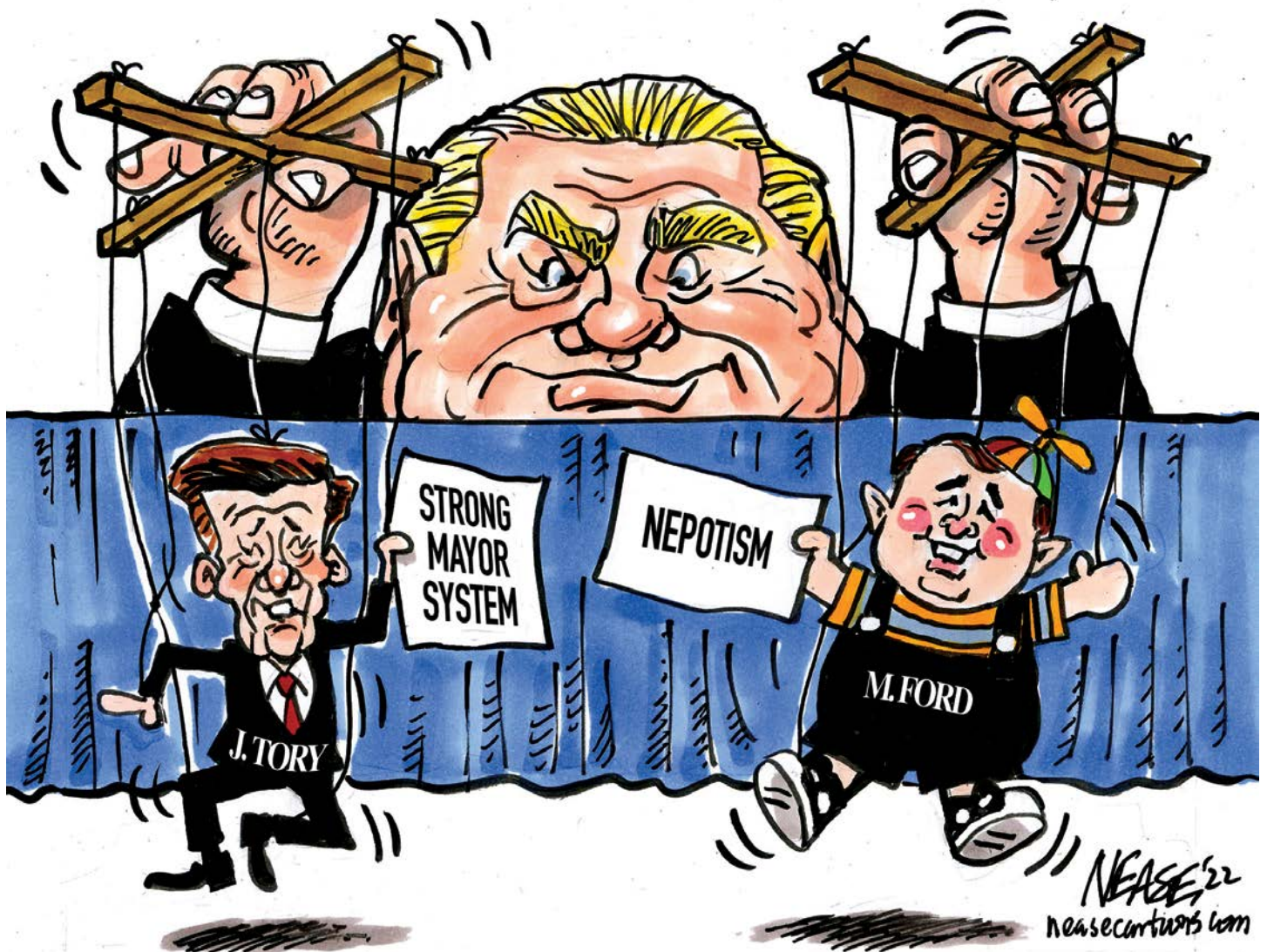
Ron Fletcher taught History and Geography in the Elementary panel in Scarborough.



