

Currently Speaking

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www.ugot.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear membership,

I hope you are all well. We have had a busy start to the New Year. The highlight for me was the half day paid workshop on February 22nd at J.D. Hogarth. I was very pleased with the turn out we had. It would have been greater but the members who are on Long Term Occasional assignments were exempt because they had already received the training at their schools. If you didn't attend and haven't done the training yet, don't panic. Please read the note on Mandatory Professional Development.

There are so many things to talk about, where do I begin? The newsletter will include important topics like electronic newsletters and electronic communication, upcoming Professional Learning events and other social events, our Annual Meeting and Elections, where to find relevant information on our website and many other important news items for Ot's. Please read it carefully. I don't want you to miss a thing.

Your executive has had many discussions around member involvement. We make an effort to provide opportunities for professional growth but we think we should make more of an effort in social events. Several ideas brought forward were Minga, a barbeque and the Annual Meeting. Do you Minga? This is a term used loosely by friends at my wife's school. The term Minga comes from Ecuador, before the Incan empire. A Minga is a gathering of citizens, who complete tasks to benefit the community. It is a gathering to achieve a collective purpose. Our local will provide an opportunity for members to meet on a Friday night at a specified location to just spend time together and have some fun. Please remember that this is not an ETFO sponsored function. This will not be funded. However, we felt that it would be a good opportunity for you, the member, to connect with colleagues in an informal situation. We

will not discourage any work-related questions if you have any, but it is meant to be informal. The first one will be in Orangeville at Boston Pizza on June 18th at 5:00 pm. We will rotate it around to reach all the areas of our local. Please attend and watch for announcements for upcoming gatherings. We had also discussed putting together a barbeque for members and their families. We will get organized for September to greet new members.

The last important event I wanted to mention at this time is our Annual Meeting. Yes, a few business items will be handled during the meeting like budget, professional learning, elections and speeches. However, it is also a social gathering. Sam Hammond, our ETFO President, will come to our local. What a great opportunity to meet him and hear about what your Federation is doing for you. We always serve great food. Vegetarian meals are provided but you need to request them. We will also have door prizes and a draw for great items. Several members walked away with valuable gift certificates. This year we will give away 18 Differentiated Instruction Books to the first 18 members registering with me.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention the nomination forms. If you haven't given it any thought previously, now is a great opportunity to get involved. The nomination form is included in the newsletter. The responsibilities of the positions are on the reverse side. I have been on the executive for four years now. I have enjoyed my experience tremendously. Ask Julie Birken and Kylie Cyr, our two most recent executive members. I think they have had a great year so far. Give it some thought. We have some great people on the executive who have taught me a lot. You can learn from their perspectives and experience as well. See you there.

Andrew Aloe

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E-mail: aloeristok@distributed.net

PENSION NEWS

On April 9, 2010, I attended the OTPP (Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan) Annual Meeting. This report will highlight the issues of major importance for the membership and detail what will need to be addressed in the immediate future.



The OTPP continues to be one of the world's best pension plans. Members ranked the plan's service quality 9.1 out of 10. The Plan achieved a 13.0% investment return as markets recovered (4.2% above the benchmark). Net assets grew to \$96.4 billion in 2009, up from \$87.4 billion in 2008. The preliminary 2010 funding valuation showed a projected \$17.1 billion funding shortfall that will need to be resolved before the next valuation is filed in 2012. OTF and the Ontario government (plan sponsors) and the management team from OTPP must study options and find a solution to keep the plan healthy.

To deal with the shortfall, the plan sponsors (OTF and the Ontario government) must find a way to deal with the problem. Some of the options that need to be considered are:

- Increase contribution rates for teachers and the government;
- Reduce pension benefits members will earn in the future;
- Invoke conditional inflation protection for pension credit earned after 2009; or
- Adopt a combination of these options.

No contribution or benefit changes will be needed unless the shortfall still exists when the next funding valuation is filed with the Ontario pension regulator.

Why is there a Shortfall?

