

# THE 4 SHADOW

OCT 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GLEN HODGSON

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

IN THE NEWS	2
MESSAGE FROM KEN CORAN	2
VOTER APATHY	3
OCCUPY EVENTS	3
CONTEST WINNER	4
NEW MEMBER ENGAGEMENT	4

### IMPORTANT DATES

- *Oct 5 - World Teacher's Day*
- *Oct 19 -TBU Executive meeting*
- *Oct 20 - CBC Regionals*
- *Oct 31- Seniority list posted in all workplaces*

### Time to get FeelingBetterNow

Recently, I attended the annual conference held by the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan in Toronto. The theme of this year's event was the emerging issue of mental health and the speakers and workshops were all designed to give OSSTF officers strategies and tools to help their members when dealing with issues related to mental health.

According to OTIP research, "One in five Canadians suffers from some type of mental health issue. Only one in eight Canadians receives the right diagnosis and treatment for their condition. At OTIP, we take every aspect of our members' health and well-being seriously. We recognize that there are times when you may have concerns about your emotional and mental health."

To address these concerns, OTIP is now offering a new service called FeelingBetterNow.

FeelingBetterNow is a Web-based mental health program designed to assist in the prevention, early diagnosis, and ongoing management of common emotional and mental health issues.

The purpose of the initiative is to provide a confidential diagnostic tool to help you understand if you are suffering from health-related issues and to zero-in on what they are and how they are affecting you and your overall health.

The end result is feedback that can be useful for you or your medical professionals to help begin the process of dealing with mental health-related issues in an appropriate and meaningful way.

It is time to acknowledge that mental health issues are real and they are common in any workplace. By offering timely intervention and support, we can have happier and healthier workplaces for all of our members.

Visit the District 4 website at:  
[www.nearnorth-osstf.org](http://www.nearnorth-osstf.org)



### [Why separate schools are outperforming public boards](#)

Public funding for the Ontario separate school system has always been a controversial topic. Catholics have the choice of sending their elementary school-aged children either to separate or to public schools, and non-Catholics do not have this choice. Do separate school administrators have a greater incentive to provide higher-quality education because of the competitive pressure?

### [Teachers seek court clarification on class sizes](#)

For months, the contract stalemate between the BC Teachers' Federation and the provincial government was confined to the bargaining table. At that time, the arguments moved inside the courtroom as the union asked for clarification on a ruling that it believes gives teachers the right to negotiate class size and composition.

### [Feed a student, feed the future](#)

By correlating a student survey that tracked eating habits at home and at school with test scores, school board researchers have concluded that middle-school students who eat some food each morning score higher in math and science. (Forty-four per cent of students that did not eat were deemed academically at risk versus 28 per cent who did.)

### [Liberals plan to overhaul B.C. College of Teachers in fall](#)

New legislation by the B.C. Liberal government will be introduced this fall that will transform the B.C. College of Teachers. A new discipline committee will be formed that will consist of nine members, five from the government-friendly partner groups (one each from the superintendents, principals and vice-principals, FISA, school trustees, and parent groups) and four from members who were nominated by the BCTF or elected. The panels that hear discipline-related cases will be made up of three people; two will be government-approved council members while only one can be affiliated with the BCTF.

### [Experts support rewards for at-risk students](#)

Education experts are praising recommendations outlined in a Toronto District School Board draft report intended to help at-risk students — including financial incentives for poor students that work hard. But some say students should be paid through scholarships or for additional work, not handed cash for marks.

## EDUCATION STILL A PRIORITY POST ELECTION

Publicly funded education is also the winner in the Ontario provincial election says the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

"I want to congratulate Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal party on winning a third term of office," said Ken Coran, President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF). "During the Liberal government's tenure, the Premier and his party have made publicly funded education a top priority and demonstrated respect for those responsible for its delivery. The Liberals' resolve to protect and to further invest in our schools and post-secondary institutions and programs is the key to Ontario's future, and obviously appealed to voters."

"We look forward to working with the government as well as the NDP and Progressive Conservative leaders and members to meet future challenges and to further strengthen Ontario's publicly funded education system – a system highly regarded by the rest of the world. We have had a positive working relationship with all of the parties as we worked to protect and enhance publicly funded education and we look forward to renewing and maintaining those relationships in the future," added Coran.

"We also owe the candidates from all parties who ran for office a debt of gratitude. They exemplify a commitment to public service that needs to be recognized and applauded. Congratulations on your campaigns and your dedication to working to continue to improve our province," concluded Coran.

## VOTER APATHY

ROB GRAHM

Why is it that we are now less likely to exercise the fundamental rights of our citizenship?

We have all seen the numbers. Voter turnout fell to an all-time low in Thursday's Ontario election, during which just 49% of eligible voters showed up to cast a ballot. This, in spite of the government's efforts to increase voter participation with several initiatives. Besides the theory behind fixed-date elections, there were also more days to vote, and more ways. Voters had the option to vote by special ballot by mail, in person at the local returning office, or during 10 days when advance polling stations were open.

I suppose voter fatigue can be argued, since we were asked to head to the polls shortly after a federal election in May, and municipal elections last October. Interestingly, the provincial results run counter to those of the recent federal election, when some 61% of Canadians turned out for the polls.

