

Currently Speaking

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This newsletter will be my last official communication with all of you. As of February 1, 2009, Andrew Aloe will be the OT President. I will continue to serve the OT local as Vice-President and Chief Negotiator on the bargaining team. This will allow me to support Andrew's role as President in the transition period and to work to negotiate a favourable Collective Agreement for the next two years.

Needless to say, I have been a passionate supporter of Federation work for many years throughout my career and hope I have supported the membership to achieve positive outcomes for individual concerns and also contributed to the collective well-being of Occasional Teachers in Upper Grand. Federation work is time-consuming but I have truly enjoyed my role and hope I have made a difference! It's been a labour of love. I will continue on the Upper Grand Occasional Teaching List for a few more years and mentor future OT leaders.

The Upper Grand OT executive is anxious to recruit members to serve on the Executive. Many of the current members are close to the end of their teaching careers also. An organization is only as strong as the members who are willing to contribute to make it successful. ETFO provides many programs and training seminars to encourage Leadership Development. It is a rewarding experience for any member who accepts the challenge. Please consider this opportunity when the Nomination Committee seeks new members for the Executive. Application forms will be available in the April newsletter. Collective Bargaining will be the main focus of the Federation's work in the next few weeks/months. We will keep

Embracing the Challenge

This event should be a relaxing, inspirational event with supper included. I hope OT's and LTO's will take advantage of this after-school program. Please send your information to Jan Grant at Orchard Park by email to jangrant@ugetfo.org or by phone at 519-837-0090.

Further details are included on the enclosed flyer.

you informed but we will need your on-going support. Stay informed and involved! Positive outcomes will only be realized through member support and participation.



Dear UGOT member,

As of February 1st, I will become your active President. Marina and the executive unanimously voted on this change at our last executive meeting.

I began with the UGDSB in 1999 as an occasional teacher, after three years of teaching in Japan on the JET program. Prior to that, I taught in Halton and York Region Public School Boards while working at Mountain Equipment CO-OP. During those days, it was difficult to get a lot of supply work and we desperately needed the income. Since joining the UGDSB family, I have been an OT and am very proud of it. Most of that time, I was doing it on a part-time basis because of my other role as a stay-at-home dad. My daughters are now 7 and 9 and are in school full time which gives me a lot more opportunity to work.

My involvement with the Upper Grand OT Local began in June 2005 at our Annual Meeting when Marina was voted in as President and a call was made to the membership for two executive positions. Two people quickly put up their hands and I thought I had lost my opportunity to get involved. I shyly put up my hand and asked if it was too late to apply. At that point, one executive member made room for me by stepping down saying that they only took the position because no one else had put up their hand. I was in. I really didn't know what I was getting into. Two and a half years later and here I am and I owe it all to the amazing people who are your executive. They never once made me feel small because of what I didn't know. I was always given an explanation whenever it was requested. Marina kept encouraging me to get involved. I attended Union School last year and I was hooked.

I hope that, in my own way, I can provide you with the kind of leadership you deserve. Do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns. My cell number is 519-217-2704. If I am not able to answer when you call, leave a voice message and I will get back to you as soon as I can. My email address is andrewaloe@rogers.blacberry.net. Even if it is just a message to say hello, I would appreciate it. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

THE MEETING OF THE MINDS

as reported by Ruth McLean, Upper Grand ETFO Teacher
President

Well over 300 concerned ETFO members attended our General Membership Information Meeting on January 15 at the Fergus Sportsplex.



With standing room only, President Dave Clegg presented the facts of what took place before, during and after the Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) talks between the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) and ETFO from December 1-5, 2008. He clearly explained the rationale behind ETFO's proposal and the reasons why the OPSBA proposal was unacceptable for our teachers. (The detailed proposals can be viewed at www.etfo.ca.) President Clegg answered a wide variety of questions at the microphone.

I would like to share with you some of President Clegg's important points:

- ETFO recognizes the problems and concerns with the economy and knows that our members want their Union to be respectful of the economic crisis. Due to these factors, ETFO modified their position to ask for a commitment from the government to Close the Gap in funding over a number of years.
- ETFO presented a progressive and creative offer to OPSBA which was within the government's fiscal parameters. Ministry officials had costed every aspect of the proposal and had no objection to it. OPSBA rejected it and instead tabled strips to existing collective agreements and language that would undermine teacher professional autonomy.
- The gap in respect for elementary teachers became more apparent when OPSBA demanded ETFO accept conditions that had not been asked of OSSTF in the previous week of PDT agreement talks.
- ETFO did not ask for any more money than was given to their Separate and French system counterparts.
- After the failure of the PDT talks, school boards were put on notice on January 8 to table their full packages to local CBC teams by January 30. If there are strips to existing rights of members or less

funding offered than our provincial counterparts, strike votes will be initiated after February 13.

President Clegg stated that *“Strike votes demonstrate support for what we are bargaining at the table and for the negotiating team. They give leverage for a fair and reasonable deal to be made and for existing rights in the collective agreement to be maintained. History has shown that the higher the strike vote, the less likely you have to use it.”*

In closing, Provincial President Clegg explained that:

“Every time we are in bargaining, we are either prepared to stand up for what we have and think is fair or we are not. School boards do not willingly come offering us money. It is up to us to decide how we want to be treated and what we will stand up for. The decision is ultimately made by our members; this is how it is and how it should be. Our first step now is to see what the board will put on the table in bargaining locally.”

BARGAINING UPDATE

The current state of Collective Bargaining is about all of us - OT's, LTO's and Contract Teachers included! During the next few weeks/months, the OT membership will be called to an All-Member Meeting. It would be optimistic for me to suggest we would meet to ratify a new Collective Agreement; more likely it will be to conduct a strike vote.