- The OTPP is a mature pension plan that reflects demographics;
- Real interest rates are at very low levels (1% drop in rates translates into approximately \$25 billion in future pension costs.);
- Smoothing gains and losses over a five-year period;
- Benefits vs contributions (1.7 billion gap)

N.B. The value of pension benefits that current working teachers and retired teachers have already earned up to 2009 is protected under current Ontario law. Only contribution rates and pension benefits to be earned after

2009 will be adjusted if the funding shortfall still exists in 2012. Each teacher is required to pay for the pension he/she will receive upon retirement. Retired teachers have already paid for the pension they receive. Investing in your pension fund is still one of the best (in most cases, the best) investment opportunity available. What other investment requires the employer to match the contribution that the employee makes? The pension sponsors will make decisions to keep your pension plan secure and to deliver the pension promise when you retire. Retirement may be seen as something a long way into the future but the money invested now will secure lifelong financial security.

At this time, no decision has been made about the 95/20 day rule affecting retired teachers. An announcement should be made soon. This decision does not impact the financial status of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.

For more information or to receive the OTPP report, contact these sources: www.fundingyourpension.com, communication@OTPP.com or Carol Dunsmore 1-877-812-7989.



Retiring This Year?

If you are a career occasional teacher, a member who has not retired from a contract position or have not already been recognized by the Board, then please contact me. You will be invited to attend a celebration and be recognized for your years of service and contribution to the board. Please let me know as soon as possible because the board needs to plan for your official retirement.

SUMMER ACADEMY

Thinking About Summer?

Summer Academy: Advertised on the ETFO website (www.etfo.ca):

- Kindergarten AQ Course in Upper Grand - course begins in August and will be completed December 1, 2010.
- On-line AQ courses will be offered by ETFO.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mandatory Professional Development

You are still required to do the accessibility training but it can be done online. Go to our website, www.ugot.org, and go to Professional Development. There you will find the website link and instructions on how to get the accessibility training and have it reported on your employee HR file.. I suggest printing off the certificate and filing it for future reference. There is a checklist of important things to remember on the actual certificate.

The workshop featured several additional components that weren't mandatory but essential. Please take the time to read and understand the different components. The accessibility session was delivered by John Ritchie and Ted Pritchard. If you attended, you had to sign the attendance sheet. It was necessary so that the Board could have a list of those who attended. They also reviewed the epi-pen training. The notes from that portion are on our website.

Marina Howlett and Julie Birken delivered the "Boundaries" session. It featured the video made by ETFO entitled, "It Could Happen To You." They also had a discussion and question period. Further details are provided on the enclosed information sheet "Boundaries - It Can Happen To You". Marina has had years of experience working in the Federation and was a great resource for that session. There was a break that included coffee and cookies, nicely organized by Donna Henderson and Barb Walkey.

Jim Bowie, the Health and Safety Officer at the Board, presented the WHMIS training session. He presented an excellent workshop about the handling of dangerous substances. You wouldn't think that would necessarily apply to us. After his talk, I know otherwise. Brent McDonald, a Superintendent of Education for the Board, presented the Bill 157 training, dealing with the Safe Schools Act. It was the same presentation delivered to all the teaching staff at Upper Grand. It was very informative and necessary for us to hear. The Power Point slides will be posted on our website. This is also vital because we are required to report incidents of violence and bullying.

The last session was presented by a group of us. Jennifer McCreary unveiled the new job shopping feature on Smart Find. Unfilled jobs for that day will be available online between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. Just go to our website for details. If you have any questions about the procedure, call Jennifer at the Board. If you are not comfortable with the computer, Smart Find will continue to call out during that time. Bonnie Evans,

Superintendent of Human Resources, and I presented a piece on Board expectations and Professionalism. Randal Wagner, principal at Jean Little P.S., unveiled the new Occasional Teacher handbook. It is a template with necessary information available for us, at all the schools. Go to our website to see a sample.

Lastly, the O.T. performance appraisal was presented. It was done by the Board. Barb Walkey, Marina Howlett and I provided our feedback. It was a collaborative effort. Performance Appraisals for all Ot's will be conducted in April and May 2010. A sample of the checklist handed out to us at the workshop is available on our website. Please remember that this is not to remove you from the list. If you are not comfortable teaching a particular age group or subject, but are taking the job, let the principal know. Everyone understands that we take assignments that we are qualified for first and then we are often called for assignments that need to be filled but for which we aren't qualified. For instance, I've done many core French assignments. You may have had a terrible start to the day. Your car broke down and you just managed to get to the school on time and are quite flustered. If you are not comfortable being evaluated that day, the principals will understand. I hope all members who didn't attend will get the information made available to you. If you have any further inquiries don't hesitate to contact me.