However, it is the trend that is most alarming. In 1990, when Bob Rae's New Democrats won a majority, 64% of eligible voters turned out. By 2003, the rate was down to 57%. In 2007, 52% of voters went to the polls. And now, for the first time, we are under 50% of eligible voters.

I don't know what the next steps should be. Should we be considering making voting mandatory? This is the case in Australia, where voting is compulsory for citizens over 18. In their last federal election, they witnessed a registered voter turnout of 93%.

The one positive we can take from this past election is that advanced-polling results were up. This may indicate that online voting could make it more attractive and easier for citizens. Elections Ontario reportedly has an online voting system it is willing to try. Of course, this will bring up many questions and concerns over privacy and trust.

I have decided to ask the membership for its thoughts. In this month's website poll I have asked, "Why has voter turnout dropped?" Please visit [www.nearnorth-osstf.org](http://www.nearnorth-osstf.org) to participate. Yes, I see the irony in asking you to vote on voter apathy. :)



## OCCUPY EVENTS

We have received the following information from Sid Ryan, OFL President, regarding the "Occupy" events being planned for various locations in Ontario. Please share this information with members.

Please note that the organizers of the events would like members of labour unions to participate as individual workers. This means that members should not take OSSTF/FEESO flags to the events. As more information becomes available, we will send it to all leaders.

From Sid Ryan Brothers and Sisters:

I am sure that many of you have been following the epic Occupy Wall Street protests that are now entering their third week and the similar actions that have spread throughout the United States. This is a truly exciting movement that represents a new kind of grass roots organizing that is taking its lead from similar tactics and outreach strategies used in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Greece, the UK and elsewhere. Broadly speaking, this is an organic movement that is opposing the austerity agenda that sees governments cooperating with corporations to download the financial crisis onto the backs of working people. This is very much in line with the struggles union members have been confronting at the bargaining table and in our campaigns to defend the next generation of workers. In the US, the AFL-CIO has supported the protests. We are currently coordinating with the CLC to determine how Canadian labour unions can best support the protests that will begin this weekend.

We have been approached by some of the organizers of "Occupy" events with a request that rather than organizing and mobilizing the events, labour unions provide solidarity and support for these grass roots actions, while encouraging our members to participate in local events as individual workers.

## AND THE WINNER IS...

Thank you to all teachers that sent in their non-board emails this past month. The winner, of the \$100 gift card from Staples, is Steve Mair. Congratulations Steve!

This month's trivia question: One factor that contributed to Tim Hudak's loss in the provincial election, was his party's affiliation with the mayor of Toronto. Name that Mayor?

This month's prize is a carrying bag complete with water bottle and sticky pad.



## NEW MEMBER ENGAGEMENT WORKGROUP SEEKS PARTICIPANTS

The Provincial Executive is seeking up to eight members at large with five years or less experience as an OSSTF/FEESO member, to join the New Member Engagement Workgroup.

The Provincial Executive has just approved the creation of a New Member Engagement Workgroup to provide input and advice on issues such as new member resources, workshops to assist local leaders in engaging new members, training opportunities for new members, the creation and distribution of OSSTF/FEESO giveaways for new members and other topics as required.

The workgroup will meet up to four times per year. Members applying to the workgroup must be able to secure time release from their employer. All costs associated with being a member of the workgroup will be covered by provincial office. Your bargaining unit president will be notified if you are appointed to the workgroup.

If you are an OSSTF/FEESO member in good standing and interested in putting your name forward for consideration for appointment to the workgroup, please provide a letter of application detailing the following:

- ⇒ your current position, work location, district and bargaining unit;
- ⇒ why you would like to become a member of the workgroup;
- ⇒ what contributions you could make to the workgroup;
- ⇒ any experience you have working in your bargaining unit or district on new member engagement
- ⇒ a work telephone contact number;
- ⇒ a home telephone contact number; and
- ⇒ a current personal e-mail address.

Please forward your letter of application to Randy Banderob, Executive Assistant by mail to 60 Mobile Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M4A 2P3 or by email to [banderr@osstf.on.ca](mailto:banderr@osstf.on.ca), Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 1, 2011.

### RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

<http://www.skepticalscience.com/>

*Skeptical science is an all encompassing web page which focuses on global warming and climate change. This website gets skeptical about global warming skepticism. Links to resources, articles, and software are provided.*

Primary article contributor: Glen Hodgson  
Layout, design, and editing: Rob Graham

### OSSTF TBU District 4 Executive 2011-2012

Glen Hodgson- President	Steve Todoroff AHSS rep
Santo Cucullo- VP North Region	Ray Rheault -CSS rep
Rob Graham- VP South Region	Lloyd McMillan-FJM rep
Glen Hodgson- Provincial Councillor	Parker Robinson-NSS rep
Richard Wolfram- Chief Negotiator	Stevan McCallum-PSHS rep
Christina Weirsma-Treasurer	Kevin Henehan-WFSS rep
Chris Chabot-Secretary	Anthony Loreto-WSS rep
	Chris Bell-OTBU rep

printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper with eco-friendly font

### OSSTF DISTRICT 4 TBU

347 Sherbrooke St  
Suite 207  
North Bay, Ontario  
P1B 2C1  
Phone: 705-472-1408  
Fax: 705-472-0759  
Email:  
[osstf@cogeco.net](mailto:osstf@cogeco.net)