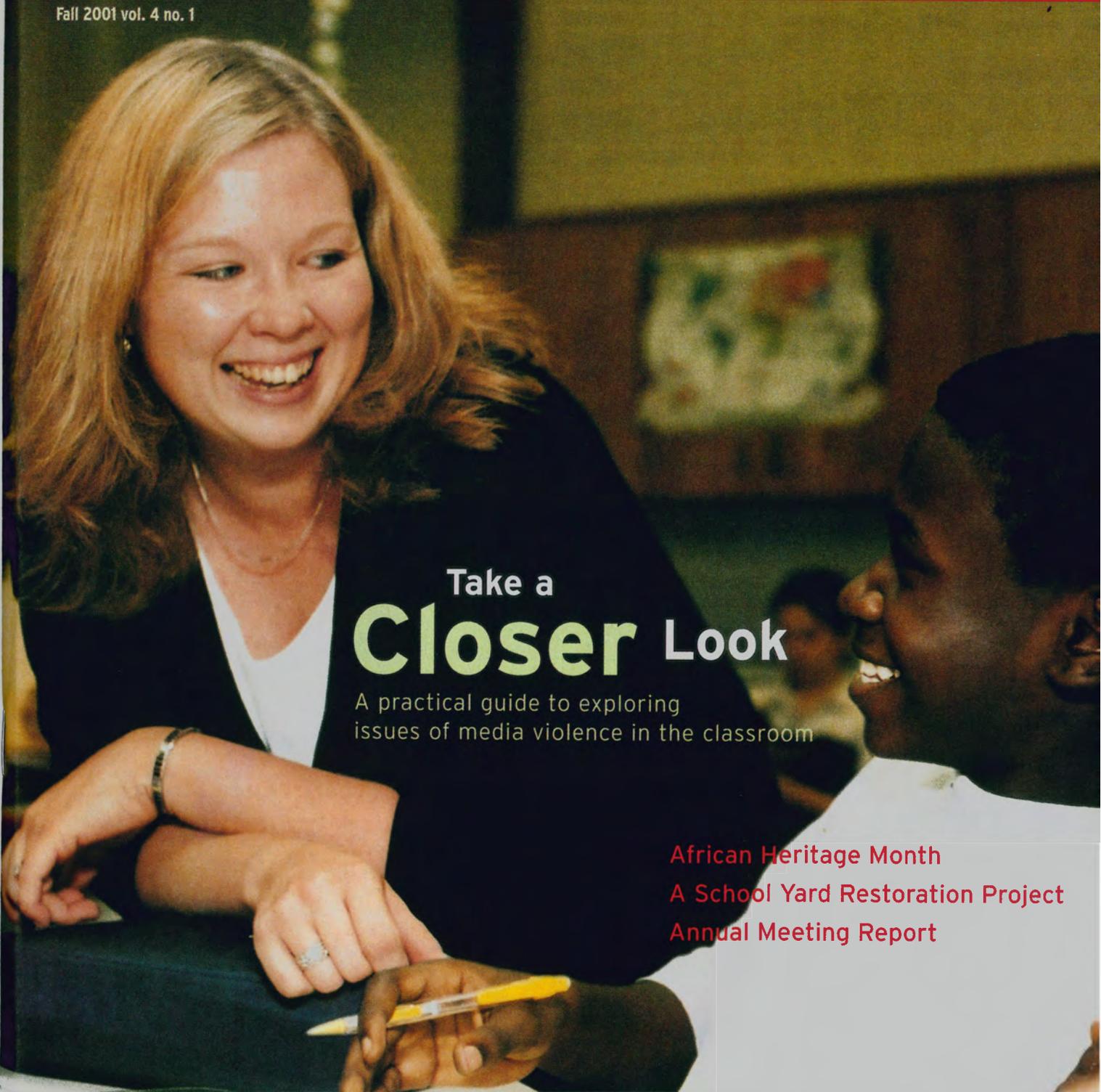


voice

Fall 2001 vol. 4 no. 1

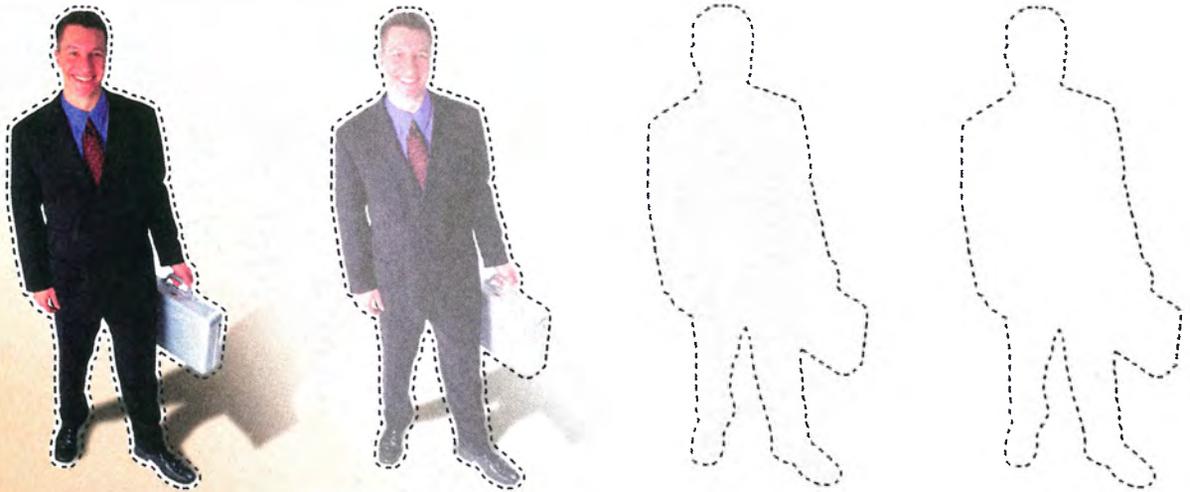


Take a
Closer Look

A practical guide to exploring
issues of media violence in the classroom

African Heritage Month
A School Yard Restoration Project
Annual Meeting Report

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Marietta Stonehouse-Kish (retired) taught Primary and Junior grades at Millgrove School, Hamilton-Wentworth DSB. She was inspired by the benefits that accrued to the entire school community as Millgrove developed its "Learning Ground."

COVER PHOTO: Rick Matthews, with thanks to Sharron Mathers and the students at Rockcliffe Middle School, Toronto.

voice

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Elementary Teachers'
Federation of Ontario

Elementary Teachers Must Stand United



Phyllis Benedict,
President, ETFO

During August, Premier Harris and his caucus met to plan their strategy for the next election. Following that meeting, there was some indication the government realized it must re-invest in public education. That idea appears to have been driven not by altruism but by opinion polls linking the government's declining popularity to public concerns about Ontario's education system.

The Premier's statements about replacing some of the over \$2 billion that has been stripped from public education were qualified by the assertion that the government now has the tools – student testing and teacher testing – to measure

the outcomes of its various initiatives. Then, to bolster support for itself and to detract from its unpopular actions, the government aired two television advertisements focusing on education issues. Even the most ardent Tory supporter tired of the saturation coverage these spots enjoyed – at a cost of \$6 million to the public purse.

Last spring, the government provided an additional \$100 million to boards to address teacher workload issues. The Minister of Education stated publicly that \$50 million would go to the elementary panel. We saw virtually nothing.

ETFO has repeatedly drawn attention to the funding gap between elementary and secondary. The difference between the government's rhetoric and its actions has been breathtaking. It says it understands the issue and will address it; yet its actions have increased the gap between the panels.

ETFO members take pride in our work. Yet over six years of unsupported restructuring of elementary education has taken its toll. For some of our members, focusing on the classroom leaves little time for other activities.

The imposition of recertification legislation has added to our frustration. ETFO was the first to say "No!" to this perpetual probation.

We have stood up to Boards intent on stripping collective agreements; we have represented members' rights through the grievance process; we have defended members before the College of Teachers. Some are highly critical and bewildered by our new stance. To them, our message is "Get used to it!"

No one advocates on behalf of elementary teachers, educational workers and students more loudly and more persistently than ETFO. Our voice is heard. Our collective actions must speak loudly too.

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Strengthening the Defense Fund - Strong Principles, Strong Actions, Strong Finances



Gene Lewis,
General Secretary,
ETFO

At the inception of ETFO in July 1998, the Defense Fund was established. It is used to pay costs incurred for operating a strike, including strike pay, benefits and pension contributions. The Defense Fund may also be used to fund political action programs designed to defend against attacks on the collective bargaining rights of members. In our first year, the allocation to the Defense Fund was 0.05% of salary. When delegates to the

1999 Annual Meeting learned that the collective bargaining costs had exceeded revenue by over \$1 million, they increased that allocation to 0.075% in 1999-2000 and to 0.10% in 2000-2001.

During 1999-2000, a less volatile bargaining year, the Defense Fund realized a surplus of \$1.6 million. However, in 2000-2001 the government's unrelenting attacks on teachers, education workers and students resulted in a chaotic bargaining climate, 21 Locals in Provincial Takeover, and three full withdrawal of services strikes.

This year's Annual Meeting learned that the 2000-2001 Defense Fund costs of \$5.5 million had exceeded fee revenue by \$2.5 million. The

delegates determined to strengthen the Defense Fund by approving a special levy of 0.2% of salary for the 2001 through 2004 school years. On an average salary of \$54,000.00, that amounts to \$108.00 in pretax contributions.

Unless you have been on strike, this may seem like a lot; if you have been on strike, you appreciate the need. This special levy will generate an additional \$6 million per year to bolster the Defense Fund. Strong principles, strong actions, strong finances. These are three key elements in an effective union. Your representatives at the Annual Meeting have taken responsible action to ensure that the bargaining rights of our members are respected and protected.

Voice Editorial Policy

At its meeting in July, ETFO's Executive approved the following:

Goals of the publication

- To inform members of the priorities, policies and opinions and initiatives of the Federation.
- To provide a platform for the sharing of members' professional experiences.
- To provide high quality, practical curriculum units.
- To celebrate members' achievements and successes.

Content

- Regular columns shall be: President, General Secretary, Ontario Teachers' Federation, Canadian Teachers' Federation.
- Space shall be provided to ensure that each of the following ETFO service areas is regularly represented in Voice: Collective Bargaining, Equity and Women's Services, Professional Development, Strategic Services, Professional Relations.
- Curriculum units shall be published in cooperation with ETFO's Professional Development Services Area.
- Both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts received from members based on members' professional experiences shall be considered for publication.
- Personal opinion pieces shall not normally be considered for publication.
- Authors whose manuscripts are amended by the addition of a disclaimer or qualifier shall be informed prior to publication and given the opportunity to withdraw their submission.

Editorial Board

- The Editorial Board shall consist of the Administrative Committee.
- The Editor shall ensure that the Committee is informed as to the magazine's content prior to publication.
- The decisions of the Committee with regard to all aspects of the publication shall be final.
- Final pre-press signing authority rests with the General Secretary.

Review

The Editorial Policy of Voice shall be reviewed every two years.

CHARLOTTE MORGAN

cmorgan@etfo.org

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Snowbirds Visit Whitby

September 4 marked the official opening and dedication of **Captain Michael VandenBos Public School**, Whitby. The school is home to 600 teachers, education workers and students, kindergarten to grade eight. Because **Captain VandenBos** was a former Snowbird and Whitby resident, the Snowbirds marked the occasion with a flypast. **Lieutenant-General Campbell**, Chief of Air Staff, along with the snowbirds, visited classrooms in the afternoon and attended a dinner held in their honour that evening.