Andrew Aloe

Professional Learning News

I hope everyone had a wonderful Easter Break and is enjoying our beautiful spring. With the end of the year quickly approaching, many of us are thinking about what lies ahead and some of us are preparing for job interviews. For those of you who were unable to attend our Interview Workshop, we will be holding another one in late May or early June. You will receive a question bank on a CD and valuable information on "landing the job you want". As soon as the details are available, we will post the information on the UGOT website.

In addition to our interview workshop, we are also pleased to announce that the UGDSB will be providing OT's and LTO's with a CPR and First Aid certification course on June 4th at the board office. The session will start at 9:30 a.m. and will end at around 3:00 p.m. with lunch provided by the UGOT local. Space is limited to 22 so to ensure a spot you must register before May 20th.

Finally, with summer approaching we thought it would be nice for all of us to have a chance to gather for meaningful discussion and perhaps share some experiences with one another. This meeting of the minds or "MINGA", as

mentioned by Andrew Aloe, will be held on Friday, June 18th at 5:00 p.m. at Boston Pizza in Orangeville. This is not an UGOT sponsored event. It is just a way for us to build a sense of community among all of the OT's and LTO's. Andrew and I can't wait to see you there!

To register for the interview workshop or the CPR course please send an email to:

Julie_birken@rogers.com or phone 519-940-3955.

******Please indicate which workshop you will be attending along with a phone number and email contact (if possible).**

Keep Smiling!!!
Julie Birken

Website www.ugot.org

Please visit the website for current information, Professional Development opportunities, an Executive contact list, Executive Meeting Minutes, Currently Speaking (our OT newsletter), and other pertinent information as mentioned in this newsletter.

We will continue to use the website to communicate to members when it is impossible to contact all members by telephone or through the mail.

U. G. ETFO Occasional Teachers' Local

- President: Andrew Aloe
- Vice President: Marina Howlett
- Treasurer: John Ritchie
- Secretary: Donna Henderson
- Executive: Julie Birken
Carol Christie
Kylie Cyr
Jacqueline Gray
John Parkyn
Ted Pritchard
Ralph Rainford
Ruth Tomlins
Barb Walkey

Website: www.ugot.org

ETFO Provincial: 1-888-838-3836

DATES TO REMEMBER

Federation Dates

Thurs., June 3, 2010.....**Annual Meeting**
Time: 4:45 p.m. Location: Marden Community Centre
August 16 - 19, 2010.....ETFO Annual Meeting, Toronto

Executive Meetings

Thurs., April 22, 2010..... Marina Howlett's house
Wed., May 19, 2010.....Ruth Tomlin's house
Thurs., June 24, 2010.....Ralph Rainford's house

Professional Development Days

Friday, April 30, 2010
Friday, June 4, 2010
Friday, June 30, 2010



Workshop

June 22, 2010.....Employment Insurance Workshop
Location: J.D. Hogarth

Holidays

Monday, May 24, 2010.....Victoria Day

Last Day of School for Students

June 29, 2010

Pay Dates

- April 16, 2010
- April 30, 2010
- May 14, 2010
- May 28, 2010
- June 11, 2010
- June 25, 2010
- July 9, 2010

Upper Grand ETFO Occasional Teachers'

ANNUAL MEETING

AND

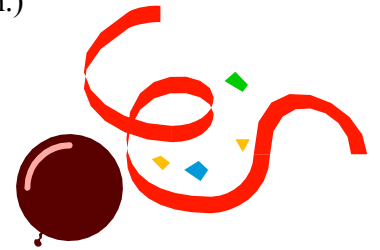
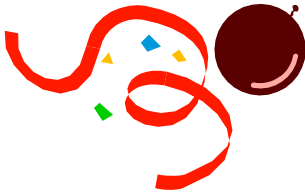
2010-11 EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

Marden Community Centre

7368 Wellington Rd. (Exit west from Highway 6N at Marden.)

THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2010

Cost: \$10.00 per person
4:45 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



ETFO: PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVE

GUEST SPEAKER:

Sam Hammond

President, ETFO

*Draw
Proceeds to go to
Guelph Charity*

Agenda

Elections - 5:15 p.m.
Meet Your Executive
Budget Update
Committee Updates
New Business
Johnson's Insurance
Social Reception - 6:15 p.m.
Dinner (Turkey, Vegetarian)- 6:30 p.m.
Draw/Door Prizes

*\$10.00 each
Subsidized
By UGOT*

- I will attend the Annual Meeting and Dinner. Payment: \$10.00 per person
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- I will only be able to attend the General Meeting.
Name: _____ Phone: _____
- I will require a vegetarian meal.



