

IT'S A DEAL



The TECT Collective Bargaining Team on the night of the TECT ratification vote: Back Row from Left to Right: Nick Netta, Shannon Flynn, Shawna Campbell, Bruno Pileggi. Front Row from Left to Right: Anthony Bellissimo (Chief Negotiator), John Pecsénye (Chair), Mario Bernardo. Not present in the photo: Jeff Heximer (Liaison, Provincial OECTA)

The TECT Collective Bargaining Team reached a tentative agreement with the Board at 10:20 p.m. on the evening of Wednesday, June 1, 2005. The tentative agreement was ratified by the Board of Trustees and the TECT membership on Wednesday, June 8, 2005. The TECT membership voted 97.9% in favour of accepting the agreement.

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COVER

The Cover photo was taken by
Louisa DeCiantis

The opinions expressed in Metro Voice are not necessarily those of the TECT Executive, the Communications Committee or the Editorial Board. The Metro Voice reserves the right to edit any submissions for length and clarity. Contributors will be contacted regarding any major changes to their articles. Final approval of articles rests with the Editorial Board. Anonymous submissions cannot be accepted.

The logo of the Ontario Education Association (OEA) is located at the bottom left of the page. It consists of a small circular emblem with the letters 'OEA' inside, followed by the text 'ONTARIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION'.

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President's Message



Where has the year gone? It seems like only yesterday, to quote an old cliché, that we were in the dog days of September. Much has been accomplished and there is much left to do.

At our Annual General Meeting, held on May 26th, I was once again given the privilege to serve as your president for the next two years. The assembly also passed a series of motions that releases a fourth officer to meet the ever growing needs of almost 4000 elementary teachers in our unit.

One of the most pressing issues facing our Association has been that of achieving a fair collective agreement. The sands beneath the Collective Bargaining Committee's feet have been constantly shifting during this long but all too important initiative.

The McGuinty Liberals are slowly regaining their level of popularity after last year's introduction of the Health Tax and the delisting of physiotherapy and chiropractic services. However, in late November 2004, the Minister of Education, Gerard Kennedy, sent a letter to all Directors' of Education, and Chairpersons, in which he promised them provincial initiatives that would assist them in their bargaining with OTF affiliates. That very same day he sent a letter to the provincial presidents of OTF. In his letter, he invited the four affiliates of OTF to enter into a time-limited discussion between the minister and the presidents that would touch upon a number of key issues. In a move that puzzled everyone, the Minister then wrote all unit presidents in the province explaining his position. In response to that letter, I submitted a response on behalf of the Toronto Elementary Catholic Teachers.

In December, the B21 Memo introduced the phrase, 'peace and stability' into the collective bargaining vernacular. The memo outlined a prescriptive four-year funding process that allowed for 2%, 2%, 2.5% and 3% for four-year collective agreements. There was also an indication that mandated three year terms would be replaced by either a two year or a four year term (Bill 167), teacher development accounts and requirements on Boards' of Education to track the new funding. The new initiative did not take into account that most of the Boards, whose salaries were based on the August 31, 2004 trigger, were the Catholic Boards in the province of Ontario. The memo did not allow for any flexibility. For example, for years the Toronto Catholic District School Board has been reducing the primary class loadings at the expense of the members' benefits and salaries. Thus, the Board had begun to meet the tar-

gets as outlined by the Ministry. In several discussions and pointed questions the Minister was asked if those monies could be directed to reducing the class sizes in the junior and intermediate divisions. Equity should also mean flexibility.

Locally, we did not bargain without some discussion with our public school sisters and brothers.

Recently, another series of twists and turns has had a direct impact on negotiations: the 'framework' for elementary and secondary public school teachers has redefined the landscape for bargaining once again. Although our public school counterparts have been working with a model since mid-April we were not presented with a parallel framework until early May.

Our new agreement, with its four-year term, will have a profound effect on the working conditions of our members. Although the salary component for a four-year deal is retroactive, benefits are not. Benefit enhancements included a paramedical provision, reinstatement of smoking cessation, fertility drug provisions, raising the age of a dependent to 25 (provided they are attending a post secondary institution), and enhanced dental and medical provisions.