Toronto Teacher is Children's Author

Myrna Neuringer Levy, a regular contributor to the former *FWTAA Newsletter*, has just published her second book for children. *My Grandpa Plays with Trains* is intended for readers aged 4 to 8, although it will appeal to younger children, as well as older readers interested in trains. The subject matter will support the social studies curriculum in grades 1 and 2. The full colour photographs are of an actual antique toy train collection. Teachers can order the book directly from Myrna at a cost of \$12.00 plus shipping. Visit www.geocities.com/myrnasbooks, Email: myrnasbooks@yahoo.com.

Ever taught in Manitoba?

If you are a teacher who has taken maternity leave(s) from a Manitoba school division prior to August 18, 2000 - and you are not currently collecting your Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF) pension - you are now eligible to purchase period(s) of maternity leave as pensionable service. If interested, you must apply to purchase those leave(s) before July 3, 2002. For a Maternity Leave Purchase Request Form or more information contact: Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, Room 330, Johnston Terminal, 25 Forks Market Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4S8. Tel: 204-949-0048/1-800-782-0714. Email: info@traf.mb.ca. www.traf.mb.ca

ETFO Standing Committees

Getting involved with a standing committee is a great way to get involved with your union. The federation's standing committees ensure that the expertise and work experiences of members are an integral part of the design and development of ETFO programs and services. Committees develop policy and program recommendations; provide the perspective of the members on federation initiatives; and advise the executive on matters relating to the work of the committee. For more information on committees, ask your ETFO Steward

for a copy of the ETFO Reference Book 2001-2002. Watch for the 2002-2004 application forms, available in February 2002.

Food Safety Information

The Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education has produced a comprehensive and informative bilingual learning program. The program aims to teach children in grades 4 through 7 to FightBAC against food borne illness by focusing on four key messages: *clean* - Wash hands and surfaces often; *cook* - Cook to proper temperature; *chill* - Refrigerate promptly; and *separate* - Don't cross-contaminate. The program consists of a Teacher's Guide, Poster and education video. Some materials are available free from the website; others are available at cost recovery prices. The Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education, founded in 1997, is a coalition of industry, consumer, government, health and environmental organizations. Visit www.canfightbac.org. Tel: 613-798-3042.

Poll Finds Teachers are Tops!

Teachers scored the highest marks in a public opinion poll conducted by COMPAS on behalf of The National Post. When asked: Which of the following institutions is doing the best job? Teachers scored 69 out of 100; private or independent schools 67; private religious schools 63; provincial ministry of education 55. When rating the job performance of public schools, elementary schools scored 66; secondary schools 63. Interestingly, only respondents from Ontario said education is worse today than in the past, a finding for which the government is clearly responsible. Elsewhere in Canada, respondents said education is better. The overall poll was conducted on 785 people between August 17-20, 2001. The findings are considered accurate within plus or minus 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Eyes on the Government

The Ontario government reports it spent \$6 million on its early fall television and print 'education' advertising campaign. Watch this number skyrocket as the next provincial election draws closer. On Sunday October 13, *The Toronto Star* reported that the Mike Harris government has now spent a total of \$134 million on partisan advertising.

ETFO Voice is pleased to provide "PD Notes," a column written by the ETFO Professional Development Services Staff. It introduces issues, new programs and publications.



Heads Up: Ontario Early Reading Strategy

The Ontario Ministry of Education (government) is placing an even greater emphasis on the EQAO assessment results with its new initiative, the Ontario Early Reading Strategy. This project will have an impact on teachers and students in junior kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 3.



PD NOTES

ETFO's analysis of this initiative is included in our new position paper *Adjusting The Optics: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting*, which was released at our Annual Meeting in August, 2001. Here's what that document says about the Early Reading Strategy:

"On June 1, 2001, the government announced that it would be implementing Ontario's Early Reading Strategy beginning in the 2001 school year. The initiative will require every school to set targets to improve reading achievements of JK to grade 6 students, as measured by the province-wide grade 3 test, and report annually to parents on the school's progress. The initiative will provide funding for:

- Training of elementary

- principals and lead teachers on how to use target-setting techniques and assessment of students' reading skills, providing for better instruction;
- Additional resources for selected schools that need extra help; and
- School improvement teams of specialists to work with these selected schools.

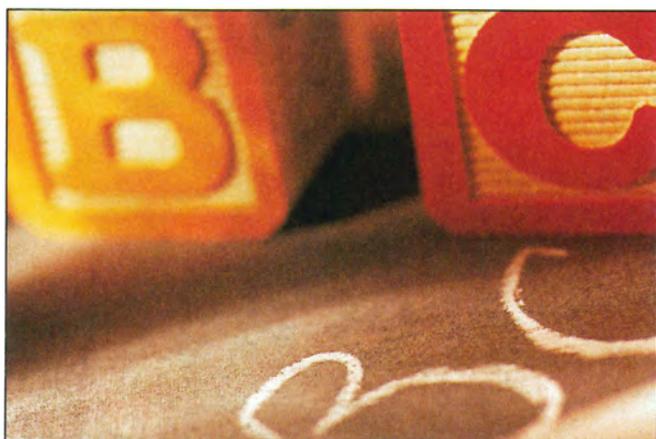
ETFO believes that the Ontario government's focus is misdirected. The focus of the training is on setting targets based upon EQAO data analysis and early reading assessment tools. The initiative is simply a form of teaching the students to pass the achievement tests as opposed to focusing on real student learning, which takes place every day within elementary schools in Ontario. Achievement tests are a snapshot in time and therefore have limited value.

Targeting selected schools based upon a one-time test each year does not take into account the cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of schools. In addition, many schools have increasing numbers of special needs students. The school profile is constantly changing from year to year. This limits the usefulness of the test. Targeting schools in this way is unfair to students and the educational professionals who every day meet the challenges of diversity effectively, resulting

in real student learning. Further, the cycle of target-setting, improvement planning and testing is flawed. Grade 3 students take the test in May. The results are reported in October, and schools are expected to set improvement targets for students' achievement in November. Schools will actually base improvement targets for grade 3 students upon the previous year's test results (the results of the current grade 4 students). Taking into account the diversity of the student population within many schools and the often transient student population of schools from year to year, one cannot generalize the achievement needs of the current grade 3 students from the results of the previous year's students. This simply is not good diagnostic assessment practice.

With this initiative, the government is focusing on helping teachers improve their teaching methods based upon an assumption that low test scores reflect unsuccessful teaching practices. This assumes the teacher is at fault, which smacks of a "blame the victim" mentality. ETFO believes that teachers already know what has to be done for students within their classrooms. Unfortunately, with the massive overhaul of the educational system in recent years, the Ontario government has removed many of

the supports teachers need to maximize their success in the classroom. By re-instating supports such as smaller class sizes and resources for every classroom, the government would be providing the time and assistance that would allow teachers to put into action the teaching strategies best suited to their students.



As a result of the new funding model, and the elimination of early literacy programs, many boards have found it necessary to eliminate special support personnel and consultants whose job it has been to provide supports for younger students. Once again the government's focus is on the wrong grade. Funding should be provided to help boards focus on students who are younger (i.e. those in their first years of language and reading development) to ensure that teachers have the resources to meet the needs of every child in these areas. The government should re-focus its funding on helping school boards return special consultants and professionals who deal with oral language development.

For all of these reasons, ETFO believes that the Early Reading Strategy is just more "smoke and mirrors" from the Ontario

government, designed to draw attention away from the larger problem – student learning requires appropriate funding to provide the resources, time, training and support personnel that teachers need to get on with what they already know about student achievement and learning. All of these supports have been eroded due to the

government's educational initiatives in recent years.

A copy of *Adjusting the Optics: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting*, was included in the September mailing to your ETFO Steward. You may download a copy from www.etfo.ca. This position paper is required reading for anyone interested in the many things that are wrong with this government's approach toward student testing.

Selecting Appropriate Resources

Also as part of the Early Reading Strategy, teachers are being asked to select appropriate resources from a predetermined list. These resources are of variable quality. We know members will want to select the best quality resources to meet students' needs.

ETFO's newest Curriculum Connections resource, *The Class That Reads: Best Practices for*

Teaching Primary Reading, includes sections on Factors That Affect Reading, Components of a Balanced Reading Program, and Resources. The following is excerpted from *The Class That Reads*.

Selecting the Best Resources

Researchers in a study of effective literacy programs conducted by the National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement in 1998 found that in the grade 1 classrooms where there was an emphasis on quality literature, most students were reading and writing at or above the grade 1 level.

Characteristics of Successful Classrooms

- The students selected materials from extensive classroom collections.
- The teachers read literature and conducted author studies.
- Sufficient resources were available to ensure classroom and school libraries had a wide range of high-quality children's books, computer software and multimedia resources at various levels of difficulty and reflecting various cultural and family backgrounds.
- Cambourne's literacy learning condition of immersion that is so critical to reading was in place. The materials used to immerse children in print were of a high quality, rich in language, engaging and worthy of reading.
- Studies have found that a minimum of five books per child is necessary to provide even the most basic print-rich environment (Morrow & Weinstein 1986; Neuman & Roskos, 1997). Computers and developmentally appropriate software should also be available to provide alternative, engaging, enriching literacy experiences.

Finding High Quality Materials

- The teacher librarian can recommend books and websites that provide excellent annotated recommended books by grade level.
- Find out about recommended award winning books, such as the Silver Birch Award winners, to include in the reading program.
- Use your public library to supplement school materials.
- Provide a balance of fiction, non-fiction, classic and contemporary literature to give students a background in a variety of genres and authors.
- Study Canadian authors – Sheree Fitch, Robert Munsch, Etta Kaner, etc.

Using High Quality Materials Effectively

A variety of genres provide a starting point for planning and selecting books to read aloud or to use for shared and guided reading.

An effective program planner can assist the teacher in ensuring quality resources and variety in an exciting and eclectic language program. A reading planner is provided in the ETFO resource, *The Class That Reads*.

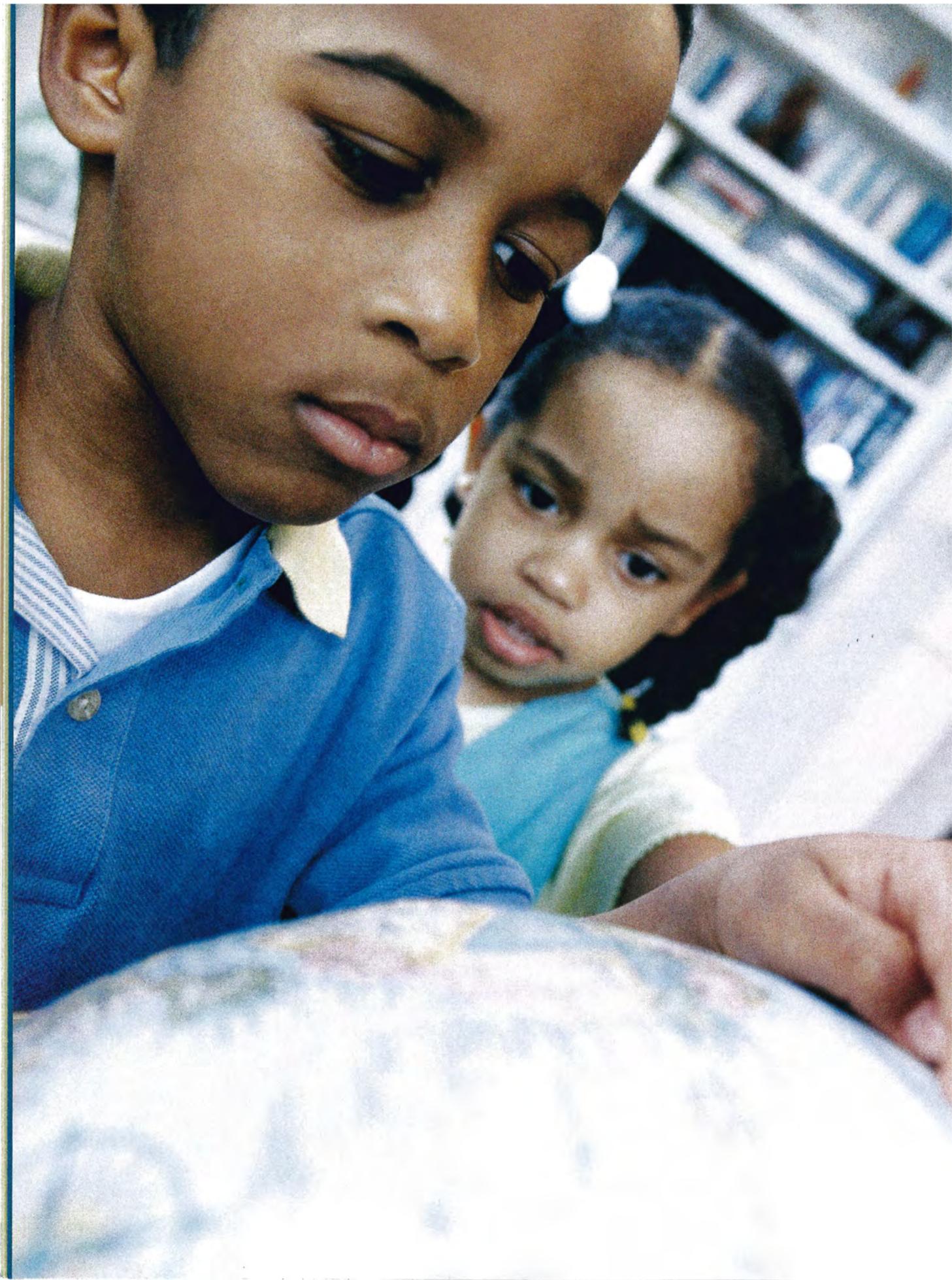
Want to Know More About Quality Materials?