Please return to Andrew Aloe (President) by May 29, 2010

Orchard Park, Suite B2
5420 Hwy 6 N
Guelph, ON N1H 6J2

by Royal Mail
by Board Courier from each school site
by fax to 519-836-9759



OT Logins on School Computers

As a follow up to the information in our January newsletter, here are the detailed instructions for you to log on to the Board's computers.

If these instructions don't work, ask the office coordinator, administrator or TAC teacher to contact the Board's computer Help Desk at 519-766-9344.

1. Press the Control, Alt, and Delete keys simultaneously to bypass the startup window and produce the login window.
2. Your user name is: staff \ first name initial last name (... no spaces ... no punctuation) eg. Frank Bloggs would enter: staff\fbloggs.
3. Your password (this is your initial password which you will soon change and never use again) is your 8-digit date of birth with no spaces in this format: MMDDYYYY e.g. 02231973.
4. You will be asked to create a NEW password. Your new password must be at least 7 characters and, for better security, be a mixture of at least 3 of the following 4 sets of characters:
UPPER CASE LETTERS, lower case letters, numbers, symbols (! @ # \$ % ^ & *).
5. Make sure you remember your new password because, as soon as you enter it, you will be asked to repeat it for confirmation purposes, and you won't be able to see it on-screen.
6. Make sure you keep a secure record of your user name and password, as you will require them to log in on any computer in any Board school or facility.

For security purposes, the Board will require you to enter a new password every 45 days. When you need to change your password, you will first be required to enter your old password. You need not wait 45 days to change your password; you may change it as many times as you wish. Note that your user name never changes, but your password does.

PLEASE SEE OVER for a message about email addresses.



ATTENTION ALL OTs !!

EMAIL ADDRESS CHECK

In order to test the accuracy of our email list for future editions of the newsletter and other messages, we will be emailing you before April 30, 2010. The email subject line will read "UGOT Email Address Check".

If you get an email from us, it means that your email address is accurate and ready (no action or reply required).

If you get this email at more than one address, please reply to us at ugotorg@yahoo.com with the address that you prefer. Put "This is my preferred email address" in the subject line. This will solve the duplication issue.

If you do not get an email by April 30, it means that we do not have your email address or the one we have on file is not accurate. In this case, please email us the correct address at ugotorg@yahoo.com.

Note: If you think that you have given us your email address, you may not have received the email we sent due to one of the following reasons:

- legibility of handwritten addresses on our sign-up sheets
- a transcription error on our part
- your email address has changed.



PLEASE SEE OVER for a message about OT Logins on School Computers.

Boundaries It Can Happen To You

As a follow-up to the workshop “Boundaries” presented by Julie Birken and myself on Monday, February 22, 2010 at the Elementary Occasional Teachers' Professional Development Day, I agreed to prepare this information sheet for your information and reference. It will also appear in the April 2010 edition of the Occasional Teachers' newsletter 'Currently Speaking'.

Legal Assistance for ETFO Members

The Federation provides legal assistance to defend members against allegations that are related to the member's teaching duties or employment responsibilities.

If you are contacted by the police or the Children's Aid Society (CAS) regarding an allegation against you:

- Do not participate in or consent to an interview.
 - Make no statement to anyone regarding the allegation charges.
 - Say “I am willing to cooperate but I am unable to comment until I contact the Federation and legal counsel”.
 - Call ETFO Professional Relations Staff at **1-888-838-3836 or 416-962-3836** and state your call is urgent.



The Only Safe Place For Your Hands In Your Pockets

Members who have been Occasional Teachers for a few years will have heard this message before but will also know the classroom environment is changing. Professional Boundaries for Occasional Teachers are different than the Professional Boundaries for the regular Classroom Teachers. Classroom Teachers have the opportunity to establish a different level of trust because they are actively engaged with their students on a daily basis. Occasional Teachers do not have the same day-to-day experiences and may encounter students who are hesitant and unsure of their interaction with the Occasional Teacher. Sometimes students misinterpret cues or attempts by the O.T. to reinforce both positive and/or unacceptable behaviour.

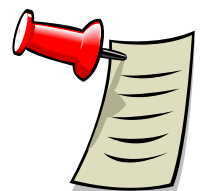
Unfortunately, it cannot be repeated enough; No Occasional Teacher should ever touch a child. The only exception is when a child's health or safety is in jeopardy. Please take this message to heart and remember it every single day you teach.

