

ARM 18/21

2018 January 8

Active Retired Members of OSSTF

VOL 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

HBO CURC

Wednesday, January 10th
D21 1423 Upper Ottawa Street, Unit 2
10:00 a.m.

Burlington Art Gallery and Lunch

Tuesday, January 16th
1333 Lakeshore Rd, Burlington
11:15 a.m.

Player's Guild and Lunch

Tuesday, February 20th
80 Queen St S, Hamilton
11 a.m.

W. J. McCallion Planetarium

Tuesday, March 20th
1280 Main St W, Hamilton
10:30 a.m. @ Squires, Westdale

Editors: R. Giles, M. Payne, T. Viola

OSSTF ARM Website

For a compendium of information regarding ARM chapters from across Ontario, please see <http://www.armcouncil.osstf.ca/>.

President's Report

Executive Meetings

Meetings for the executive are scheduled for Monday, January 8; Monday, February 5; Monday, March 5; Tuesday, April 3; and, Monday, May 7. Meetings begin at 10:30 a.m. at the D21 Office. All are welcome.

This Past Fall

On November 21 we had an enthusiastic group, including several coming out for their first time, attend a noon lunch at the Village Restaurant in Stoney Creek.

Our December event is always the best attended of the year. This year we went to Whitehern on Jackson St. near City Hall for "Christmas with the McQueston Children". This very large house was home to several generations of the McQueston family. The home was donated to the City of Hamilton in the late 1960's and has been a museum since that time. After a brisk walk to Bay & King Streets we enjoyed a very nice lunch at the George Hamilton Restaurant. Thanks to Colleen for organizing this event.

Burlington Art Gallery

In January we will make what I believe is our first visit to this Gallery for a tour. A 45-minute tour, on Tuesday the 16th, starts at 11:15 a.m. This should get us in a good mood for lunch down the street at the Waterfront Hotel. We are booked at the B & B (formerly the Beaver and the Bulldog) for 12:15 p.m. We have a private room at the back of the hotel, facing the lake. Thanks to Suzanne for organizing this event.

Player's Guild

On Tuesday February 20 we are booked at 80 Queen Street S for a tour. Parking is available adjacent to the building. My theatrical expert has informed me that they have an extensive collection of costumes and scenery. The tour starts at 11 a.m. to be followed by a 12-noon lunch at La Luna restaurant. This eatery, which has been featured in the Hamilton Spectator, is "kitty

corner” to the Scottish Rite. Thanks to Barb for organizing this event.

From Whitehern and the George Hamilton:





OFUR Reports, CLC/OFL/HDLC Reports, Hamilton Health Coalition Report-Pharmacare Campaign, Pensions Update: Bill C-27, Bill C-384, and Bill 117. Presenters include: Paul Miller, MPP, Hamilton East Stoney Creek with a Queen's Park Update and Karl Crevar, Ontario Network of Injured Workers-Workers' Comp is a Right campaign.

ARTICLES:

One Public System in each Official Language by D. Bellissimo

It is a fact that an object tossed into water creates ripples that expand far beyond the point of impact, with potentially far-reaching effects. Similarly, a solid idea "tossed into a discussion" will often stimulate a more expansive debate and begin a process of enquiry that, though potentially difficult, can have an enormous positive effect.

Such is the case for the campaign to achieve a single school system and the issue of education funding and governance in Ontario. It is the policy of OSSTF/FEESO that there should be only one publicly-funded school system for each official language and that there be no job loss as a result of moving to such a system.

Currently, publicly-funded education in Ontario is divided into four distinct systems—English Public; English Catholic; French Public and French Catholic. All fully funded by the taxpayers of Ontario. Each one provides high quality education to the students it serves. Something all of us can be proud of.

But this arrangement is facing a number of challenges, and if our education system is to remain current and a world leader, it is in need of a rethink Demographic changes to

Our Group

President: Milt Payne; V.P.: Colleen Wray; Benefits Officer: Jay Parekh; Secretary: Mary Lou Mattucci; Membership Secretary: Barb Brown; Editors: Tony Viola, Milt Payne, Ruth Giles; Treasurer: Bob Thompson. Members at Large: Malcolm Buchanan, Suzanne Burchell, Chester Faulknor, Warren Johnson, Murray Kilby, Pat Lachapelle, Jan Lukas, Brian Radke, Frieda Smyth, Norm Urhig.

HBO CURC

The next HBO CURC Area Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 10, 10:00 am, at the District 21 OSSTF Office. Agenda items include: National CURC and

Ontario over the past five decades alone have meant that declining enrollment is a reality for all four systems. This is contributing to school closures and inequitable outcomes for some communities. As the cliché goes, busing students past one half-empty school so they can be educated in another half-empty school only impoverishes the entire system.

In situations like this, creating one school system could, in many instances, mean merging two or more under-capacity schools into one, which is a good thing. Full schools mean more programs, more caring adults in the building, and more opportunities for students when it comes to educational programming and extra-curricular activities.

The funding formula currently rewards boards for dosing under-enrolled schools. As overall student numbers have decreased, pressure to maintain enrolment has led to more competition between these different school systems and school boards. In fact, a significant amount of money is spent on television, radio and print advertising encouraging students to choose a particular board. These are resources which could be better spent on students' needs.