Wonderful websites that provide annotated bibliographies of quality materials: www.eduscapes.com and www.carolhurst.com

Additional information on ETFO PD Programs and Services can be obtained from www.etfo.ca. ETFO PD – Making a Difference in the Professional Lives of Our Members.

REFERENCE

Kaner, Etta and Cathy Miller Davis, Jan Moxey, Judith Taylor. *The Class That Reads*. Toronto. ETFO. 2001. \$20.00.



AFRiCAn HERiTAGe MONTH

The Yearly Challenge

By MARVA MAJOR

In February, many schools plan event filled Black History Month activities focused on showcasing the cultural and historical contributions of people of African descent within Canada and the world. Posters featuring prominent leaders, artifacts and timelines of historical facts fill the hallways and school libraries. Speakers and performers are brought in for assemblies and students are introduced to individuals and cultural experiences that are often not a part of their everyday realities. During my first four years of teaching, I organized similar activities, but I often felt something was missing.

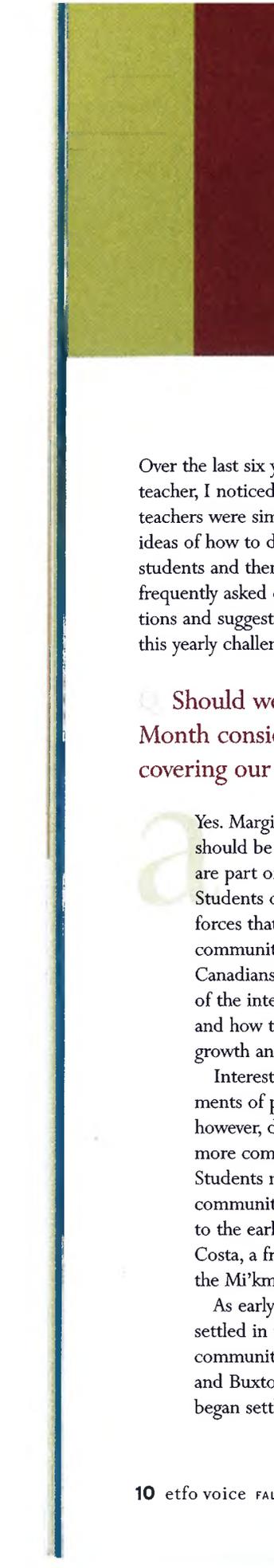
In 1994, I surveyed grade eight students on what they had experienced and learned during Black History Month over the years. Some of the responses were:

- they enjoyed the activities as they were a break away from “real” school;
- they learned about Black sports figures and entertainers; and
- they learned that Black people escaped from slavery in the United States and fled to Canada.

My objectives for doing Black History were:

- to acknowledge the roles played by people of African descent to the growth and development of Canadian culture and society; and
- to affirm African Canadian students and support them in feeling more connected, represented and validated within the curriculum.

It was clear from the responses that students were constructing a limited knowledge base and I questioned whether I was meeting my objectives. If these activities were limited in scope, not connected to the students’ life experiences and not viewed as “real” school work, then I needed to rethink what I was doing.



Over the last six years in my role as a curriculum resource teacher, I noticed that the questions and concerns raised by teachers were similar to my own. They were also struggling with ideas of how to deepen the experiences and learning for their students and themselves. In this article I have included the most frequently asked questions from colleagues and my own reflections and suggestions on how to support teachers in dealing with this yearly challenge of African Heritage Month.

❓ Should we still be doing African Heritage Month considering the difficulties we face in covering our content rich curriculum?

Yes. Marginalized histories of communities within Canada should be acknowledged and celebrated as these stories are part of the fabric of Canadian history and identity. Students of all backgrounds need to understand the social forces that have shaped, and continue to shape, Canadian communities. They need to hear the voices of diverse Canadians and develop a more balanced understanding of the interactions between various groups of Canadians and how these experiences have contributed to Canada's growth and development.

Interesting facts about the contributions and achievements of people of African descent taught in isolation, however, do not provide students with a connected and more complete understanding of Canadian history. Students need to understand that African Canadian communities are not new to Canada. They can be traced to the early 1600s, with the explorations of Mathieu da Costa, a free man who served as an interpreter between the Mi'kmaq people and Samuel de Champlain.

As early as the 1700s, Black United Empire Loyalists settled in the Maritimes and Ontario. In the 1800s, communities were established in Chatham, Windsor and Buxton. In the 1800s also, people of African descent began settling in Western Canada. Like other immigrants

at that time, they came to prospect for gold and seek a new life.

Despite the challenges they faced in adapting to their new homes, these Canadian pioneers persevered and helped to shape Canada's cultural and social fabric. Sharing these stories of perseverance, pioneering spirits and commitment to nation building offers students a more connected and complete picture of our Canadian reality.

❓ What should we be calling the month these days? The terms keep changing

Over the last few years there have been on-going discussions relating to whether 'Black History' or 'African Heritage' is the more appropriate term. 'African Heritage Month' has evolved from 'Negro History Week' in 1926, when it was first proposed by Carter Woodson, an African-American historian, to 'Black History Month' in 1976. These days, in various African-Canadian and African-American communities, the term 'African Heritage' is being used. The changing terminology reflects not only the changing times and socio-historical contexts, but also a broadened understanding of our varied and complex identities as people of African descent.

Our students of African descent have roots in Canada and across the globe. They define themselves and are socially constructed according to their cultural, faith, racial, sexual, linguistic and/or socio-economic identities. Therefore using a socially constructed identifier such as "Black" in today's context is somewhat limiting and may be viewed as less inclusive. It may certainly be an important part of their identity, but depending on the individual and their life experiences, other social factors may have greater implications in their lives. For example, for some students, faith and culture play a greater role than "race" in terms of how they view themselves, how they are viewed by society and how they negotiate social situations.



Heritage is connected to familial roots and geographical descent and incorporates racial identity, culture, language, faith and ethnicity. Using the term African Heritage supports this thinking and takes into account the multiplicity of identities that are central to the lives of African-Canadian students.

Teachers can help students deconstruct bias and challenge stereotypes by pointing out the diversity that exists within the communities of people of African descent. Integrating classroom activities that examine how factors such as language, religion, race, gender, class and/or culture can play a significant role in shaping the identity, history and experiences of the individuals being studied helps students:

- understand that the experiences and perspectives of individuals from the same racial or ethnocultural background are not necessarily the same;
- understand the need to examine issues from a variety of perspectives; and
- listen and appreciate diverse opinions before making judgments or assumptions.

February is such a busy month, how can I do all of these activities when I have to focus on my curriculum?

Integrate African Heritage all year round and make it an integral part of the curriculum rather than trying to squeeze in a number of activities in the shortest month of the year. Start small and each year continue to build your own knowledge and resource capacity. The more connected activities reflecting African heritage are to the curriculum, the deeper the learning will be. If speakers or assemblies are held to commemorate 'African Heritage Month,' these should be related to themes that are being covered in the classroom.

When trying to make the curriculum more inclusive of the experiences, perspectives and values of peoples of African descent, consider these questions:

- What themes are you covering this term? What books, short stories, articles, poetry, videos etc. can you access to support themes that include the experiences of people of African descent?
- When studying Canadian authors, do you include writers from racial and/or ethnocultural minority backgrounds? Have you asked your teacher-librarian for lists of picture books and novels reflecting the lives and experiences of people of African descent? Will you review these materials prior to beginning your unit of study? Have you visited the internet sites listed at the end of this article?
- During school wide celebrations such as Remembrance Day, do you include the experiences of African Canadians who participated in World War I and World War II?

Integrating African Heritage into the curriculum

There is a growing wealth of resource materials teachers can use to support mandatory themes in the social studies curriculum. Resources listed at the end of this article provide excellent information regarding African Canadians who have contributed to the growth and development of Canada and their connections with other communities within Canadian society. Information from these resources can very easily be integrated into units. Here is an example for the grade three strand on Pioneer Life. Pioneers of European background have been well documented. However, the experiences and perspectives of other pioneering communities in Upper Canada have been excluded or treated superficially. Within the pioneer unit, teachers can include the often neglected stories of such communities, examine their interactions and the commonalities and differences in their experiences.



In addition, teachers can:

- address the history, values and power relationships between dominant and minority communities;
- provide information regarding the obstacles these communities faced and how they overcame them. For example, each group faced unique challenges setting up their pioneering communities. Their accomplishments were often a result of the level of support received, and constraints faced by the community. Irish settlers and White Loyalists were provided with acres of land, whereas Black Loyalists either received no land, or received land of poor quality. This impacted on settlement patterns and the rates at which communities were established; and
- support students in viewing the complexities of life experiences, rather than only the music, food and crafts of specific communities.

Students should know that people of African descent have made contributions in a variety of fields. *Multicultural Math, Science, Technology Package*, published by Addison Wesley, for example, includes a number of activities for junior, intermediate and secondary students highlighting scientists from a variety of racial and ethnocultural backgrounds.

Q: Slavery and racism are a part of history, and don't really impact on what is going on in today's society. Also, I don't want my students feeling uncomfortable when they are learning about these issues. We should be focusing instead on racial harmony and celebrating diversity.

A: Some teachers are concerned about how best to deal with racism and slavery in relation to teaching Black History. Concerns include the possibility that students of African descent will feel a sense of shame and/or anger; students

who are racialized white may feel guilty at the actions of their ancestors; and teachers' feelings of inadequacy due to their lack of background knowledge and/or personal discomfort with these issues.

Slavery and racism are emotionally challenging issues. However, to focus exclusively on these aspects, or to ignore them, is both inadequate and problematic. It is important to avoid idealizing people of African descent, representing them as victims and/or demonizing people of European descent. Slavery and racism should be put in their proper context. Students need to understand the social conditions during periods of Black migration; the interactions between communities of African and European descent; the ways in which these relationships developed and changed over time; and the various forms of resistance that took place.

Learning about slavery and racism are important to developing a more complete and realistic picture of Canadian history. During a workshop on teaching an inclusive curriculum, I surveyed participants. Few knew about the history of slavery and racial segregation in Canada. Most were never taught about it and it wasn't in the history books when they were growing up. Many, however, were aware of the Underground Railroad narrative where thousands of enslaved people of African descent escaped to what they presumed to be an oasis of tolerance and freedom in Canada.