The Collective Bargaining Committee negotiated a fair collective agreement and tentatively settled on Wednesday, June 1, 2005 at approximately 10:20 pm. Both the Teachers and the Trustees ratified the tentative agreement in early June. There are many changes to the collective agreement that will require this unit to be adaptive and vigilant. An enhanced transfer process that not only "opens up" transfers but protects those members who have been declared surplus, took countless hours to negotiate. Although there was no agreement on component staffing, a joint committee composed of Teacher and Board representatives will have the ability to allocate 10 FTE Special Education teachers in each of the next three years. That is an additional 30 teachers to offset difficult conditions.

Two years ago the members of TECT were stripped of their right to vote on a collective agreement negotiated by its elected representatives. In this round that right was restored. The relationship between the Teachers and Board is continuously evolving. It is my belief that we have taken the first steps in turning a corner in our relationship. There will be many challenges and obstacles to overcome. No collective agreement is perfect. No collective agreement meets all the needs of the members. TECT will continue to bring our issues to the forefront and solve problems collaboratively where possible.

Finally, let me wish each and everyone of you a peaceful summer. Wherever you are, whatever you do, may God watch over you.

*John Pecsénye is President of the
Toronto Elementary Catholic Teachers*



A Memorable Year

The end of another year is a few days away. In June we signed a four-year deal that was overwhelmingly ratified by the membership. Let us hope that this is the beginning of lasting labour peace. A time when our teachers will be allowed to do what they do best: enrich the minds of children within a Catholic context.

In my December editorial, I thought out loud whether this might be a memorable year for our teachers. Only time will tell, but I believe that we have turned a corner as a profession. All of us should be proud to affirm that we are teachers.

As an Executive we always strive to create ways to get more members involved in the Association. If you have not really been too involved in TECT events, I ask you to consider some of the following ten suggestions. I would certainly welcome other, probably more creative, suggestions from the members.

- Whenever you have a question about the contract or are unsure about a union issue – call a TECT release officer.
- Attend a least one, and hopefully more, sub-unit social event(s).
- Join a TECT Committee.
- Apply to be a delegate to the OECTA Annual General Meeting or attend as an observer.
- Attend TECT and the Sub-Unit General Meetings.
- Visit, at least once, the TECT Office at 951 Wilson Avenue, Unit 12.
- Write a poem, editorial, article, book review or something else for the *Metro Voice*.
- Visit the TECT web-site at www.tect.org.
- Visit the Provincial OECTA web-site at www.oecta.on.ca.
- Add your name to the TECT membership e-mail list and receive timely and informative news and updates.

Many members who get involved – stay involved in one capacity or another. I hope some of these suggestions will encourage you to be more involved in the Association.

Superordinate Reprisal

One issue that often permeates discussions with members is the fear of superordinate reprisals. Members comment, that on occasion, they fear calling TECT or taking action to protect their rights because they fear reprisals from their superordinate. If you feel this way, it is important not to “ignore” this issue, but to discuss your concerns with a release officer. As mentioned before, a release officer will never act without your permission and everything shared is kept in the strictest confidence. If you are not acting to protect your rights because of this fear, then I suggest asking yourself, “What advice would I give a loved one, my son or daughter, if they were being mistreated at school or at work?” Dealing with one’s fear is always a complex matter, but beginning a dialogue is the first step to better understanding one’s concerns and overcoming them. Ultimately, the goal is not to add more stress to your life, but to address your concerns in a reasonable manner that improves your working conditions, while protecting your rights.

Farewell

At this year’s Annual General Meeting a resolution was overwhelmingly passed to release the Third Vice-President. One of the duties of the Third Vice-President will be to assume the role of *Metro Voice* Editor. I wish the incoming editor, Louisa DeCiantis, all the best. Louisa is well qualified for the role, given her past experiences as a contributor to *Metro Voice*, and as a former Chair of the Communications Committee. I am leaving the *Metro Voice* in capable hands.

As for me, I wish to thank the Executive for affording me the opportunity to be Editor these last few years. It was a rewarding experience. I also wish to thank the membership for their support, and involvement in the editorial page. I encourage members to continue reading, and commenting and contributing to, the *Metro Voice*. I know I certainly will.

*Anthony Bellissimo
is Editor of the Metro Voice*



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It Takes A Barrier To Stifle A

“We are companions on the journey, breaking bread and sharing life...”