FAMILY VALUES AND THE THEATRE OF FORD'S LEADERSHIP

—CHRISTOS ASLANIDIS

It may have been touching for some to see Doug Ford welcome his nephew, Michael, into the PC caucus this spring. After all, who doesn't value family and family relationships? But, it was quite shocking to many more of us to see the 28 year-old novice appointed as Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. We all want to encourage fresh faces and new blood in politics, but surely a cabinet minister has got to be someone with a little more seasoning and experience than two terms on City Council; someone who does not need be shown where the Queen's Park bathrooms are, and someone who can find Mowat Block without the aid of Google Maps.



This blatant nepotism is indicative of Ford's sense of power and impunity.

The fact of the matter is, that with both the Liberals and the NDP weakened politically, there is no real power to hold Ford and his government to account. Ford has four years to further to pound the public service landscape in Ontario into the for-profit land of his dreams.

Bill 7, the *More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022* is one of the more showy moves Ford and co. have made to look like they are taking hard action to address the multifaceted public health care crisis in Ontario. Forcing vulnerable people to go to long term care facilities that no one who has a choice wants to go to may not be quite the same as sending desperate migrants to the states and homes of your political opponents, but it's close. It's a simple, coarse action to address a complex and difficult problem. But, it looks charmingly bold to his supporters; a bit of political theatre that makes him look like a man of action.

They use to say of teaching that we got the classes we deserved. The notion was that good teachers ended up with well-behaved classes by virtue of their robust engagement with their students, and weaker teachers had poorly behaved classes. Even though we know that is not really the case, there was an element of truth to it. Similarly, with government, there is a critical relationship between the engagement of the voters, the type of government elected and the ruling party's sense of accountability.

Doug Ford's conservatives were elected by only 17 per cent of the electorate. 17 per cent!

One of the more emergent strategies in the ever-more fractious and negative maelstrom of recent election campaigns is making your oppo-

nent's supporters stay home on election day by turning them off to the whole election process. If voters become disgusted by the escalating grotesqueries of political lies, accusations, counter accusations and other shenanigans, regardless of which party is at fault, and they become disengaged as a result, it allows for a remarkably small group of hard-core supporters who will turn out to voter no matter what, to determine the course of an election.

This is intolerable, and antithetical to a healthy democracy. The solution is a broadly engaged voting public.

October 24 is the date of the Municipal and Trustee elections. This is pretty well the lowest tier of elected public service, and it doesn't spur a big turnout of voters. But, Mayors, City Councils and Boards of Trustees still impact what happens to us locally, arguably affecting individual households and citizens more directly than other levels of government.

Please take a moment to find out a bit about the municipal and trustee candidates in your area. If any of them come to your door, don't politely take their literature only to discard it without reading. Ask them questions. Engage them. Tell them what's important to you. Be an active citizen.

If you are interested in the recommendations of OSSTF/FEESO and other allied organizations, check out the endorsements by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council listed on page 11 of this issue.

Municipal elections may not seem like a big deal, but they are a good place to start changing the profile of our political leadership. Let's not allow to become true by our disengagement the old line that we get the governments we deserve.

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Please send your letters to the editor to: afterschool.armch12@gmail.com

SOLUTIONS-BASED POLITICS

—CAM KILGOUR

The 2022 provincial election has exposed a few harsh realities. The Conservative majority at Queens Park is, in fact, a small majority in terms of the popular vote. As a percentage of eligible voters, the Tories received approximately 17% of the eligible votes. No wonder that concerned citizens call for electoral reform. Proponents of changing our electoral process have advocated for preferential ballots, compulsory voting (as in Australia), and easily accessible, secure online voting. The reforms may not happen in the near term given the interests of the three dominant parties.

Our teaching careers included the NDP's five-year term in the 1990s. Those years were marked by the notorious Rae days and the invocation of a social contract whereby teachers and nurses agreed, in principle, to accept a wage freeze *pro bono publico* to balance the budget. That term gave way to the Common Sense Revolution with its devastating consequences for Ontario in terms of sacred trusts under provincial jurisdiction (health care, education, community services). A "crisis in education" was engineered by Minister Snobelen. Our sisters and brothers took strike action.

Fast forward to this year. After a global pandemic necessitated a thoughtful emergency response to protect Ontarians from the virus's long-term impact, students, teachers, and all education workers returned to the classroom under stressful conditions made worse by unclear, inconsistent policies from the Ministry of Education. While COVID-19 would have been a challenge for any administration, the Ford administration mismanaged the messaging and fostered an environment in which many teachers were burnt out and many students disengaged and suffering from mental health issues.