The reality these individuals faced in Canada however, was somewhat different. The experiences of Black Loyalists comes to mind. As well, in the mid 1800s, early settlers to Upper Canada and British Columbia faced great challenges from government legislation and local community members. They were forced to live restricted and segregated lives. *The Common Schools Act* of 1850, for example, legalized segregation in education in Ontario and heralded the establishment of separate schools for students of African descent. This legislation lasted de facto until 1964, when the last segregated school was closed.

A final example is related to Canada's wartime experience. When World War I broke out, many men flocked to the recruiting stations. African Canadian men who tried to sign up were told that this was a "white man's war;" they were not needed. Believing that they should be accorded the same rights as European Canadians, African Canadians demanded equality. So began a series of communications between the African Canadian community and the federal government. The documents reflecting this dialogue are in the Public Archives in Ottawa, as well as in the book *The Black Battalion* (Ruck, 1987). In April 1916, African Canadians won their case and an all Black battalion was formed.

Teachers who are not exposed to more complete stories of people of African descent are likely to replicate their own learning experiences and share their limited knowledge with students. Yet the stories of African Canadians must be understood as central within the sweep of Canadian history, not marginalized, barely visible anecdotes, as happens too often today.

Teachers must create classroom environments where students can listen to different perspectives and examine and challenge their views and the views of others without feeling threatened or victimized. Prior to beginning a unit of study, establish a context for dealing with the hard social issues of slavery and racism. Acknowledge the emotional challenges in dealing with these issues, the role slavery and racism have played historically, as well as how these issues have affected Canadian society.

Throughout the unit, share background information regarding the social attitudes and conditions of the time and how these shaped the actions of citizens and the government.

Use poetry, diaries and literature to deepen students' understanding. Bring history alive by asking students to make connections with historical situations and present day events. Talk with them about how social attitudes have changed over time, and the role that African Canadian communities have played on their own, and in concert

Assessing Bias in Curriculum Materials

When reviewing and selecting learning materials such as books, videos, poetry, articles etc., teachers find biased content. There are many pieces of literature that contain biases and perspectives that reflect particular time periods. Teachers can assist students in recognizing and critically assessing such biases in curriculum materials. In some cases, however, depending on the age and maturity of the students, the curriculum objectives, and board guidelines in relation to dealing with challenged materials, the teacher may decide not to use the material. Use these questions to assess bias in curriculum materials:

STEREOTYPING

Are language and imagery used that reinforce stereotypical roles or attributes?

If the language and illustrations include stereotyping, this may be an excellent opportunity to show students how to identify and challenge stereotypes and biases.

REPRESENTATION

Do the materials show diversity in terms of faith, culture, socio-economic status, language, gender and physical ability, in the representation of people of African descent?

Are people of African descent represented as victims or active agents of change?

Are they represented in central or marginal roles, non-traditional or traditional roles?

PERSPECTIVE/POINT OF VIEW

Whose perspectives are being reflected?

Do students have enough information to understand the author's perspective of an historical event?

Is the interpretation of an event, issue or experience balanced?



with other ethno-cultural communities, in challenging discriminatory laws. Examine the significance of these resistances and ways in which these struggles have affected the tradition of human rights within Canada and have led to changes in government policies related to civil rights and liberties. An excellent example of this is the story of Chloe Cooley. In 1793, she was an enslaved young woman from Queenston who was brutally beaten by the man who owned her, transported against her will and sold in Niagara. As an enslaved person under existing laws she was viewed as property with few rights; there was little likelihood her owner would be prosecuted. News of her mistreatment reached the ears of John Simcoe, the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. Following lobbying from abolitionists, Simcoe passed *An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves and Limit the Term of Enforced Servitude Within This Province*. Although this Act was limited in scope and was focused primarily at preventing the further importation of enslaved persons to Upper Canada, it was one of the earliest pieces of anti-discrimination legislation in Canada.

Our students need to hear these stories of alliances between communities, learn about strategies for change and strive for new sources of hope for the future.

In so doing, they will become more committed to creating a more inclusive, harmonious society where racism and discrimination are not tolerated under any conditions. To deepen our students' experiences and our own in relation to African Heritage Month, we must broaden our current vision of Canadian history to one which is balanced, one that includes positive and negative stories, and one which centralizes the experiences of African Canadians within the national story. We must allow ourselves and our students to grapple with challenging issues like bias, stereotyping and racism, examine the intersections between these and other forms of oppression, such as classism, sexism and heterosexism and our roles in maintaining or challenging these issues.

Does teaching African Heritage require multiple activities and ideas for the shortest month of the year? No. It means rethinking what we're doing and charting a path which is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of our students.

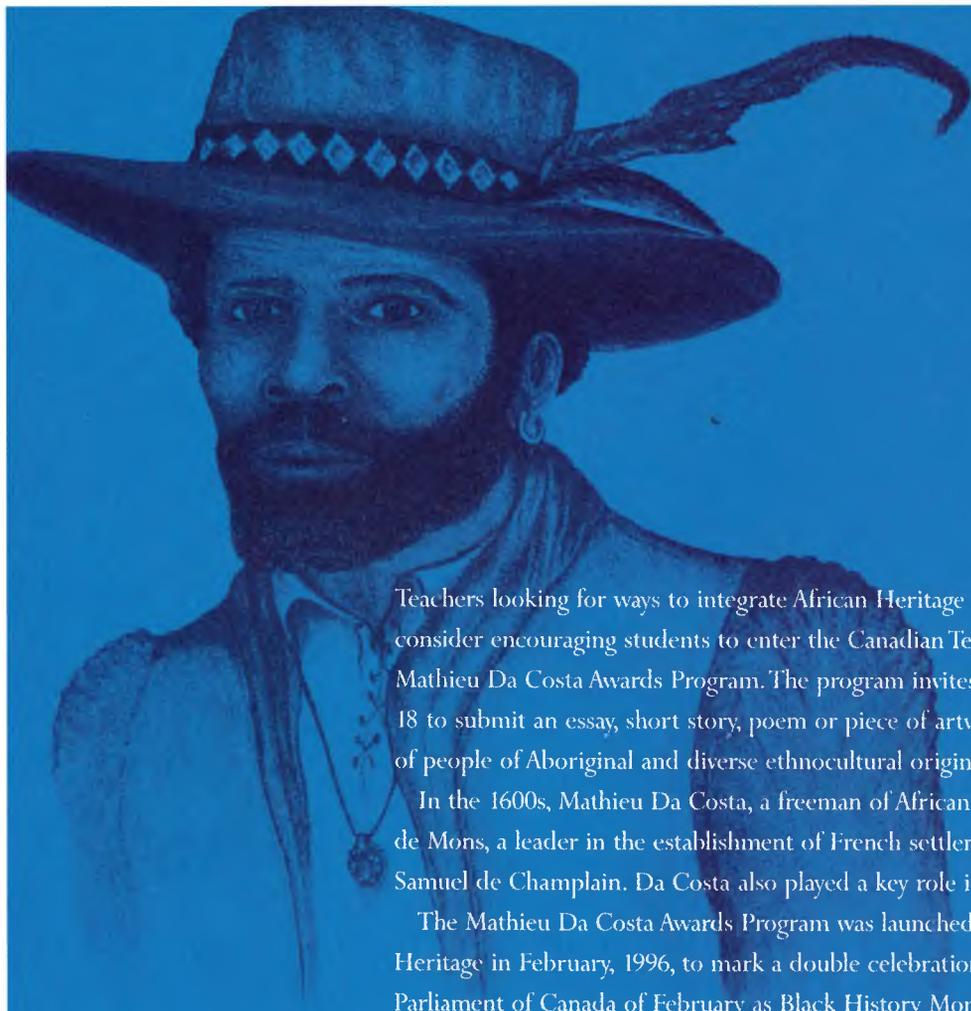
MARVA MAJOR has served as a Curriculum Resource Teacher with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board for six years. She has recently been appointed as Vice Principal of Robert Bateman Public School, Ottawa.

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WEBSITES

Paths of Glory: www.pathsofglory.com • Some Missing Pages: www.qesn.meg/gouv.ca.ca/mpages • Ontario Black History Online: www.collections.ic.gc.ca/obho



Teachers looking for ways to integrate African Heritage studies into the curriculum might consider encouraging students to enter the Canadian Teachers' Federation's (CTF) Mathieu Da Costa Awards Program. The program invites Canadian students aged nine to 18 to submit an essay, short story, poem or piece of artwork celebrating the contributions of people of Aboriginal and diverse ethnocultural origins who built this country.

In the 1600s, Mathieu Da Costa, a freeman of African descent, worked with Pierre Dugua de Mons, a leader in the establishment of French settlements of Eastern Canada, and with Samuel de Champlain. Da Costa also played a key role in the founding of Port-Royal.

The Mathieu Da Costa Awards Program was launched by the Department of Canadian Heritage in February, 1996, to mark a double celebration – the official recognition by the Parliament of Canada of February as Black History Month and also the 25th anniversary of the Multiculturalism Policy. The program is administered by the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Last year, encouraged by her teacher-librarian Hripsik Sarkissian and classroom teacher Bessie Anastoupoulos, Celeste Milborne, a grade 6 student at Rosedale School, Toronto, submitted a winning essay on Hungarian-born Toronto doctors John and Paul Re kai. In the 1950s, the brothers founded Toronto's Central Hospital (now the Re kai Centre) and provided interpretation services because they were concerned that minority-language speakers were not being understood in other hospitals. Three other Rosedale students received honourable mentions.

More information on the Mathieu Da Costa Award is available from www.ctf-fce.ca.

Mathieu Da Costa

Award

Although the climate of teaching has changed, much remains the same. Recently, I taught in a classroom where the teacher was retiring within days. The plans and information she left answered all my questions. My "Wish List" is the result of teaching in hundreds of classrooms over the past ten years.

An Occasional Teacher's Wish List

By NANCY J. C. BELL

1. My first wish is that the Supervision Schedule be posted in the Staff Room. In this way, the occasional teacher can organize their day and get into the classroom long before the secretary arrives and the office gets busy. This is especially so if the occasional teacher arrives early. Arriving at 8:00 a.m. gives us plenty of time to photocopy, socialize and make ourselves presentable.

2. Most classroom teachers leave a file of activities, workshops, maps, games related to the curriculum and reading selections. One teacher I spoke with says she always leaves too much and too detailed a day plan, only to return and find that her plans have not been implemented.

For a totally unexpected long term absence, the long range plan would be very helpful. Even having the new curriculum documents on the teacher's desk is a help. Some occasional teachers are quite resourceful. I have found it never hurts to have a couple of resources in my briefcase in case the students finish their work sooner than expected.

3. An up-to-date seating plan is always useful. If there is no seating plan, and you are going to be teaching that class for the whole day, many occasional teachers will ask a student to complete one.

On the other hand, the seating plan that the classroom teacher draws up could indicate with an asterisk which students are struggling with their behaviour and which students receive resource assistance.

4. A class list to check off work handed in, milk orders, photo money and field trip permission forms is very much appreciated.

5. A first year teacher I taught for last year pointed out where the class register was located. This was very helpful.

6. The school's emergency plans could be summarized on one page. These could include procedures for severe weather, intruders, violence, etc.

7. The expected playground/yard behaviour could be summarized for the visiting teacher. For instance, is there a no-touch rule on the yard? No running on the creative playground? No snacks outside at recess? Is the garbage recycled into wet and dry cans? No bikes, rollerblades or communication devices at school?

8. The coveted relationship of Administration supporting the occasional teacher would be much easier to achieve if the teacher were assigned to a family of schools. It would be easier under these circumstances for both the Principal and the occasional teachers servicing her or his school to cultivate a rapport and appreciation of each other's professional manner.