Allegations can happen to anyone. Virtually every teacher who is suspended pending an investigation starts out saying, “I never thought that this could happen to me.” It can happen to anyone, no matter what their experience or intention. Allegations don't just happen because there was a tense situation. The only common theme is that the teacher is alleged to have made physical contact with the child. Many of us touch students to demonstrate our kind and caring demeanor. This is a habit we must abandon. Times have changed and **there is absolutely no safe touch.** Although we are still there to help our students to achieve their best, we now have to do it from a safe distance.

If you are accused of professional misconduct, call Andrew Aloe (519-217-2704) and ETFO's provincial office at 1-888-838-3836 immediately. Ask for the Professional Relations Services (P.R.S.). If Andrew does not answer your telephone call, please leave a message, telephone number and the time you called. He will return the call ASAP. Under no circumstances should you speak to the police or CAS without Federation advice or representation. Do not provide a written statement regarding what occurred to anyone until you have Federation advice. Remember Andrew is there to support you. Contact him ASAP.

You should routinely observe the following precautions:

- Maintain a positive, professional attitude in all your dealings with students, no matter how difficult the student may be.
- Call the office for help before a problem escalates. Let them know that you are being pre-emptive and want to avoid a bigger problem.
- Never be alone with a student.
- DO NOT TOUCH a child except for health and safety reasons; any touch can be misconstrued.
- Leave a note for the returning teacher detailing any incidents that were of concern.
- Keep a copy of your notes and include the names of individuals who witnessed the incident.



Teacher Allegations It Can Happen To You

Ruth McLean, President of the Upper Grand Teachers' Local has provided this advice to her members and she has agreed to let me publish her article, Teacher Allegations - It Can Happen to You, for your information..

Teachers are caring and committed individuals who continually put their students' needs and interests first. This makes writing an article for Teachers about how to prevent allegations of assault and professional misconduct a difficult task. It is a topic that needs addressing, however, as Upper Grand Teachers continue to have allegations filed against them. Most of these cases have resulted from Teachers physically contacting students in a manner which later becomes 'misconstrued'.

Even though it is hard to believe, allegations can happen to anyone from a brand new Teacher to a well-experienced Teacher. It can happen no matter what your intentions were or *your* experience of the situation. It can also happen in a tense or disciplinary moment, as well as in a kind and caring moment.

The common denominator in most allegations of assault is the **initiation** of touch by the Teacher. The **interpretation** of touch by the receiver becomes the grounds on which a complaint is lodged.

Teachers today are in a very difficult and vulnerable position since they interact with students all day long in a variety of scenarios. We know that Teachers may, and sometime must, use physical contact when necessary to defend themselves from physical harm or injury or to intervene in situations where there is a risk of harm to students. To ignore such situations can result in a Teacher being accused of negligence of her/his Teacher's duty. We also know that Teachers are encouraged to avoid physical contact whenever possible in order to avoid false allegations and that administrators urge restraint of students as a last resort.

All Teachers need to continue taking precautionary steps to protect themselves from potential allegations of assault or professional misconduct. The following advice is practical and clear:

- **Avoid physical contact with students except when absolutely necessary.**
- Receive Board training in restraint if this is part of your teaching position.
- Openly communicate with your Principal regarding discipline expectations and procedure.
- Document all conversations and incidents of a serious nature that arise with students or parents.
- Whenever possible, do not handle a dangerous or sensitive situation alone.
- Avoid keeping a single student in your classroom at recess, nutrition/lunch breaks or after dismissal.
- Do not go into a small room or concealed cloakroom with only one student.

Even when you are careful and professional in your role as a Teacher, you may face being accused of an allegation. If you are contacted regarding an allegation against you, immediately contact Provincial ETFO at 1-888-838-3836 and ask for a PRS Counsellor or call Orchard Park at 519-837-0090 for support. Do not speak to the police or CAS and do not provide a written statement regarding what occurred to anyone without federation advice.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

- Never leave students alone.
- Never touch a student.
- Never be alone with a student.



If you are ever involved in a situation where there is an allegation of physical or sexual abuse, do not make any statement to the police or the CAS until you have contacted your Federation for legal and professional advice. Call ETFO's Professional Relations Services (PRS) toll-free 1-888-838-3836 or local 416-962-3836.