Add in the existential crisis of climate change, the neglect of our seniors and the war in Ukraine. This is the backdrop to the June

2nd vote. One would think that the depth of these issues might give voters a chance to voice their dissent by casting a ballot for an alternative to the traditional political parties.

In my riding of University-Rosedale, a downtown constituency stretching from Ossington to Rosedale, Dianne Saxe, Ontario's last environmental commissioner (her office was eliminated by the Tories in 2019) ran a principled campaign against the incumbent, Jessica Bell (NDP). Though Dr. Saxe spoke to OSSTF D12 teachers twice during the past two school years, she was not endorsed by teacher unions. Bell retained her seat while losing 10,000 votes from her 2018 total.

The legislature will again be a nominal "majority". What can we do to promote policies that we support? It starts with doing our homework. What does each party stand for and what are their key talking points?

If one watched the one leader's debate on TVO's The Agenda, one could draw the inference that Green Party leader Mike Shreiner presented his platform in a cogent, civil way. By the assessment of the pundits, Shreiner won the debate. He also returned to Queens Park, increasing his vote share in Guelph. He also was the only MPP who voted against the Ford government's scrapping of the vehicle registration fee, a cynical political gesture.

The Green Party is grassroots and, as such, it has to work hard to gain the trust of citizens. Since my retirement, I have become active in learning the platform (gpo.ca) and supporting our local candidate).

The core values of the Greens are participatory democracy, social justice, diversity, ecological wisdom, non-violence, and sustainability. Some view the Greens as merely an environmentally focused party; in fact, the policies on mental health, housing, elder care, small business, and reconciliation are all worthy of attention.

ARM CHAPTER 12 NEEDS YOU

ARM Chapter 12 is only as good as the participation of its members.

There are lots of ways, big and small, to get active in ARM Chapter 12:

- **Joint the *After School* Editorial Board:** The Editorial Board meets online four times a year and helps determine the content of the magazine.
- **Submit to *After School*:** We are always looking for, opinions, reviews, poetry, art, photography and even short fiction. Send your work to afterschool.armch12@gmail.com. Deadlines for submission and the submission guidelines are on the ARM Chapter 12 website.
- **Organize an event for members:** Are you interested in golfing, curling, attending museums and/or concerts, playing euchre, bridge, poker etc. Do you have a bit of spare time and some experience in organizing an event? We have the resources to promote and support member events, and, depending on if there are costs involved, we may even be able to arrange subsidization or sponsorship. For more details on how to submit a proposal, just go to our website, www.armch12osstf.ca and look under Events.
- **Join the ARM Chapter 12 Executive:** Executive members are elected at the Annual General Meeting. However, there is no limit to the number of Executive Members At Large position, so, if you want to take a bit more of a leadership role in ARM Chapter 12, this is how you do it. Check out our Constitution on the website.



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A TRIP TO NORWAY—CHARLES HAWKES

We recently travelled to Norway spending time in the capital city of Oslo, then cruising on a small ship through a number of the fjords on the west coast. We braved the COVID-19 threat, relying on our full complement of vaccines, staying masked as much as possible, submitting to testing before boarding the ship, and enduring the crowds, confusion, and flight delays, which plagued travel everywhere this summer. We were fortunate that we made all our connections, lost no luggage, and most importantly, did not catch COVID-19.

Norway's population is just over five million, about the size of Toronto's GTA. The capital city, Oslo, has

700,000 people. With no preconceived ideas about the city, Oslo was a revelation for us. Its modernist and creative architecture is highlighted by the famous Opera House which anchors the city that faces the sea. The structure with its planes and angles suggest a Nordic iceberg, and its roofs also serve as walking areas for people. It teemed with people enjoying the sea air and sunshine. Oslo's buildings are low rise, and its buildings seem to be individually designed with full scope given to architects' creative sense. The city limits car traffic. We never heard a horn. Electric street cars run smoothly over streets which accommodate bicycles

and pedestrians.

Oslo is situated on a latitude equal to Yellowknife, but a branch of the Gulf Stream moderates the temperature. Its northern location means long summer days of light with sunset after 11 PM. The people take full advantage of these light filled days by taking to the outdoors at every opportunity. Cold weather, rain showers or cloudy days hardly stop them. Restaurants all have large patios, with heaters for colder weather.