It takes years to be recognized as an accomplished, professional, occasional teacher, just as it does for the regular classroom teacher. Having said this, may this be your best year yet!

NANCY BELL has been an occasional teacher with the Upper Grand District School Board and the Wellington Catholic District School Board for about 10 years.

During July and August, 3,500 ETFO members participated in professional development designed by teachers for teachers. Participation was voluntary and the courses were free of charge.

Learning in the SUMMERTIME



THOUSANDS ATTEND CURRICULUM INSTITUTES

One hundred and fourteen workshops on a wide variety of curriculum-related topics were conducted in approximately 40 locations across the province. The three and four day events were offered through a cooperative agreement reached between the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO); the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA); the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF); and the Ministry of Education. In most cases, local school boards were also important partners in delivering the programs.



Curriculum Institutes were offered in locations across the province, including Welland, Burlington, Stratford and Elliot Lake. Among the dozens of topics covered were workshops on computer literacy, special education, the arts, mathematics and classroom management.

In June 2001, the Media Awareness Network (mnet) released *Young Canadians In A Wired World*, the most comprehensive survey to date on what Canadian children are doing online.

Use the **Net**



The cross-Canada survey, in the form of a written questionnaire, was administered by Environics Research Group last March to 5,682 students between the ages of 9 and 17. The survey is a follow-up to telephone research conducted last year with 1,100 Canadian parents about their children's internet activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that (surprise!) children are way ahead of their parents – and alone – in their explorations of the internet. Perhaps more important, the findings reveal a major discrepancy between parents' views about how the internet is used, and managed, in their homes, and what the children think.

Young Canadians In A Wired World underlines the extent to which Canadian children have integrated the internet into their daily lives. Seventy-nine per cent of children say they access the internet at home (48 per cent for at least an hour a day). Fourteen per cent say they use the internet at school for at least an hour a day.

Downloading music, emailing and surfing for fun are the children's favourite activities, followed closely by downloading games, getting information (other than for school work), using instant messaging, and chatting. Homework (which parents rated at 66 per cent) came in ninth as a preferred online activity, albeit at a healthy 38 per cent. The three most popular sites, for respondents of all ages, are Hotmail (a free email service), Yahoo (a multi-purpose portal that provides email, chat, instant messaging and a search engine) and Napster (a web site where children go to download music).

Parents' main concern about the internet is children's access to pornography and other inappropriate material. Over half the children in this survey say they've ended up in a pornographic web site accidentally while searching for something else, or by typing in the wrong address, clicking on a banner advertisement, or being sent a link by someone through a chat room or in

Parents' main concern about the internet is children's access to pornography and other inappropriate material.

instant messaging. Slightly less than a quarter of the children say they go to sexually explicit sites intentionally and another 40% (mainly boys) visit violent or gory websites.

More than anything, it's the interactive aspects of the internet that have captured children's imaginations. Seventy-one per cent of young people have an email account and of these 81% have a free email account like Hotmail or Yahoo. Instant messaging (like ICQ or MSN Messenger) is especially popular with young people. Use peaks with the 13 to 14 year olds, 39% of whom use IM "every day" or "almost every day."

Children do not always know who they are talking to online. Most email activity is with friends, but 45 per cent of children say they "often" or "sometimes" email people they've met only on the internet. Of the 56 per cent of students who say they go into chat rooms, 72 per cent participate in unmonitored chat rooms for teens and almost 60 per cent say they at least sometimes go into private areas of chat rooms to talk to just one person.

Children are exploring the internet largely without adult intervention. Eight in ten say they are alone online all or most of the time. Nearly seven in ten say their parents never sit with them while they surf the net and over half say parents never check where they've been online.

There's a "disconnect" between how parents view their management of the internet at home, and how children see their parents' involvement. Seventy-one per cent of parents say they know quite a lot about the web sites their child visits but only 45 per cent of children say this is so. Eight in ten parents tell us that they talk "a great deal" or "a fair bit" to their children about their internet activities but less than a quarter of children are of the same opinion. A full 44 per cent of the students say their parents don't know about all their email accounts! "What we're seeing" says Jane Tallim, MNet's internet specialist, "is a parent generation that values the internet as an educational tool and who think they're in touch with their children's internet activities, and a younger generation who consider the internet their own world, separate from their parents' reach and

knowledge." Over half the children think they know more about the internet than their parents, and nearly a quarter have put up their own web sites.

In spite of their technical abilities, many show a certain naivety about online communication and information. The majority of children who host their own sites are willing to disclose their email addresses on these sites and 39 per cent believe "all" or "almost all" of what they find on the net.

"It's hard keeping up with the children," says Anne Taylor, MNet's Co-Director, "but we have to remember that they need our involvement now more than ever. There's a lot of savvy required for the net. Children may have the technical know-how but they also need good information and critical thinking skills in order to be safe and discriminating consumers of internet content and interactivity."

The second half of the *Young Canadians In A Wired World* findings, about safety, privacy, marketing to children and online student behaviour, will be included in our next issue.

For more information on the data cited in this article go to www.media-awareness.ca/eng/webaware/netsurvey/index.htm.

The *Media Awareness Network* (MNet) is a not-for-profit education organization whose mandate is to support and encourage media and information literacy in Canadian homes, schools and communities. MNet hosts a large web site with K-12 resources (www.media-awareness.ca) and it licenses professional development workshops for teachers to raise awareness about internet issues that are emerging as children and young people go online. Among MNet's members are the CTF, 13 provincial teachers' federations, including ETFO, and the Canadian Home and School Federation. To contact MNet write to info@media-awareness.ca

MNet is sponsored by Bell Canada, Rogers@Home, CanWest Global, BCE, CTV, CHUM Television, A&E Television Networks, AOL Canada and the Government of Canada.

Professional Relations Services

Pregnancy & Parental Leave - Rights & Responsibilities

Preparing for the birth or adoption of a child is an exciting time for you and your family. You are faced with many questions and decisions with respect to your employment - your leave of absence, your benefits, your pension... the list seems endless! It is important that you are aware of your rights and responsibilities during this very important time.

Taking a leave of absence

To qualify for a pregnancy and/or parental leave you must have at least 13 weeks employment with your school board before the expected date of birth or adoption. In Ontario, the *Employment Standards Act* defines the leave period as 17 weeks for pregnancy leave and 35 weeks for parental leave. You may begin a pregnancy leave no earlier than 17 weeks before the expected birth date. The parental leave begins when the pregnancy leave ends or when the child comes into custody, care and control for the first time.

Notifying your school board

For a pregnancy leave, you are required to provide a minimum of two weeks written notice of the date your leave will begin. The written notification must include a certificate from a legally qualified medical practitioner stating the expected date of birth. This minimum notice does not apply if the birth occurs earlier than the

expected date of birth. In the case of a parental leave, you must provide at least two weeks written notice of the date the leave is to begin. This does not apply if the child comes into custody, care and control for the first time sooner than expected.

Qualifying for EI benefits

In order to qualify for EI benefits, the *Employment Insurance Act* requires that you have at least 600 hours of insurable employment in the 52-week period preceding the claim. You may begin a claim for maternity benefits up to eight weeks before a child is born but not later than the birth of the child. A claim for parental benefits must start no later than 52 weeks after the baby is born or comes into your care.

Human Resources

Development Canada (HRDC) will provide maternity benefits for a period of 15 weeks after a two-week waiting period. Parental benefits are available to the birth or adoptive mother or spouse for 35 weeks. These benefits can be accessed by one parent or shared at the same time, consecutively or on alternating weeks.

Supplemental Employment Benefit Plan (SEB)

Your collective agreement includes provisions affecting pregnancy and parental leave. The SEB Plan is a benefit

which provides additional compensation and/or top-up during the two-week Employment Insurance waiting period. A top-up to EI benefits may be available during the leave period as well. Refer to your local collective agreement for information relating to a SEB plan. You may also wish to review your collective agreement for other benefits that may be of interest to you, i.e. extended leaves of absence.

Accessing sick leave following pregnancy

In the late 1980s, the Supreme Court of Canada (*Brooks v. Canada Safeway 1989*) held that women who are off work following childbirth are to be treated in the same manner as other employees off work for valid health-related reasons. The Court held that while pregnancy is not a sickness or an accident, "it provides a perfectly legitimate health-related reason for not working." The Ontario Court of Appeal affirmed this decision in 1998 in a case concerning *OSSTF v. Essex County*.

Generally speaking, you can access up to "six weeks" sick leave during your recovery period. This does not extend your claim for Employment Insurance or your time for leave; it coincides with it. You must notify HRDC when you are in receipt of income from sick leave and your EI benefits will be adjusted accordingly.

Contact your school board before going on leave to find out how to access sick leave following delivery. If your request for sick leave is denied, please call your Local ETFO office for assistance.

Pension plan contributions

The *Employment Standards Act* requires that your employer continue to make your pension contributions during your pregnancy and/or parental leave, unless you waive this benefit. Teachers must complete a TPP Application and arrange a payment schedule with your board prior to taking the leave. Non-teaching members need to complete a Pregnancy/Parental Leave Election form for OMERS Pension Plan contributions.

ETFO's resource *Pregnancy & Parental Leave - A Guide to Rights & Responsibilities* provides more detailed information on these topics. Contact shopETFO at www.etfo.ca to purchase a copy.

SHARON O'HALLORAN for
ETFO's Professional Relations
Services



Take a Closer Look:

A practical guide to exploring issues of media violence in the intermediate classroom.

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One of the objects of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) is to foster a climate of social justice in Ontario and continue a leadership role in such areas as anti-poverty, non-violence, and equity.

Today almost every aspect of life is presented through the media and children must be able to discriminate among many distortions. Children have to be able to decide what is true and what is false, what

is good and what is bad, what has value and what is harmful – decisions that can only be made by a media literate person.

Media Literacy and the Curriculum

Students in the Intermediate grades will gain:

- Knowledge of what messages are conveyed by the media.
- Knowledge of the complexity of violence in today's society.
- Knowledge of themselves

as consumers of the media.

- Knowledge of how the media is constructed to inform, persuade, entertain, manipulate and influence.
- Knowledge of their role in shaping the media of the future.

How does this resource connect to the Ontario Curriculum?

The focus of the resource is to teach students to become critical and informed consumers of mass media, with

a focus on media violence. Each lesson within every unit includes expectations from the *Ontario Curriculum*.

How do I implement this resource?

When implementing this entire curriculum, we encourage teachers to begin with *Part 1: Creating an*

Awareness of Violence in the Media, then proceed through the units in any order, based on their focus and the interests of the students. Each subsequent unit is self-contained and can be done in blocks of time or throughout the school year. Lesson plans are provided in each unit with student activity

sheets and required resources. Background information is provided for each unit and lesson. When this information is used in conjunction with the overview provided in the introduction, the teacher will have the necessary information to prepare.

A Sample Unit – Clothing & Logos

BACKGROUND

The premise of *Take A Closer Look* is the need for students to be aware of the underlying messages in the mass media. In particular, any messages accompanied by violent undertones and overtones need to be filtered through a base of knowledge about the intention of such material and its manipulative power. Issues of influence, intimidation, power and control are some of the guises in which violence resides.

Products we wear are often promoted by celebrities. There is the unspoken message that we too may attain such great status if only we would buy these products. The fashion world depends on the psychological need to belong and on the teenager's overwhelming need to be cool.

This unit on clothing and logos is designed to help students be aware of why we make our clothing choices, the meanings of advertising logos, and just whose interests are being served by the choices we make.

Clothing and Logos comprises Part 6 of *Take Another Look*. The two lessons presented here have been selected from the five that are included in this section of the resource.

Lesson 1 What's a Logo?