A few years ago, a secondary colleague, exasperated by some needy Grade 9’s, wanted to know how we elementary teachers dealt daily with children even younger and needier. He commented on our lot in life by saying of us, “We call you the nurturers.” I honestly sensed a compliment in what he had said.

Parents put their children from the tenderest of ages into our care. They come from a multitude of backgrounds and experiences. Part of our vocation as educators is to make them feel secure in a positive learning environment. We encourage them to open themselves up to the nourishment of knowledge, the light of wonder at the world around them, and the inner strength that comes from self-confidence.

However, this has never been a solo effort on our part. Many staff members participate in this ten-year process. As well, parents, siblings, friends, classmates, schoolmates, parish priests, and more contribute an invaluable share to the growth of each child. An effective learning environment welcomes, inspires, supports, and prepares the child for life.

“We are fed and we are nourished by the strength of those who care...”

What are we doing to this environment when we close our classroom doors? Lock the school entrances? Place cameras and buzzers at the castle gates? Demand that the community request for permission to enter? Send children to the water fountain in two’s, and use voicemail as the first method of contact on our phones? When we physically close off some of the outside world to our schools, I fear we may spiritually isolate and pinch off some of the essential communication and lifelines between the two. The climate that is being established is of a less than welcoming place.

Moreover, many of us know that these security measures are ineffective. Children know the combination codes to electronically locked stairwell doors. Parents, teachers, students, and delivery people pass through doors opened by others on a regular basis. I have been in many schools over

the last few years and I have never been challenged even though I was a “stranger”.

On the opposite end, parents, visitors, and workers with appointments or business in the school are stopped outside in the rain or snow as they try to figure out which entrance to use, or what method of gaining entry is in place at this building. If there is no immediate response to pushing a button, the questions and doubts start. Is the buzzer working? Is the office currently occupied? How long should I wait? Does anyone know I am out here? I was told at one school that if I got no response, that I should go to the church next door and phone from there. Uh huh.

Previous governments did a great deal of damage to the public image of teachers. The quest for “accountability”, instead of seeking cooperative solutions, has negatively affected many a parent-teacher interview. The barriers to “Welcome to Our School” further strain the relationship between home and school. The distance between school and community is made that much greater, and impede communication and understanding at stressful times is further impeded.

“We have been gifted with each other and we are called by the word of the Lord...”

Why have we been changing our ways? I have taught in many schools in Toronto and Scarborough throughout my career. I have always been in safe schools with no incidents of child endangerment. How many students have actually been threatened or hurt in GTA schools in the last ten years? Is the number more than those that have been hurt on the streets going home after school, playing in the parks, even living in some homes? Why are the focus, energy, and resources so much on our schools? What is the real price we are paying in terms of creating a positive, and enriching learning environment?

I believe that common sense and vigilance are what have always been used and are all that are needed. The rush to “secure the school against the outsider” is highly reminiscent of the overreaction to one horrible North American tragedy on one September day. How have multiple “heightened terror alerts” reported in the media created a false sense of imminent danger? How have abrupt changes to our traditional rule of law created a false sense of increased security? How many innocent

Community

Canadians have been negatively affected by broad measures taken against an unseen and unknown enemy?

At the local level, how many of our schools have lost some of their innocence and effectiveness by shutting out too much of the community? Are we still doing right by our children by raising them with too much mistrust of the “other” in our neighbourhoods? By locking out some of the community some of the time, are we not also locking down the minds of our youth? Is this really the way to prepare them for dealing with others they will meet as they get older? We can still educate our students to grow well and safely in the realities they will face in today’s world. But I think it should be done by “nurturers” who teach children in a healthy, nurturing environment.

Let us have the courage to open our hearts, our minds, and our schools to the loving and safe communities in which we live – that we know that we have here in Toronto. We need not be as much of a thoroughfare as the local public library or the neighbourhood shopping mall, but let us put out the welcome mat to the community. Let us open our doors and our arms to the senior and youthful volunteers and parents who have so much to offer to our students. It is through such contacts and communication that the children in our care will have a better and healthier appreciation for and understanding of others. I daresay that their teachers might also feel some of the same benefits.