If there is one defining characteristic of Norwegians it would be that they are an outdoor people. This national quality is instilled at an early age. Preschool-



ers take all their kindergarten classes outside in winter - no exceptions allowed we were told! Hiking and skiing by all ages is the most popular activity, and the city and country are laced with trails. The Norwegian doctrine of ‘free land’ allows people to walk and hike anywhere without restriction, as long as common courtesy is observed near homes and farms. We were told that this even includes the King’s palace grounds and it is common to see and wave to him while he is having coffee in the morning. The royal family is held with great affection by the people.

What are the people like? Most of course, speak English, but they are not an outgoing people in the North American sense. They are reserved, but cordial. They have a good-natured rivalry with Sweden, and a guide told us several jokes making fun of Swedes who in turn call Norwegians ‘mountain monkeys.’ Folklore gives prominence to nighttime trolls, creatures haunting the night who must return to their lairs

before sunset or risk being turned into the hard rock which covers Norway.

I asked a taxi driver (always a good source of information as every journalist will attest) originally from Somalia, about the tolerance level of Norwegians as more refugees enter the country. He felt that at first, he faced some discrimination, mostly, he felt, from media distortions, but people warmed up to him and became friendly in time.

We sailed to see six of the fjords that are rightly considered to be among the most spectacular geological formations anywhere. Formed by glaciation, they are long narrow, and as deep as the high mountains that surround them. They receive a constant flow of fresh mountain water, cascading from high waterfalls which mix with the sea water. Depending upon the particular water mix the colour of fjords can be a light blue, or an aquamarine blue. Small farms, orchards, and roads line some of the sides of them. In some cases, the fjords are bridged over, or

even tunnelled under. We were impressed with the engineering ability of the country.

The Norwegian economy, once rather poor in its dependence on fishing, mining and forest products is now much wealthier since oil was discovered in 1969. A full range of social services provided equally to all citizens from infancy to elder care. But as a deeply socially democratic people, they are ambivalent about oil wealth, and the widening of income differences it has caused.

A weak form of mandatory military service for one year is required of both sexes. A founding member of NATO since 1949, Norwegians have lived through the old Cold War, and seem to regard the possibility of new tension with Russia with equanimity.

Our lasting impression of Norway was that of a people quietly proud of their beautiful country, and determined to preserve its social democratic character.



Photos: Opposite page Oslo house; this page left Lake Loen; above Fjord.
Provided by Charles Hawkes

UNION SOCIAL EATERY—PUB REVIEW BY ALLAN HUX

UNION SOCIAL EATERY

4899 Yonge St., Toronto, M2N 5N4,
416.221.6789

WWW.UNIONSOCIAL.CA

In July of 2022 I sold my house on St. Germain Ave. and moved north to the Yonge & Sheppard area, but still on the Yonge subway line. On moving day my son, Ryan and his partner, Rachel, took me to a local restaurant/pub just across the street from my new condo. The name of the *Union Social Eatery* appealed to my federation and union bias, and the menu and environment did not disappoint!

As you know, I believe there are at least eight key criteria that must be considered when reviewing a pub. These include the location, atmosphere, design/layout/décor, brews, fare, service, price, and accessibility. I have already touched on the location, and I will address the rest in random order.

The *Union Social Eatery* is located on Yonge St. 2 short blocks north of Sheppard Ave. and the Yonge and Sheppard subway station. The ground floor windows open to the sidewalk and there are tables for 4 down several steps and 8 people available as well as a number of comfortable booths on the north side of the room. There is a U-shaped bar in the centre and tables for 4 on the south side of the main room that are up several steps. The pub also has a very large patio upstairs with bar, a covered seating area and an open area to enjoy the sky. We sat at a table upstairs and enjoyed the open air and the excellent service. Rachel ordered a chicken cobb salad [\$20.85], Ryan had the Steam Whistle fish and chips [\$20.95] and I had the blackened salmon [\$28.95]. The meals were excellent, and we took 2 meals to go for our friends who were starting the unloading of boxes. Unfortunately, the

pub does not have an elevator and so the seating is not readily available for people using walkers or wheel chairs.