Background

Many images are symbols which quickly identify ideas, objects and large organizations. They are a kind of visual shorthand which allows an identity to be presented easily and in a familiar way. The heart is a symbol of love, the skull a symbol of danger, and a green light means go. A logo is an identifying name, device, or trademark used in advertising and marketing.

Sophisticated logos and symbols range from chemical and mathematical formulas to artistic representation of large institutions and commercial products.

Governments, cities, universities and even families have

flags and other symbols. The list is endless. Many people are unaware of all the logos that bombard them every day.

Purpose

- To make students aware of the many symbols and commercial logos prevalent in our society.
- To create collages after classifying a variety of logos.

Curriculum expectations

Grade 7 students will:

- identify various types of media works and a variety of the techniques used in them (7e53).
- explain how artistic choices affect the viewer (7e37).
- analyze and interpret media works (7e54).

Grade 8 students will:

- listen attentively to organize and classify information and to clarify thinking (8e47).
- analyze and interpret media works (8e53).
- contribute and work constructively in groups (8e50).

Opening Act

The teacher will display four examples of logos to the students, such as sports teams, product safety, a company logo, school, community, etc. As a class, discuss the relationship between the logo and the product.

Main Attraction

Divide the students into small groups. Ask the students to

cut out logos from magazines, flyers, catalogues, etc. Students can then classify the logos into categories and create a collage.

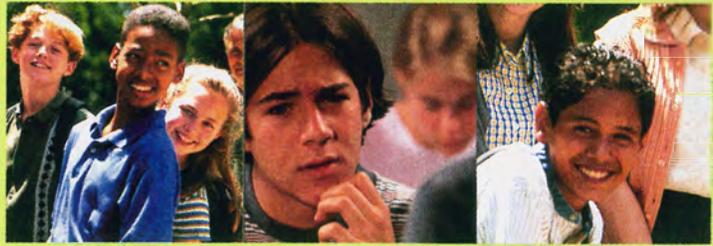
Students must be prepared to explain the reasons for their choice and the effectiveness of the logo or symbol in representing the product or service.

It's a Rap

Students will present their group collages and explanations to the class.

MATERIALS

- Magazines for clippings
- Teacher chosen logos and symbols (4-5)
- Chart paper
- Glue
- Markers



Lesson 2 Choices We Make about Clothing

Background

We are aware that individuals and companies present themselves in a certain way for specific reasons. What factors influence our clothing choices in presenting ourselves within our various daily roles?

A major factor is the desire to achieve brand name status. Brand name businesses are everywhere. In some ways, consumers count on the predictability of products associated with the recognizable name or logo. In other ways, consumers can gauge the cost factor by choosing brand name X over brand name Y. For many, especially the young, choosing to wear a certain brand involves a decision based on the perceived social value of that product.

It has been said that brands create a feeling. Is it true? Do Calvin Klein ads make one feel irresistible and sexy? Do Nike ads

make the viewer long to be more powerful and strong? Does Gap clothing make the wearer feel secure?

Purpose

- To examine the messages and issues inherent in the clothing students wear and the logos they see.
- To be aware of personal reasons behind clothing choices.
- To be aware of image messages and self esteem (or lack of) which are portrayed through clothing choices.

Curriculum Expectations

Grade 7 students will:

- organize information to develop a central idea (7e3).
- clarify and broaden their own points of view by examining the views of others (7e35).
- contribute and work constructively in groups (7e51).
- demonstrate the ability to concentrate by identifying main points and staying on topic (7e52).

Grade 8 students will:

- clarify and broaden their own points of view by examining the views of others (8e34).
- demonstrate respectful behaviour towards the feelings and ideas of others (8p40).
- contribute and work constructively in groups (8e50).
- demonstrate the ability to concentrate by identifying main points and staying on topic (8e51).

Opening Act

Ask the students to form a circle. The teacher will model his or her clothing choices and explain their significance. Consider such attributes as price, personal comfort, purpose of the day, colour, audience, etc. As a class briefly discuss students' clothing choices. Allow only two or three responses for this before moving to the next section.

Main Attraction

In small groups, students will brainstorm a web chart which identifies the reasons and issues relating to clothing choices and logos. The question they must consider is: Why do we wear what we wear?

Students are then asked to relate the ideas from the web chart to their own personal clothing choices and be prepared to present these choices to the class.

It's a Rap

Representatives from each group will present their clothing choices and web charts to the class. Every student will record the personal reasons for their clothing choices in their student journals.

MATERIALS

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Journals
- Tape or magnets

Take A Closer Look, published in August 2001, is available from Shop EFTO for \$18.00. The document's contents include five lessons on each of the following topics: Creating an Awareness of Violence in the Media; Television; Advertising in Radio, Television and Print; Movies and Video Games; Music Videos and Lyrics; Clothing and Logos; The Internet. Shop EFTO online www.etfo.ca or call 416-962-3836, or 1-888-838-3836.

Creating a Learning Ground -

A School Yard Restoration Project

By MARIETTA STONEHOUSE-KISH



Finally somewhere shady to sit.

THERE ARE MANY SCHOOLS WHERE THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT IS AGED AND UNSAFE. THIS PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT A RESTORATION PROGRAM AND BUILD A LEARNING GROUND. If you are

inspired by this account of what we accomplished at Millgrove School, Flamborough, the easiest place to start is by contacting Evergreen Learning Grounds. Evergreen keeps a wealth of information on its website and has developed a comprehensive manual and video *All Hands in the Dirt: A Guide to Designing and Creating Natural School Grounds*.

It began on Earth Day, 1989. We were celebrating by planting a native tree and some shrubs in our school yard, which was almost all grass except for a neglected baseball diamond, a soccer area, a small wooden climber and tarmac. I never enjoyed recess duty. In winter, freezing wind ripped through anyone who attempted a playground game. In summer, there was no place to escape from soccer balls or sit quietly under a tree. The special needs children used only the paved area. Even with such a large grassy site, the children often found nothing to do but bicker. One day, as I listened to the words of complaint about having nothing 'fun' to do, I finally heard what the children were saying

To enjoy our space to the fullest, we need a place for shelter, for active play, and for small groups to get together.

Teachers who shared my dislike of yard duty began to chat about change. We wanted to reduce the chaos of recess and give students a friendlier environment.

We decided to develop an ecological restoration area in a far corner of the yard – a Carolinian Forest. The experts had informed us that about 80 per cent of the Carolinian Forest, which had grown on our land before the settlers arrived no longer existed. Most of us, sad to say, had no knowledge of the plants, trees or wildlife that had once lived in our climate zone. We needed to learn about Carolinian plants and trees, as well as how to plant and maintain them. Our ideas required funding and support. We would have to involve the principal, the caretaker, students, parents, and the community. It seemed an impossible order.



Informing the delegation from China about the Carolinian Tulip Tree (with interpreter).



Beginning of the sand area.

SOMEHOW, WITH A BIT OF INFORMATION, A PILE OF ENTHUSIASM, AND A GENEROUS MEASURE OF INNOVATION, THE PROJECT BEGAN. Since none of our staff

was a qualified landscape architect or horticultural expert, we sought information elsewhere. Expertise and support flowed in from Evergreen and other environmental groups, as well as from individuals promoting the idea of protecting our environment and restoring the earth.

We developed a plan and students and teachers began researching how to implement it. In the spring of 1990, our first grant of \$500.00 arrived from Evergreen. At the time, it seemed a huge amount of money. We used it to buy more native shrubs and plants. The principal set aside a day and everyone in the school, along with a few parents and an energetic, knowledgeable student volunteer from The University of Waterloo, went out to plant, to learn and to begin appreciating our schoolyard. To our amazement, almost every student worked hard, took pride in what they were doing, and enjoyed the day. The curriculum had taken flight out of doors and the learning was experiential and gratifying.

After that first spring planting, we realized we were ready for a long term plan. It was clear that if the students and members of the community were to remain interested in the restoration, they would have to take ownership for the project.

The principal held two school wide assemblies. We grouped students into families, kindergarten to grade 5, and facilitated as they planned their playground. At first, the planners had a great giggle mapping swimming pools, go-carts and even a golf course. Teachers nudged discussions towards activities students could enjoy in a natural environment. When taught how to solve problems in this real life situation, even the youngest students made wise decisions. Their plan was articulated beautifully. They had changed their playground from "what it was" to "what it could be."

Parents and members of the community helped and, as the playground developed, volunteers contributed plants, trees, time and expertise. Teachers and students learned together. One shy man came at night to plant oak, cucumber magnolia, hickory and other endangered Carolinian species. He was thrilled that the young students would be taking care of his plants.





Our new sand pit.

SINCE WE NEEDED A
SEPARATE COMMITTEE
CONCERNED WITH PLAY
APPARATUS, A STRONG
PARENT GROUP FORMED
TO FUNDRAISE AND

EVENTUALLY PURCHASE EQUIPMENT CHOSEN BY THE STUDENTS. As everyone agreed about the need for sand, the parents designed and built a huge area enclosed with log pieces. On our first "sand day" all the children – even the older ones – shouted out "ooos" and "aaahs" as they rounded the corner from the bus. Instinctively, they ripped off shoes and socks and raced across the playground to "dive in."

Parents also purchased garden tools, parallel bars, climbers and built a small hill. Teachers organized a half kilometer walking path. These projects were in keeping with the primary focus of the grounds. All monies for the plants came from Evergreen and the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation.

After the five year plan had been designed, assemblies were held to celebrate our accomplishments to date and to revise the plans. The playground parent group stayed strong and worked with the students as well as with community members to continue realizing the plan. Parents initiated "Go for Green Day,"

and people arrived with shovels and other equipment to tidy, fix and build on the Learning Grounds. This group is still meeting today, thanks to the dedication of one strongly committed mother.

Almost from the inception of our Learning Grounds, teachers found it easy to relate links to curriculum. Fun fairs came into arithmetic class as students counted profits and made graphs to show progress. Art posters and signs were designed and delivered. Crafts and bake sales augmented reading, writing and technology. The Learning Ground became another classroom and was used as never before. Students were involved in reading, researching, drama, art, science, mathematics, and writing stories, poetry and journals. Physical education was fun and healthy, both in summer and winter. The students made wreaths, did silk screening, studied botany and geography, and decorated the school.





A "LEARNING GROUNDS DAY FESTIVAL," DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO OUTDOORS, ENJOYED HUGE SUCCESS. ARTISTS GAVE THEIR TIME TO FAMILIES OF

STUDENTS. Activities included storytelling set to music, tie dying, folk dancing, drumming, art, visiting wetlands, meeting challenges in sand, building bird, bat, and butterfly houses, and lunching with music performed by the senior school band. A drumming group set the yard in motion. Think of it and we did it. Planning, preparing and evaluating students' work still took time. However, students' interest, parental appreciation and community involvement made it all worthwhile.

The playground design continued to change and expand. Our plans were coming to fruition. The playground now included small and large picnic tables with benches as well as shrubs to delineate reading or drama areas, a small hill for carpet riding in the snow, a kindergarten garden, a vegetable garden, large trees and a tree nursery. Hopscotch, Kings Court and a huge hundred square were painted on the once unused tarmac. Many large donated shade trees were dedicated to members of the community. There was still plenty of room for baseball and soccer.

The amazing part was that students played and worked digging huge holes, getting soaking wet on watering days and pulling out uninvited plants. We used no pesticides. Adults helped, but much of the work was done by the students. The caretaker and the secretary never complained and were always there to help.

Now there were more special and interesting places to congregate, students gathered away from flying soccer balls or enthusiastic racers. Our "Peace Garden" became a haven for quiet play. The students had planted native trees and berry shrubs along with flowers and herbs to invite butterflies, birds and wildlife to share the space. Every spring, this garden saw a host of tulips – each one lovingly planted and dedicated by students in honour of a person who gave time or life to accomplish peace for the world during times of war. One Remembrance Day, the piper led students and staff to this garden to celebrate peace given to us. To promote harmony on the playground, young students were trained to help others solve their problems without bullying. Playground violence was reduced substantially.