Indeed, it does take a village to raise a child. Let us try to foster that approach and encourage that ideal by renewing our connection to the people living beside us in our school neighbourhoods.

“No longer strangers to each other...

To walk side by side with hope in our hearts for we believe in the love of our God. ”

— *C. Landry*

Dan Nazar is a teacher at St. René Goupil Catholic School

Move

“Dance,” sang the wind;

Feel your heart’s beat,

Hear the earth’s rhythm.

Sing your soul’s dream

And lose yourself in the music.

“Stand,” said the earth;

Plant your feet,

Spread your arms.

Raise your face to the sun

And speak your truth.

“Float,” whispered your heart;

Feel the pull of the wind,

Feel the turn of the Earth.

Use your soul to glide high,

And let nature guide your path.

“Be,” prayed God;

Dance with passion

Stand with Faith

Float with Vision

Be what dreams are made of.

Erin Paine is a teacher at Epiphany of Our Lord Academy



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THE RETIRED TEACHERS OF ONTARIO
LES ENSEIGNANTES ET ENSEIGNANTS
RETRAITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

Reflections of OECTA – AGM 2005

March Break is typically a time for relaxation and recuperation from a job well done; funny how a third year teacher would choose to spend time, attending a three day meeting in a Toronto hotel. Yet, that is exactly what I have chosen to do, for the second year, by attending the OECTA Annual General Meeting held in Toronto at the Westin Harbour Castle. Meeting day after day, talking about and voting on provincial union business may sound like a very dry and ordinary experience yet, year after year, the AGM draws hundreds of professional teachers to participate. There must be something about it that is worthwhile.

Let me tell you ...

On Friday, March 11, 2005, the day interviews end and March Break commences, the AGM extravaganza begins. Teachers and friends are welcomed into their weekend long meeting at the Westin Harbour Castle with a Casino Night Social with all proceeds going toward the Starlight Children's Foundation. Teachers from around the province, secondary and elementary, deal Blackjack, dance and socialize. It is a wonderful way to begin the AGM by meeting teachers from across the province, whose faces one will see throughout the weekend and in future years. It definitely makes the meeting of individuals more like one of long time friends. By the end of the weekend, in fact, those faces from Friday become names that one will not soon forget.

As the weekend progresses, the evenings are sprinkled with various other socials and gatherings that lend to fostering relationships and satisfy one's need for social fun and interaction. More important, however, is the experience during the day. Each day of the AGM, discussions and debate abound concerning amendments to the current OECTA handbook. Ironically, after a long day of discussing the amendments, conversations in the evening often centre on that exact same topic. The AGM becomes a satisfying and enjoyable immersion of one's self into a forum of OECTA policy and politics.

From my experience I have learned how the union is the glue that supports a teacher's profession and passion within the classroom. I have witnessed conversations between politicians and teachers, been inspired by retiring teachers and been captivated by the passion and knowledge of other young teachers attending the AGM for their first time. I could offer anecdotal evidence of my experience, but I could hardly choose just one.

As a young teacher, only in my third year as a professional, the experience is overwhelming and exciting. I do not have first hand experience with the history of the union, so I am not always aware of where we as a union have come from, but I have been around long enough to know that every teacher has needs and wants within their classroom, for their students and themselves as professionals.

The AGM is the perfect place to meet others who share our passions and to learn how the union can help. More importantly, however, it is a place where we can empower ourselves with the knowledge to help ourselves.

*Erin Paine is a teacher at
Epiphany of Our Lord Academy*

Every year TECT sends more than fifty delegates to represent the interests and views of our unit at our Provincial OECTA-AGM. Joining with almost 600 other delegates from across the province, the delegates assembled at the AGM become the supreme law making body of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. Judging from the response from previous attendees, it promises to be an enjoyable and memorable experience that will heighten your awareness and appreciation for how your Association works to serve you. Applications for members interested in serving as TECT delegates to Provincial OECTA-AGM 2006 will be made available in October 2005.

Everything You Wanted To But Were A

Q ■ *What does the acronym LSSAC stand for?*

A ■ LSSAC is the abbreviated form for Local School Staffing Advisory Committee.

