

Upper Grand Elementary Teachers' Local



THE CURRENT NEWS

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We are pleased to welcome you, along with over 1200 other elementary contract teachers employed here, to the Upper Grand Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

We look forward to meeting you throughout the year at meetings and special events. Watch your school ETFO bulletin board or see your School Steward for details.

A message from your President

IN THE POLITICAL PLAYGROUND IT'S TIME TO PLAY BALL

How political are you? Ask a teacher this question and you're likely to get a pretty vague response. Political? Me? Not really...

The classroom is a place where 'political' discussions happen when developing democratic citizenship. Students and teachers alike have opinions. What contributions are we hoping to make? To whom are we responsible? What do we expect of others, of ourselves? What will we tolerate and how can we make a difference to improve the world?

Together, students and teachers should promote transparency, diplomacy, democracy and freedom. If we don't teach our students how to address issues in the classroom, on the playground or in the lunchroom then where exactly do we expect them to learn how to mediate, to negotiate, to collaborate and to hear another's point of view? These skills are truly useful in the "real world", aren't they? Leading by example supports the words we choose.

Political action means to get involved. To care. To take an *active* interest in the world that's happening all around us.



(Pictured left to right: Gundi Barbour, Tamara Reso, Doug Cook)

During the summer, twelve local delegates attended the Provincial ETFO Annual Meeting in Toronto. Each year this is an opportunity to bring forth resolutions regarding educational policies and procedures. It is a chance to effect positive change and to decide as a collective what actions we will support in the fight to maintain and improve public education. The election for the positions of Provincial ETFO First Vice-President and Vice-President Female resulted in Susan Swackhammer and Maureen Weinberger securing these positions for the next year. I learned a valuable political lesson: the way a message is conveyed can resonate louder than words alone.

On the heels of Annual Meeting, I attended the Canadian Labour Congress summer school for six days at the CAW Family Education Centre in Port Elgin. Here I took a course entitled "Facing Management". Our class studied issues from a wide variety of labour groups including auto workers, nurses, factory workers and electricians. We learned how to recognize and respond effectively to various tactics used by management to defend the collective good of all workers.

Interestingly enough, the problems that we face in education are universal to those faced by other unions: respect, increasing workload, interpreting the Collective Agreement correctly, health and safety and trust. Upper Grand ETFO Vice-President Gundi Barbour and Secretary Gord Dunbar also attended CLC Summer School, to study Conflict Resolution and Collective Bargaining respectively.

The labour movement has worked long and hard to establish and improve worker rights. If we are not careful to remain politically active and educated, we could see these gains lost with the stroke of a pen.

Political action involves research, planning, mobilization and reflection. As teachers we are all leaders....with a responsibility to keep informed of the issues, to plan a course of action, and to engage fellow members to stand up for what's right. From data-driven testing to the downloading of initiatives, I ask, how political are you?

ETFO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010 – TORONTO



(Pictured: Sam Hammond, President, ETFO presented a gift to Lynda in recognition of her award).

We are very proud to announce that Lynda McDougall (pictured here 2nd from the right front row) has received the **Provincial ETFO Honorary Life Membership Award**. Lynda is a former local Vice-President and recently retired from the position of Vice-Principal at Primrose school in Shelburne. Congratulations Lynda, I know there are many teachers who will be happy to see that your work is recognized at the provincial level.



Our Local secretary, Gord Dunbar, had the opportunity to meet the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Education.



(Pictured: 2010 Upper Grand ETFO Delegation
absent: Heike Schiller)



Our own Doug Cook, Chief Negotiator, speaking loud and proudly at the AGM – good job Doug!

A word about the AGM from first time delegate Carrie Zamora

This past August, I had the opportunity to attend our Annual General Meeting. I wasn't sure what to expect going into the AGM, but it was fascinating. It was like being a student again. After four vigorous days of sitting, listening, and watching resolutions either be passed or denied, I was ready to head home, but not without all the learning that had taken place. I had a phenomenal time. I enjoyed getting to know other people who have similar interests, learning more about how our union operates and being able to participate in the political process of our provincial organization. Knowing that I was part of helping to make our jobs as teachers better was very satisfying.