Hoist up the bird house.

WE WORKED
THROUGH
THE TERMS
OF FOUR
SUPPORTIVE
PRINCIPALS,

TWO OF WHOM WENT ON TO SUPPORT RESTORATIONS AT NEW SCHOOLS. Two superintendents worked with students on special days. Community members who took evening walks through the grounds commented enthusiastically about the wild garden – even those who had previously opposed “gardening” in school time.

Our Learning Ground became a base for all civic activity. Students worked to become a “Green School.” The fact that each student participated in some way was important to the well being of the school community. Completed environmental tasks gained points for the Green School program and were announced each morning. Vandalism was minimal and the schoolyard was protected and free of litter. The school became involved in an extensive recycling program. Earth Day activities were part of learning. A “Composting Club” and “Garden Club” were formed. Students carefully recorded the daily activities needed to gain points for Green. The day our School was recognized as a Green School by the Learners in Action Program

of the SEEDS Foundation, everyone celebrated both the worth of their labour and their understanding of their roles as responsible citizens.

Our small school project – to plant a Carolinian forest restoration – was just the beginning of what turned out to be an extensive and enriching school community experience. We learned about and connected with our own ecology. Students found something “fun” to do. We met our goals and set new ones, creating a living, beautiful park far more desirable than a place filled only with play structures.

This project touched lives and created memories for all who participated. Incidentally, I also met a personal goal. My personal library now includes at least 100 books I bought to enhance and inform the project in various ways. I keep these to share with my grandchildren and others. My garden at home is a now a small Learning Ground in my neighborhood.

MARIETTA STONEHOUSE-KISH (retired) taught Primary and Junior grades at Millgrove School, Flamborough.

REFERENCE

Evergreen Learning Grounds www.evergreen.ca. Tel: (416) 596-1495/1-888-426-3138
Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 355 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, ON M3B 2W8.
Tel: 1-800-440-2366. www.ontarionature.org Email: info@ontarionature.org
Learners In Action Program, SEEDS Foundation, Suite 202, 25 St. Michael Street,
St. Albert, AB T8N 1C7. www.greenschools.ca/seeds



Enjoying the fragrance.

Six hundred delegates and alternates from across Ontario were in Toronto August 13-16 to attend ETFO's Fourth Annual Meeting. The four-day event quickly got down to work; before it was over delegates had taken care of all the business presented to them; had voted on over 100 resolutions; elected the provincial executive for 2001-2002; and celebrated with the winners of a variety of awards and honours.

In Support of Public Education

By CHARLOTTE MORGAN

In her opening address to the meeting, Phyllis Benedict, President, ETFO, said she was proud of all that has been accomplished in three short years. She pointed particularly to our achievements in the areas of collective bargaining and equity. However, the President had harsh criticisms to level elsewhere. "Ontario has experienced a government that believes there is little value in public education. The government has systematically undermined public confidence in public education, its educators, and its ability to provide a future generation of leaders," she said.

On teacher recertification, Benedict said "I want to be one of the 40,000 randomly selected teachers. I will continue to choose the professional development I need to improve my teaching skills. And five years from now, I guarantee, I will not have completed the Minister's seven core courses and seven elective courses. I know that should the College of Teachers attempt to discipline me, I can rely on this union to defend me!"

Report to the Annual Meeting

ETFO's Report to the Annual Meeting – a comprehensive document that details the federation's activities during 2000-2001 – was distributed to all delegates. In September, copies were mailed to all ETFO's worksites. Ask your ETFO steward to share this informative booklet with you.

New Executive Elected

Delegates elected the following members to represent them on the provincial executive during 2001-2002: Phyllis Benedict, President, Kawartha Pine Ridge; Emily Noble, First Vice-President, Algoma; Ruth Behnke, Vice-President, Lambton Kent; Ken Collins, Vice-President, Rainbow; Phyllis Benedict, OTF Table Officer, Kawartha Pine Ridge. Executive members: Sharon Aloian, Niagara; Barbara Burkett, Ontario North East; Kathy Clarke, Halton; David Clegg, York Region; John Curtis, Toronto; Wambui Gaitho, Toronto; Kelly Hayes, Hamilton-Wentworth; Cynthia Lemon, Bluewater; Gayle Manley, Algoma; Rian McLaughlin, Hamilton-Wentworth.

Priorities Set

Delegates agreed that the federation's priorities for 2001-2002 would be

- To protect the collective bargaining rights of elementary teachers and educational workers.
- To defend publicly funded public education.
- To serve the needs of the membership.
- To provide for the professional development of members.
- To promote social justice in the areas of anti-poverty, non-violence and equity.

Teacher Recertification

Following the President's speech, the media focused a great deal of attention on ETFO's opposition to teacher recertification. Shortly afterwards, delegates unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the Government of Ontario to repeal the sections of *The Stability and Excellence in Education Act* that imposes recertification requirements on teachers.

In August, the Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of OTF passed a resolution condemning the College for its proposed implementation of the government's teacher testing program.

The position of ETFO remains as follows: 'Teachers should engage in ongoing professional development on a voluntary basis by assessing their own learning needs ...' *Ensuring High Professional Standards in Ontario Education, ETFO, 1999.*

Opposition Leaders Address Delegates

Both Dalton McGuinty, Leader of the Official Opposition and Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, and Howard Hampton, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, attended the Annual Meeting and addressed the delegates.

McGuinty reviewed his own education platform and said he is opposed to charter schools and funding for private schools. He also said "No!" to teacher testing "If I am called upon to form the next government, I would repeal the anti-

education Bill 160; I would repeal the anti-education Bill 74; and I would repeal the private school voucher included in the 2001 Budget Bill," he said.

Hampton accused the Tories of vilifying teachers in an ongoing campaign to denigrate and attack public institutions, such as education. The NDP leader also blasted standardized tests as a \$300 million waste. "Testing is not a substitute for teaching and learning," he said. Hampton also promised to scrap teacher testing

From the Ground Up

ETFO's vision for education was released August 14. Over the previous six months, ETFO members had been asked, through a variety of means, to reflect on what high quality, public elementary education should look like. *From the Ground Up* was then created from their responses. The document is also supported by credible education research.

From the Ground Up identifies seven key priorities for education: small class sizes; qualified teachers; flexible curriculum and appropriate assessment; adequate special education programs; a welcoming school environment; early years programs; and real accountability.

"None of these priorities can be met without adequate investments in elementary education," said Phyllis Benedict, President, ETFO. "*From the Ground Up* is about solutions, about actions that, once taken, would give each of our students the opportunity to reach her or his full potential."

Copies of *From the Ground Up* have been sent to every ETFO School Steward.



ABOVE: Winnie Ng and Nancy Riche bring greetings from the Canadian Labour Congress.



ABOVE: Phyllis Benedict, President, with *From the Ground Up* - ETFO's Call to Action for Public Education. BELOW: Delegates vote on more than 100 resolutions.



BELOW: Emily Noble, Vice-President, with Executive Member Hilda Watkins.



ETFO 2001-02 BUDGET General Fund

Projected Net Revenue

REVENUE	\$45,712,941
Teachers, Occasional Teachers, ESP/PSP & Associate members + interest	
Defense Fund	(8,614,904)
Political Action/Public Relations Fund	(1,129,824)
OTF/CTF Fees	(3,106,886)
QECCO Fees	(716,175)
OFL/CLC Fees	(688,771)
NET REVENUE	31,456,381

Projected Expenditure

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	94,500
GOVERNANCE	1,802,567
Annual, Executive, & Representative Council Meetings & released executive costs	
ETFO LOCALS	13,078,350
fee rebates to locals, local release time, training & materials for Locals & Stewards	
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS	144,900
two meetings for each committee	
ASSISTANCE	339,100
awards, donations, scholarships & project overseas	
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	604,481
PD programs, teacher education & conferences	
EQUITY & WOMEN'S PROGRAMS	635,704
race relations, employment equity, anti-violence & women's programs*	
PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR MEMBERS	2,717,411
collective bargaining, professional relations services, health & safety, pensions & legal costs	
STRATEGIC SERVICES	623,901
publication & distribution of VOICE, LINK, EXPRESS & other communications, pamphlets	
PROVINCIAL OFFICE	1,884,700
rent, maintenance, taxes, phones, equipment, printing & postage & members' records	
STAFF SALARIES & BENEFITS	9,208,352
provincial staff salaries & benefits	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES & SUNDRIES	291,600
legal costs, consultants, insurance & auditors	
TRANSFERS TO RESTRICTED FUNDS	307,651
transferred assets to be accumulated in separate funds to meet long term goals	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	31,733,217
SURPLUS (deficit)	(276,836)

*Each year, ETFO allocates 6% of the annual budget (\$1,827,173) to programs for women. Some of these programs are in the Equity & Women's Programs section but most are spread throughout the budget.



ABOVE: Heather Halls receives the Humanitarian Award (ETFO member) from Vice-President Ruth Behnke.

ABOVE: Mary Heit receives the Innovative Projects on Behalf of Children Living in Poverty Award from Vice-President Ken Collins.



ABOVE: The Chairpersons of ETFO's Standing Committees gather for a photo. BELOW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP: New Honorary Life Members Jackie Campbell, Marg Couture, Carol Harvey, Patricia Kalapaca. BOTTOM: Honorary Life Members Barbara Sargent, John Simpson. Mary Peck accepts a Humanitarian Award for Cathy Wever (deceased). Ann Hoggarth, President's Award Winner.



Resolution 117

Apart from teacher recertification, the issue that attracted the most attention from the media asked that ETFO encourage district school boards to provide funding to each school, upon request, for the specific purpose of purchasing materials for student use which reflect lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender realities. The resolution passed with overwhelming support.

Annual Meeting delegates also supported a resolution encouraging ETFO locals to establish a fund for the specific purpose of addressing homophobia and heterosexism.

Resolutions Debated

Among the more than 100 resolutions debated, delegates agreed that:

- For 2001-2004, there shall be an additional fee of 0.2% of gross annual salary per Active Member to be allocated to the Defense Fund. (For more information, see the General Secretary's column on page 3.)
- That the Delegates to the 2001 ETFO Annual meeting call upon the government of Ontario to repeal the section of the 2001 Budget Bill that establishes a tax credit for private school tuition under the *Income Tax Act*.
- That ETFO, through OTF, petition the Ministry of Education to provide, for each reporting period, an additional day of preparation time within the students' instructional day for the completion of the Provincial Report Card.
- That ETFO, through OTF, lobby the Ontario government to provide adequate and stable funding to facilitate collective bargaining between ETFO and school boards.
- That ETFO, through OTF, lobby the Ministry of Education to provide a school year having a maximum of 194 school days of which nine shall be professional activity days.

- That ETFO strike an Executive Task Force to design an ethical screen that the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board should apply when making investments, with a report to the 2002 ETFO Annual Meeting
- That ETFO encourage Locals to promote leadership positions for women on collective bargaining committees.
- That ETFO establish a Humanity Fund based on the Steelworkers' Humanity Fund model.
- That Federation programs, services and facilities be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities.
- That ETFO encourage members not to participate in any EQAO marking exercises.

Policies Passed

- That the provision of extra curricular activities by Members be strictly voluntary.
- That the development of universally accessible, high quality, not-for-profit child care programs and services be supported.
- That Members not participate in fundraising activities for the purpose of raising money for essential school supplies required to run instructional programs.
- That every junior and senior kindergarten class have at least one full-time educational assistant.
- That public education be publicly funded.

Comprehensive policies were also passed on Combined Grades; Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting; Aboriginal Education; Special Education; Volunteers in the Worksite.

For more information on these and other policies passed at this and previous Annual Meetings, please see the ETFO Reference Book mailed to every ETFO steward in October.