Q ■ *What is the purpose or function of the LSSAC?*

A ■ The primary function of the LSSAC is to advise the principal regarding issues related to staffing and workload. The LSSAC advises on matters such as, but not limited to, school staffing priorities, the development of the tentative staffing model, workload distributions, instructional assignments, supervision duties and lunch break arrangements. Teacher representatives on the committee are expected to bring forward suggestions or requests of any teacher(s) at the school who make submissions to the committee. The committee is also responsible for completing reports requested from time to time by the Staff Allocation Committee (SAC)

Q ■ *Who sits on the LSSAC?*

A ■ The principal, any vice-principal, the Association Representative, and the elected teacher representatives.

Q ■ *How many teacher representatives are allowed to sit on the LSSAC?*

A ■ The number of teacher representatives on the LSSAC is determined by calculating 10% of the

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers on staff (rounded to the nearest whole number). To ensure a fair representation of teacher views on the committee, especially in smaller schools, each LSSAC must have a minimum of three teacher representatives.

Q ■ *How are the teacher representatives of the LSSAC selected?*

A ■ The teacher representatives of the LSSAC must be elected by members of the teaching staff. The selection of teacher representatives by election is absolutely essential to ensure that they enjoy the confidence of the teaching staff at the school and to ensure accountability to the staff when making decisions.

Q ■ *Once elected, how long do teacher representatives get to sit on the LSSAC?*

A ■ Teacher representatives on the LSSAC serve for one year. They should be elected prior to September 15th, as that is the date when their term begins. The term of office of the LSSAC teacher representatives expires on September 14th of the following school year.

Q ■ *What happens if a teacher representative resigns from the committee or leaves the school prior to the end of the school year?*

A ■ The teaching staff would be required to elect a replacement.

Q ■ *Who sits as chair of the LSSAC?*

A ■ The LSSAC is co-chaired by the principal and the OECTA Association Representative. It is a duty of the LSSAC to meet at the call of either co-chair.

Q ■ *Are notes of LSSAC proceedings required?*

A ■ Yes they are. One of the duties of the LSSAC is to keep notes of all the proceedings of the LSSAC. These notes should be made available to all teaching staff.

Q ■ *Who is responsible for taking and keeping the notes of LSSAC proceedings?*

A ■ Notes are taken by the secretary of the committee. The secretary is a teacher representative on the LSSAC who is elected by the other teacher members of the committee.

Q ■ *When, and how often, must the LSSAC meet?*

A ■ The LSSAC must meet not less than once per school term during the school year. As mentioned earlier, an LSSAC meeting can be called by either co-chair when, and if, the need arises. Three specific meetings are prescribed and detailed in the Collective Agreement and are, therefore, compulsory.

Know About The LSSAC... fraid to Ask

Q. *When is the first compulsory LSSAC meeting?*

A. The first compulsory meeting of the LSSAC must be held by the end of the second week of September. Following this first LSSAC meeting, the committee must report at a meeting of the full teaching staff of the school no later than the end of the third week of September.

Q. *What is the primary purpose of this first compulsory LSSAC meeting?*

A. Although any matter typically discussed at LSSAC can be raised, the primary function of this meeting is to review the tentative staffing model to ensure that the staffing provisions effective September 30 meet the terms of the Collective Agreement.

Q. *When is the second compulsory LSSAC meeting?*

A. The second compulsory meeting must be held prior to the final Friday in October.

Q. *What is the primary purpose of the second compulsory LSSAC meeting?*

A. The primary purpose is to ensure that any class loading problems have been resolved by October 15th. The LSSAC must then report their findings, to the full teaching staff no later than the Friday in the final week of October.

Q. *When is the third compulsory LSSAC meeting?*

A. The school principal must consult with the Local School Staffing Advisory Committee during the first three weeks of March.

Q. *What is the primary purpose of this third compulsory LSSAC meeting?*

A. The LSSAC must meet to offer advice and input to the principal regarding the projected enrollment for the coming school year, the staff allocation based on enrollment and the organization of the school based on that enrollment and staffing. A tentative staffing model for the coming year is to be established based on the discussions that take place at this March LSSAC meeting. By the end of these meetings, the committee should be aware of any available positions as well as the names of teachers who may be surplus to the tentative staffing model. The tentative staffing model is subsequently submitted to the superintendent for approval no later than March 31.