UPPER GRAND PD AND WORKSHOPS

ETFO Equity and Women's Services Presents

Women Abuse Affects our Children

October 20 – 21, 2010

Stratford

Regional Conference funded by ETFO -- accommodation, meals, travel & release time

Registration package and further information on the Upper Grand ETFO website

ETFO Status of Women Committee Presents

Thursday, October 21, at 7 PM meet at the Elora Public Library Community Room

Members, friends and family are welcome to join Al Koop and his renowned Older Voices on a Ghost Walk of Elora. Songs, stories and intrigue will be used by costumed actor-guides to bring the past to life with all its spooky delight during a walking tour of historic Elora. The group will reconvene at the Community Room for catered refreshments, conversation and prizes. See the flyer in your school for more details. Space is limited – register for this fascinating event today!

OTHER CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Technological Education info

visit www.ecoo.org and select the Conference tab for more information.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT MARCH AND RALLY

On Thursday, September 30th at 6 pm, the Guelph community will gather at Marianne's Park to take part in a rally and march to "say NO!" to sexualized violence against women and children. The Take Back the Night rally will feature guest speakers, activities for children, t-shirt making, and community monologues. Everyone is welcome. www.takebackthenightguelph.blogspot.com

OHASSTA

The Ontario History and Social Science

Teachers Conference

November 5 – 6, 2010

www.ohassta.org



2010 OPHEA & PHE National Conference

<http://www.phecanada.ca/Toronto2010/eng/main.htm>

First Five Features

New Teacher? Have you heard about "Survive & Thrive"?

Survive & Thrive is ETFO's virtual conference geared toward teachers at the beginning of their careers. Content covers everything from assessment to special education as well as dealing with parents, workload and a host of other issues. Participants can engage in on-line communities and learn from a variety of posted materials. Connect with other teachers, post issues of concern, share resources and ideas! It's all there. Sign up today at www.etfo.ca and click on the **Survive & Thrive** logo at the bottom of the page.

UGETFO DATES TO REMEMBER

September (First day of school)

Twenty sick leave days credited to each full time Teacher's account; a pro-rated amount credited to part time Teacher's account.

(Article 19.03)

September

Dates for regular staff meetings to be scheduled and communicated to all Teachers. (Article 12.10)

September

(by second Friday following Labour Day) Staffing levels will be adjusted based on actual enrolment. (Article 27.01.2)

September 22

Executive Meeting 4:45 p.m. Orchard Park

October 20

Executive Meeting 4:45 p.m. Location to be determine

October 27

FALL ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER

Guelph Place Banquet Hall

NEW FACES AT UPPER GRAND ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OFFICE



Gundi Barbour, Vice-President

"September is a time of renewal and change for teachers. We take on new classes, new students and build a working relationships with different staff members and parents. This September I officially assumed my new role as Vice President of the Local. What a fabulous new experience for me! While I missed the adrenalin rush of the first day of school and the interaction with students – it has been my privilege to interact with the interesting, diverse and engaging members of the Upper Grand Teacher's Local. Ours is a Local with a proud history of strong principles and exemplary member support which I hope to uphold and build upon during my term of office. Deepening the relationship with the members of Upper Grand is the what I look forward to most. A new beginning for all of us".

Linda L. Barton, Office Manager

We are very excited to welcome our new Office Manger Linda L. Barton to Orchard Park. Linda comes to us with a wide variety of experieence ranging from the Ontario Provincial Government, the non-profit mental health social service, and most recently Skills Canada – Ontario. Her years of experience as an Executive Assistant are a welcome addition to our family. Members are encouraged to speak freely with Linda in order have their inquiries directed to the correct person. She is taking on the Professional Development portfolio, so please esnure to address your applications to Linda who is now on First Class or at lindabarton@ugetfo.org.

PENSION NEWS Pension Buybacks are Changing!

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan has announced changes to its buy back police effective September 2010. These enhancements include:

- i) **Payment Flexibility** – you have a five year deadline to pay for your buyback and now you can set your own pay schedule instead of having to pay in one lump sum.
- ii) **No Interest** – interest will now begin to accrue at the end of your leave rather than at the beginning
- iii) **Pregnancy and Parental Leave** – easier communication and information regarding the impact of buying back your pension as well as easier access to your RRSP funds. After you have informed the board of your intention to take a Parental Leave, the Ontario Teacher's Pension Plan will contact you to make arrangements for a buyback.
- iv) **Cost Stability** – you can buyback multiple year absences by using your salary at the time of your leave as a base
- v) **Full Time Credit** – better calculations to ensure teachers receive appropriate credit for the time they buy back

Please log onto www.OTTP.com for full details!