The menu offers a nice range of starters, salads, 2 handed burgers, and main meals plus desserts. There is an excellent range of drinks: 9 beers in bottles, 9 in cans and 10 draft beers on tap including my favourite, Mill St. Organic [20 oz. pint \$7.95 and 60 oz. pitcher \$22.95]. They also have 6 white wines [2 domestic and 4 foreign], 11 red wines [2 domestic and 9 foreign] and 3 rose/sparkling [1 domestic and 2 foreign]. Oh yes, they also serve a range of 11 cocktails. Rachel had a glass of white wine [\$7.95] and I had a half pint of Mill St. Organic [\$4.50].

I so enjoyed my first visit, that when I learned that cousin Dave had a meeting at the North York Civic Centre, I suggested that we meet for dinner at the pub, and he jumped at the opportunity as a colleague had his retirement party at the *Union Social Eatery*. Dave ordered the fish and chips, and I ordered the Steak Frites [\$28.95]. We had to wait in our booth for awhile, but the steak was amazing and clearly the chef had taken great care in grilling my order to medium-well done. I was so impressed that when my sister-in-law, Kim, and cousin, Pat, came to pick up some items from the house I took them to *Union Social Eatery* for lunch. We had the large chicken cobb, chicken candy house, and tuna spinach salads with fries, Pepsi and a pint of Mill St. Organic for \$91.40 including the tax. Clearly, I am going to return regularly to *Union Social Eatery*, and I would like to invite ARM 12 Members to join me on October 26 at 1 p.m. I will reserve seven seats for the



first people who email me

And by the way, Bonnie, one of the managers of *Union Social Eatery*, has agreed to reserve the back room that

seats 40 people for an ARM 12 presentation if we have a guest speaker who would enjoy presenting in a pub sometime.

Editor's Note: Please check the "What's Happening" section of the [ARM Ch.12 website](#) for details on the pub event.



FEATURED ARTIST



Lake Muskoka Looking East
by Garry Herridge.
Watercolour, 19" x 33"

"This is the view from the dock of our family cottage on Lake Muskoka."

Garry Herridge taught Visual Arts for the TDSB for 32 years. He was the head of Visual Arts at Eastern High School of Commerce for 20 years. He works primarily in watercolours and has a strong background in drawing.

A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR THE NRA, SMITH & WESSON, COLT ET AL.—JIM MILE

Picture this scene in an American suburban elementary school soon after morning exercises. A young male 18 years old, dressed in army fatigues, carrying an AK-47 bursts into a grade four classroom. He screams incoherently, releases the safety lock on his gun and starts to point it at the class. Before he can fire, he is met with a hail of bullets five of which hit him in the chest and head killing him instantly. At the teacher's direction, students quietly place their guns on their desks, sit down and await the possibility of a second gunman.

This is the answer to the shocking murders that have taken place at so many US schools. My American friend, an avid gun collector, proposed this plan to arm students. Young people, he said, should be given the chance to defend themselves rather than to be helplessly massacred. He quoted the NRA's slogan that "the best way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun".

To my objection that such a policy would be dangerous, that kids might well shoot each other or their teachers, he replied that I should have more faith in the American school system. School sports activities like football and basketball not to mention ROTC and games like cowboys and Indians train students in discipline, morale and team spirit. Good education would ensure minimal collateral damage.

I probably looked unpersuaded. Is it not true, he calmed my hesitation, that one or two unfortunate mishaps are more acceptable than dozens mowed down? And here is

where the NRA and gun manufacturers come in. They are the experts and would certainly see it as their civic duty to help. They would be invited into schools to give lessons in gun safety, maintenance, and accurate targetting. At school firing contests, there could be prizes like body armour, night vision goggles and ammo. Naturally, each student would be expected to have a weapon. Parents or the school boards would purchase them. Manufacturers would certainly be willing to increase production and sell at cheaper bulk prices.

At what age should a child have a gun in school? Clearly, if he/she can walk and throw a ball, they are ready for a handgun. In response to this new policy, manufacturers could be counted on to develop new light weight pistols for all grades and ages. Moms and Dads should also have handguns around the home, in the kitchen, in the bedroom and play realistic fun burglar attack games to set a proper example of preparedness for their kids. And Smith and Wesson could market gun-shaped rattles. So, less Snow white and more Rambo.

This proposal should appeal to all patriotic Americans who hold the second amendment as sacred and want to protect their kids. To the NRA and weapons manufacturers, this would be a national opportunity to regain their proper respected status and also be a beacon to those suffering under leftist gun-hating regimes in neighbouring countries. MAGA!

As told to Jim Mile.