Q. *How frequently must the LSSAC report to the full teaching staff?*

A. The Collective Agreement stipulates that there must be a reporting of LSSAC proceedings to the full teaching staff no later than Friday of the final week of October and no later than Friday of the third week of April. The LSSAC should

report on a regular basis but not less than once a term.

Q. *What happens if issues and concerns are brought to the attention of the principal at an LSSAC meeting and they are not addressed?*

A. If members of the LSSAC feel that concerns or issues are not being addressed, the Association Representative should contact the TECT office for advice and guidance. If required, TECT can raise the concerns of the committee with the relevant superintendent or the Staffing Allocation Committee that meets to discuss staffing and allocation issues at the Unit level.

Mario Bernardo is the Second Vice-President of the Toronto Elementary Catholic Teachers and a member of the Staffing Allocation Committee

If you have any more questions about the LSSAC please contact the TECT office at (416) 398-6838 or via e-mail to info@tect.org. A release officer will be more than happy to respond to any questions or concerns you might have.

A SUCCESSFUL START

Kindling the Fire

The famous poet Yeats said, “Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire.” When children come to school they are certainly not an empty bucket, but are indeed small fires having been lit by the “matchstick” of their parents.

Whether or not this small fire grows into a full bonfire illuminating out and warming those around it, depends on the kind of education available and, on the delicate relationship between home and school. Studies have proven time and again that if there is frequent and good communication between parents and teachers, the child does so much better at school. Parents and teachers who support each other are giving clear messages to the child that learning is very important.

Teachers need to know and understand the inner working of each child’s home life – family members, routines that are in place, and the expectations around chores, mealtimes, leisure activities and bedtime. Parents must have a good understanding of the modern classroom, the teaching style of the teacher, the curriculum, and the daily routines.

As a Junior Kindergarten teacher, I have the great advantage of holding an interview with each child and the family before they enter the school. This is especially important when children are very young, because they often are not able to tell their own history and experiences. It is also reassuring to the parents for them to see the classroom to discuss the routines, activities and expectations of Junior Kindergarten. The child benefits from seeing this friendly, respectful dialogue between the parents and the teacher. This also helps to alleviate any apprehension the child may feel about a new situation. Could such an interview at the beginning of each school year help to increase positive feelings and lessen any fears about the new classroom and teacher? I believe it would.

In general, children above the kindergarten level show up on the first day, usually with a combination of positive and negative feelings. They must find their way to a new classroom, meet a new teacher, and sometimes deal with a lot of new classmates. This can be very stressful. Usually, a few weeks later, the school holds a “Meet the Teacher” evening. This is a fine practice but somehow seems a bit late. As well, it is often not easy for parents to share any information with the teacher privately.

This has to be done at the interview for the first report card, which is sometimes not until December. If there are any major concerns, the teacher would contact the parents early on, but what about the many average kids or kids with mild problems?

Surely, it would be helpful to spend some time getting to know each other early on in the school year. The relationship forged between parent and teacher cannot be underestimated in terms of its impact on the ability of a child to have a successful start in education.

Barbara Chamberlain is a teacher at
St. Maria Goretti Catholic School

If you would like to contribute to Metro Voice by sharing your thoughts or ideas on pedagogical issues, or any other issue that you think might be of interest to our members, send your article to Mario Bernardo via e-mail to mbernardo@tect.org

Parental Involvement

More and more, parents want to be involved in the schooling of their children. Many teachers are unsure about the role that they should play and how they fit into the educational framework.

We all know that if parents show a close interest in their child's school progress, help with homework and home projects, and attend their child's school performances and sports events, their child is more likely to have higher student achievement, higher aspirations, better attendance and a more positive relationship with their teachers. (*For the Love of Learning*). **The question is how can we help promote this positive environment that will lead to greater student achievement.**

J.L. Epstein has studied parental involvement in depth. She has categorized her findings into five basic types. Type One revolves around parenting. At this stage, the school suggests home conditions that support learning at each grade level. They provide parenting workshops, videos and handouts on parenting and age appropriate child-rearing issues. Through this venue of open communication, there is mutual respect; in that parents are aware of the importance of school and teachers have a better understanding of family cultures, goals, talents and needs.

Communication deepens in Type Two where teachers send home weekly or monthly folders of student work to be reviewed and commented upon. This increased interaction helps parents and teachers monitor the child's progress and make better decisions about programming. Both have a common base for the discussion of student problems and successes.