It also continues to be indefensible, in 2017, to provide fully-funded religious education for one denomination—especially when students can now be exempt from receiving religious instruction in those schools! The fact that more and more non-Catholics are attending Catholic schools but receiving no religious instruction defeats the original purpose for having a Roman Catholic system. The fact that leaders in Canada back in 1867 made a deal, based on the demographic make up of the country at the time, should not mean that deal can never change. Ontario's increasingly diverse population also agrees that there should be a streamlining,

according to polling done by Vector research over the past 10 years.

Charter for Public Education in Ontario

Ontarians have a right to high-quality, publicly-funded education that is universally accessible and supports diversity, equity, and fairness. The focus of such a system must be to provide students with skills, knowledge, and values that promote a love of learning and enable them to grow as active contributors to Canada's civic, social, and economic well-being. Resources, both financial and human, must be dedicated to supporting: Universality--access for all; Comprehensiveness--opportunity for all; Proficiency--achievement for all; and Accountability--value for all. This is best achieved through a single, secular school system for each official language.

I/We Pledge

- *To acknowledge that students are at the heart of our public education system*
- *To support the creation of a single, secular school system for each official language*
- *To respect students' and their families' beliefs while recognizing that publicly - funded education is open to everyone and does not favor one religion or denomination over another*
- *To foster an equitable public education system that is accessible for all students, for early years through adulthood*
- *To foster a learning environment is safe, respectful, and free from discrimination at any level so that all students can develop a strong sense of lifelong learning that embraces their individual emotional, social, cultural, physical and intellectual needs*

I/We Expect

- *that the government will merge before publicly-funded education systems into one secular system for each official language*
- *that the government will ensure, both before and after this merger, that no public funding will be spent in competition between school boards to recruit students*
- *that any financial savings generated through the elimination of competition and unnecessary duplication will be dedicated to strengthening Ontario's publicly-funded education system*
- *that the public education system is open to all people living in Ontario and access to public education is equitable regardless of geographic location or social economic status*
- *that a strong level of local school board governance be maintained and be accessible to the entire community*

Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador both changed their school systems. Quebec has eliminated its Catholic and Protestant school boards, and Newfoundland and Labrador has replaced seven denominational school boards with one public board. All that is needed in Ontario is the political will to make a similar change. What is needed is a respectful dialogue between educators, government, parents and local communities agreeing on the kinds of schools they need.

One year ago the campaign for a single system was launched with the website onepublicsystem.ca

The campaign proposes a Charter for Public Education, which declares that Ontarians have a right to high quality, publicly-funded education that is universally accessible and supports diversity, equity and fairness. It pledges to respect students' and their

families' beliefs while recognizing that publicly-funded education is open to everyone, and does not favour one religion or denomination over another.

The campaign calls on the provincial government to establish an all-party task force to look into the pros and cons of moving to one public, secular school system for each official language.

The campaign also emphasizes that this is not a cost-cutting measure and asks members of the public to reinvest any savings found to improve the educational outcomes for students. The One Public System website includes a poll that asks visitors how they would reinvest savings.

To date, more than 4,000 people have completed the poll, and the top three recommendations for reinvestment are to:

- Reduce class sizes;
- Ensure appropriate supports are in place to provide optimum learning for every student;
- Increase the availability of specialty teachers in subjects such as music, health and physical education, and art.

In one short year, the campaign has achieved exceptional reach by attracting tens of thousands Ontarians. In that time dozens of articles have appeared on the topic. Journalists have conducted interviews with recently retired Members of Provincial Parliament, and in many cases those MPPs themselves agree that the issue needs to be discussed in a formal, organized way. Former deputy ministers have also come out in favour of this solution as a way of modernizing our school system. The news section of the website tracks media reports dealing with the issue from a variety of perspectives. "It is dearly an idea whose time has come," as one radio host commented

while opening the phone lines to listeners' opinions on the merits of combining school boards.

Our Federation is committed to this campaign because we recognize that moving to one public system would provide long-term solutions to many of the immediate problems that plague our current system.

As we consider new initiatives and innovations in our ongoing commitment to

building the best possible education system, it would be a huge mistake for us to not toss this idea into the debate about the kinds of changes needed to protect and enhance public education.

Domenic Bellissimo is the Director of the Communications/Political Action Department at OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office.

On the lighter side...

This coupon entitles **any student** in a publicly funded Ontario Catholic high school to

GET OUT OF THAT "MANDATORY" RELIGION CLASS!

It's the law! **100% OFF!**

"No person who attends a secondary school operated by a Roman Catholic board shall be required to take part in any program or course of study in religious education on written application to the Board of the parent or guardian of the person." - Ontario Education Act, Section 42(13)

It's a shame you have to present this coupon to your principal, but unfortunately principals (and superintendents, and trustees) across Ontario *still* insist that Roman Catholic courses and rituals are *mandatory* in these open access, 100% publicly funded schools. Either they don't know they are **breaking the law**, or they just don't care. In either case, it makes you wonder about the real "values" being modelled by the authorities of this school system.

The good news: If you mention the possibility of legal action or media involvement, it will likely help speed things along. For more information, visit www.MyExemption.com

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