We have Negotiations Meetings scheduled with the Board on February 25, 2009; March 27, 2009; April 1, 2009; April 7, 2009 and April 17, 2009.

The Provincial Take-Over Team will keep you up-to-date about the progress of negotiations through Take-Over Bulletins, the website and e-mails. If it becomes necessary to take a strike vote, we need 500 members out to participate in the vote. **Yes, that means every member! A strong strike mandate gives your bargaining team the support needed to negotiate an improved Collective Agreement.**

DONATIONS

Upper Grand Helps Women in Crisis

Guelph Women in Crisis recently received donations from the Upper Grand Contract Teachers and OT's to support their ongoing work with the women of Guelph and Centre Wellington. The donations were particularly welcome during these times of economic turmoil as families who are already struggling are affected. Sly Castaldi, Executive

Director of the organization, felt that this turmoil could lead to increase pressure on women. She thanked us for our monetary support and assured us that it would help to sustain the on-going projects and continue to support the women of Guelph and Centre Wellington.



Zhaleh Afshar, Public Education; Carol Christie, Upper Grand OT; Sly Castaldi, Executive Director; Deepti Celetti, UGETFO Status Chair; Marla Reid, Manager of Finance and Property

ETFO Donates \$750 to Family Transition Place

On November 21, 2008, OT President Marina Howlett and ETFO VP Tamara Reso visited Family Transition Place to deliver a \$750 donation. Promoting social justice in the areas of anti-poverty, non-violence and equity is one of the priorities of ETFO. As a result, this financial support was provided by both the Provincial and Local organizations. Norah Kennedy and Nadine Collins accepted the donation for the centre which is located in Orangeville.

Abused women and their children in Caledon and Dufferin depend on Family Transition Place for emergency shelter, housing, counselling, legal and transition support. Since 1985, Family Transition Place has worked to deliver skill-building, violence-prevention education to youth, women and men.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Professional Development

OT - Take Three - Literacy, Numeracy and Differentiated Instruction for OT's

1. Differentiated Instruction: Addressing the "each" in Teaching
2. Teaching Mathematics: What's the Problem?
3. Linking Literacy and Learning

The Ministry of Education has provided ETFO with funds to offer professional learning for occasional teachers. Upper Grand OT's will be hosting these workshops in March, April and May 2009 in Guelph, Orangeville and Fergus.

These workshops shall prove extremely valuable in providing OT's with more information and a better understanding of program and curriculum issues. This knowledge and understanding will help OT's be better prepared for job interviews.

Flyers will be sent with the February newsletter. OT's may attend individual workshops or the entire series.

Survive and Thrive - Virtual Conference and On-line Resource Centre

This PD conference is for:

- beginning teachers
- occasional teachers
- teacher candidates (student teachers)
- mentor teachers

Visit these websites to participate: : www.otffeo.on.ca and www.etfo.on.ca.

GET INVOLVED - THESE WORKSHOPS ARE FOR YOU!

Did you know...?

- the Upper Grand District School Board has made available to you a job shadowing opportunity. If it is your first LTO and you have taught 98 days or more, you may apply for two release days to work with an experienced teacher. If you are interested, contact Tammy Fleming (519-925-3939 ext. 224 or Tammy.Fleming@ugdsb.on.ca).
- Any after-school or Saturday session is available to you. Look for these on First Class Notices.

**UPPER GRAND ETFO
OCCASIONAL TEACHERS' LOCAL**
(Effective February 1, 2009)

President: Andrew Aloe
Vice President: Marina Howlett
Treasurer: John Ritchie
Secretary: Donna Henderson
Executive: Carol Christie
 Jacqueline Gray
 Pat Klypycz
 John Parkyn
 Ted Pritchard
 Ralph Rainford
 Ruth Tomlins
 Barb Walkey

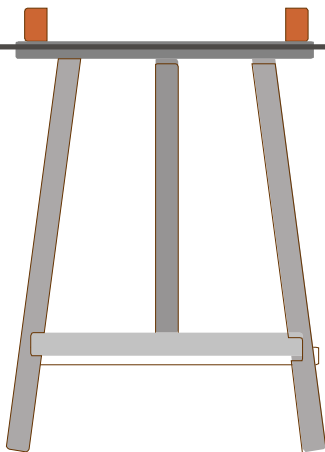
Website: www.ugot.org
 ETFO Provincial: 1-888-838-3836



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 it becomes available.

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.



DATES TO REMEMBER

Federation Dates



Thurs., February 19, 2009.....Embracing the Challenge
 Time: 4:15 p.m. Marden Community Centre
 Thurs., June 4, 2009.....Annual Meeting
 Time: 4:45 p.m. Marden Community Centre
 Mon., Aug. 17-Thurs., Aug. 20, 2009.....Provincial
 Annual Meeting

Executive Meetings February - June 2009

Tues., February 17, 2009.....Fergus
 Ralph Rainford's house
 Thurs., March 26, 2009.....Orchard Park
 Wed., April 22, 2009.....Guelph
 Marina Howlett's house
 Thurs., May 21, 2009.....Orangeville
 Ruth Tomlin's house
 Wed., June 17, 2009.....Guelph
 John Ritchie's house

Upper Grand DSB - Professional Development Days

Mon., February 23, 2009
 Fri., June 5, 2009
 Fri., June 26, 2009



Holidays

February 16, 2009.....Family Day
 March 14 - 22, 2009Winter Break
 April 10 - 13, 2009Easter
 June 25, 2009.....Last day of school for students
 June 29 - August 31, 2009.....Summer Vacation

Pay Dates

February 6, 2009	May 1, 2009
February 20, 2009	May 15, 2009
March 6, 2009	May 29, 2009
March 20, 2009	June 12, 2009
April 3, 2009	June 26, 2009
April 17, 2009	July 10, 2009