Type Three encourages and recruits parents to help in the school. School volunteers are in-serviced as to their role in the classroom and then assist in classes throughout the school. This familiarity with teachers, and the challenges of the job, creates better understanding and a comfort level with school interactions. The awareness of parent interest, and a willingness to help, can create a readiness to try more programs that involve parents in other ways. For students, there is an increase in learning skills when they receive more individual attention.

Type Four centers around learning at home. Schools provide ideas to parents on how to help the child achieve at home. Information is provided on skills in each subject at each grade. Built in to the regular homework schedule, is the requirement that, at least once or twice a month, students discuss their schoolwork at home. Sometimes calendars are provided with daily topics for discussion by parents and students. The outcome is that more meaningful homework gets done.

Type Five occurs when parents represent other parents. At this stage, parents sit on committees, advisory councils, or parent organizations, and become advocacy groups that provide input to improve school programs.

By working together as partners in education, parents and teachers can better deal with the challenges that lie ahead. By reaching out to include more parents, we can create volunteering programs that feature training and meaningful activities for volunteers to conduct.

*Carol Soper is a teacher at
St. Kevin Catholic School*

If you would like to contribute to Metro Voice by sharing your thoughts or ideas on the importance of parental or community involvement in our schools, or any other issue that you think might be of interest to our members, send your article to Mario Bernardo via e-mail to mbernardo@tect.org.

IMPORTANT DATES

SEPTEMBER 14

Term of office of LSSAC committee ends.
See Article 5.07 (c)

SEPTEMBER 15

Term of office of newly elected LSSAC committee begins. See Article 5.07 (c)

SEPTEMBER 30

Date used to determine maximum class loadings.
See Article 5.07 (c)

BY END OF 2ND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER

LSSAC must hold its first meeting.
See Article 5.07 (a)

BY END OF 3RD WEEK OF SEPTEMBER

LSSAC must report at a meeting of the full teaching staff. See Article 5.07 (a)

OCTOBER 1

Deadline date to apply to the Superintendent of Personnel Services to request consideration for related work experience. See Article 4.06 (d)

OCTOBER 15

Class loading problems arising under 5.01 (c) must be resolved by this date.
See Article 5.01 (c) (iii)

BY FINAL FRIDAY OF OCTOBER

LSSAC to report to full teaching staff of school no later than this date. See Article 5.07 (d) (ii)

NOVEMBER 30

Category Upgrading Forms must be submitted to Human Resources in order to qualify for upgrading retroactive to September 1.
See Article 3.08

NOVEMBER 30

Seniority list to be updated by the Board.
See Article 8.03 (c)

NOVEMBER 30

Teachers who elect to resign effective December 31 must give notice by this date (waived by mutual agreement). See Article 8.08

CYBER CHALK

We have all experienced that chalk dust gets everywhere – but on the Internet? The following are selected samples of useful websites for Ontario Teachers.

Karen's Treasure Troves

www.karensclassroom.com/

Karen's online classroom is linked to a wide variety of printable resources for various events and classroom activities. The Grade 2, 4 & 6 Treasure Troves contain useful organizational solutions, such as a substitute teacher info package.

Free Stuff for Canadian Teachers

www.thecanadianteacher.com/

Did you catch the title? This is a part of the Canadian Teacher website which offers educators links to free resources, materials, lesson plans, software, samples and computers. Although many resources are promotions from commercial sites that solicit for contact info, there are some rare gems.

The Teacher's Lounge

www.tbeturtlepond.com/resources.btm

A collection of web resources dedicated to Ontario curriculum and teacher services. It includes links to searchable educational sites and government agencies.

The Ontario Teacher's Webring

<http://s.webring.com/hub?ring=ejc>

Search for more websites on your own. The Ontario Teachers Webring are a set of linked web sites devoted to education in Ontario. These non-commercial sites offer lesson and unit plans or links that lead to other sites useful for teaching.

*James Harvie is a teacher at
St. Kevin Catholic School*

If you wish to share any websites you have discovered, please submit its title and URL (http://www.etc.) and short description. It may appear in a future Cyber Chalk column.



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*Some restrictions apply. O.A.C.