Awards Presented

ETFO awards offer opportunities to recognize outstanding service by federation members and others to the profession, to students and to the broader community. Many of these awards are presented locally; others are presented at the Annual Meeting. The photos of the award winners present at this Annual Meeting appear on page 30 and were announced in the ETFO *Voice* Summer 2001 issue. The winners of ETFO's 2001 scholarships and bursaries are listed on page 39 of this issue.

For more information on ETFO awards, see your ETFO Steward or contact Shauna Petrie at Provincial Office. There is still time to apply yourself or to nominate a colleague for one of the many awards and scholarships that will be offered in 2001-2002.

CHARLOTTE MORGAN is the Editor of the ETFO *Voice*.

Focus on Equity provides information about the equity programs and activities of ETFO, locally and provincially. Equity and Women's Services staff write this regular feature in ETFO Voice. We are John Guiney, Kathleen Loftus, Sherry Ramrattan Smith, Carol Zavitz.

Fairness for All

FOCUS ON EQUITY

By Kathleen Loftus

ETFO objects include:

- To foster a climate of social justice in Ontario and continue a leadership role in such areas as anti-poverty, non-violence and equity.

ETFO recognizes that we live in a society characterized by individual and systemic discrimination against particular groups. Within this context ETFO defines equity as fairness achieved through proactive measures which result in equality for all.

"...and still we rise" an ETFO Conference for Women

On February 6, 7 and 8, 2002 this provincial conference will be held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. The conference will include one day of leadership training and one day of personal growth workshops. Included in the leadership training are all day workshops in the areas of:

- Collective Bargaining;
- Health and Safety;
- Equity;
- Presentation Skills;
- Professional Relations;
- Legal Issues; and
- Status of Women.

A wide variety of personal growth workshops will be offered with specific focus on the needs and issues of women. This year the conference has been expanded to include women from other affiliates, unions, organizations and community groups as participants in the personal growth strand.

Throughout the conference, participants will have opportunities to experience diverse cultural events, attend plenary sessions with exciting, nationally renowned speakers and to participate in an evening of Celebration of Women through music and art.

Participants at last year's conference gave it "rave reviews" and we're sure this year's conference will be even better. Watch for further information and registration material in the ETFO steward mailings and on the ETFO website.

Research Opportunity -

Status of Women Canada is inviting proposals for research grants on the topic Trade Agreements and Women. If you are interested in submitting a proposal please call Kathleen Loftus at the provincial office for details. Deadline is November 30, 2001.

LGBT Listserve

Acting on a recommendation from the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender ETFO Standing Committee, ETFO has established an LGBT Listserve. The Listserve has been created to provide lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender members with a forum to share information about LGBT issues in education through a system similar to an email "read only" group. Check the ETFO website or call John Guiney for more information.

Local Committees

Many ETFO Locals have Status of Women, Human Rights, Equity, and/or Anti-Racist Education committees. Contact your Local if you are interested in actively promoting equity issues through your union.

ETFO Promotes Equity in the Curriculum

Blurred Vision: Rethinking the Ontario Curriculum

This document, which may be purchased from shopETFO, was written by the ETFO 2000-2001 Anti-Racist Education Committee and is intended to inform the community at large of the absence of equity and other essential and socially responsible issues from the

current Ontario curriculum. The document provides teachers with suggestions that can easily be incorporated into the current curriculum that focus on critical thinking, environmental awareness, media literacy and diversity

We're Erasing Prejudice for Good In-service

ETFO will provide workshop leaders to in-service teachers across the province on *We're Erasing Prejudice for Good*, an anti-bias, literature based curriculum resource. The in-service provides practical ways of delivering inclusive curriculum, consistent with Ontario's curriculum, which address equity for all. *We're Erasing Prejudice for Good* was a finalist for the Award of Excellence from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Contact **Kathleen Loftus** at the provincial office for more information on arranging an in-service.

Women's Programs 2001-2002

Look for this pamphlet in your school or call ETFO for your copy.

International Teaching Opportunities



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- Limited Space, Register ASAP
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Common sense. Efficiency. Accountability. Excellence. Flexibility. The present provincial government, as it leaps from mantra to mantra like fleas in a crowded kennel, has settled for the moment on a new buzzword - *Stability!*



Steady On

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

By Christine Brown for ETFO's Collective Bargaining Area

The quality of irony is clearly in short supply at Queen's Park. The *Stability and Excellence in Education Act*, which became law on June 28th, is a textbook recipe for upheaval. Setting aside the implications of mandatory teacher re-certification, the repercussions for collective bargaining alone are enormous.

Under the new law, teacher (which includes occasional teacher) collective agreements negotiated after July 1, 2001 will now have a common expiry date – August 31, 2004. Subsequent collective agreements would then have a three-year term. We will turn

to the potential fall-out from this arrangement in a moment, but first a look at the Tory record so far in promoting stable labour relations.

The schools sector, and in particular that part of it involving elementary teachers, was long noted for its extremely low incidence of strike activity. As the chart to the right indicates, since teachers gained the right to strike in 1976 there have been 17 strikes among public elementary teachers. Bear in mind that all but four of these years represent the pre-amalgamation era, i.e., 77 school boards instead of 31. That encompasses literally hundreds of rounds of negotiations. Moreover, of these 17 strikes, four did not advance beyond the "work-to-rule" stage; teachers continued to provide classroom teaching.

However, you will note that eight of these 17 strikes took place over the 19 years preceding the Common Sense Revolution. Thus, nine have taken place in just the past six years. While we might all agree that stability in labour relations is a good thing, it is clear who bears responsibility for the present state of affairs.

Will the new law really bring about stability? There are a number of components to consider.

First, mandatory three-year agreements are yet another example of teachers being exempted from the protections afforded by existing laws. Other workers covered, as are teachers, by the *Labour Relations Act* are entitled to negotiate agreements as short as one year. Unions generally prefer shorter collective agreements, as they enable them to negotiate continuous improvements, rather than being locked-in for an extended period of time. Some highly successful unions do, of course, sometimes agree to a longer term, but they extract a price for it.

Second, the price they extract often consists of a great many collective agreement improvements in *all* areas, in addition to monetary gains. As teaching becomes more complex, and as the legal and social environment surrounding the profession shifts and changes, no one can afford to be at the mercy of a static collective agreement. To take just one example, only recently has such an important issue

as capped supervision time been successfully addressed in collective agreements. Yet few teachers would dispute the importance of such a cap in helping to bring sanity to their working lives. As well, longer collective agreements put teachers further behind other workers with respect to a wide range of employment entitlements. For example, supplemental employment insurance benefits for teachers on pregnancy or parental leave are far worse than those available to many other public sector groups (such as nurses). Moreover, when existing legislation with respect to such leaves changes (as it recently did), or when other changes occur in employment-related statutes,

collective agreements are sometimes revised to take advantage of benefits *over and above* that provided by law. It's difficult to do this, however, in an agreement that is locked-in for three years. And then, of course, there is the salary question. While the board-by-board financial data local negotiators have had to work with for the past three years were seldom ideal, at least there was a general sense of the overall picture. Negotiators on both sides will now be working in a total vacuum, and this fall board negotiators will be placed in the interesting position of having to pull wage figures out of a hat. Teacher negotiators, for their part, will still be grappling with the fact that even the

recent gains do not redress the impact of inflation from the past decade.

All of which is to say that these battles will be *very* hard fought indeed. It is axiomatic that contract demands tabled reflect the length of the proposed collective agreement – the longer the agreement, the more comprehensive the list of proposed changes, and thus the harder the bargaining.

At time of writing, there are some 20 ETFO Locals in the process of negotiating three-year deals, with 40 Locals due to negotiate two-year deals after that. This is because of Local settlements which occurred prior to the implementation date for the new law. All of these Locals will be tabling, or have already tabled,

improvements in working conditions, wages, technical aspects such as the grievance procedure, human rights provisions, benefits, etc.

Finally, the course of negotiations over the next three years is critical to the configuration of what follows, when all teacher and occasional teacher Locals must, by law, negotiate three-year agreements. It is possible, though they continue to deny it, that the whole scheme was devised by government as a set-up for provincial bargaining. In that case, it is crucial that the agreements being negotiated right now be the best that they can possibly be, so that the bar on August 31st 2004 will be a high one indeed. It won't be easy.

STRIKES IN THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY PANEL SINCE 1975

Board	Year	Schools	Staff*	Students*	Type	Settlement
Peel	1979	123	2,533	51,749	Strike/Work-to-rule	Voluntary binding arbitration
Brant	1979	41	566	11,078	Strike	Negotiated
Metro Toronto	1987	490	8,811	136,464	Strike	Mediated
Ottawa	1990	51	1,252	17,284	Strike	Mediated
Lambton	1990	41	680	11,218	Strike	Mediated
Carleton	1992	61	1,181	30,224	Work-to-rule	Mediated
East Parry Sound	1993	12	188	2,600	Strike	Legislated
Windsor	1993	34	743	11,300	Strike	Negotiated
Renfrew	1996	26	466	8,417	Work-to-rule	Mediated
Simcoe	1998	88	1,876	34,823	Rotating strike	Mediated
Waterloo	1998	101	1,958	36,000	Strike/Rotating strike	Mediated
York Region	1998	110	2,700	50,272	Lockout/Rotating strike	Mediated
Hamilton-Wentworth	2000	118	2,300	40,000	Strike/Lockout	Legislated
York Region	2000	115	2,957	54,600	Admin. work-to-rule Work-to-rule	Mediated
Keewatin-Patricia	2000	30	260	4,000	Admin. work-to-rule Work-to-rule/Strike/Lockout	Mediated
Toronto ®	2001	550	11,000	200,000	Admin. work-to-rule	Mediated
Lambton-Kent ®	2001	52	932	15,500	Admin. work-to-rule Work-to-rule/Lockout	Mediated

*Figures before 1998 are FTE

®Toronto, Lambton-Kent - Pink-listing preceded the work-to rule. A dispute involving Durham occasional teachers in the spring of 2001 also resulted in pink-listing.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation urges its 240,000 members to take a pro-active role in countering anti-Muslim and anti-Arab sentiments in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C.



CTF REPORT

Doug Willard, President, CTF

CTF believes that the fight against religious and political extremism starts in the classrooms and in our communities. Teachers' main professional responsibility now is to help children and youth cope with this tragedy by encouraging discussion in the classroom and by dispelling any myths related to Islam and Muslims.

In struggling to comprehend the meaning of events that shook their world, young students have sought solace in our classrooms which have been forums for discussion and for overcoming their

anxieties. The classroom is where teachers can play a pivotal role in correcting inaccuracies about how students view other cultures and religions.

We must take measures to ensure that real war is not fought among children and youth in our own communities. If we try to solve our problems with murder and acts of violence here, we are no different from those we consider evil. Finding a way where both sides of any conflict can live together and love and respect each other is probably the only response that will save us all.

CTF has posted on its website professional advice by experienced teachers on how to deal with the backlash in our schools and communities.

CTF is asking its Member organizations and teachers to contribute generously to the Solidarity Fund established by its umbrella organization, Education International (EI). Cheques, made payable in Canadian dollars, should be made out to CTF, annotated "EI Solidarity Fund" and forwarded to 2490 Don Reid Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 1E1.

Three Washington D.C. teachers and three of their students were in one of the aircraft used in the terrorist attacks. The 11-year-old students were heading to California to be presented with National Geographic awards for essays they had written.

In a September 13 letter to its American colleagues – the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), CTF expressed "great sorrow and absolute shock and horror." As President of CTF, I also conveyed my heartfelt thoughts and prayers for the surviving victims and deepest sympathy to the families who have lost their loved ones.

Saskatchewan teacher **DOUG WILLARD** was installed as President of CTF in July, 2001. He has been a member of CTF's Board of Directors since 1988 and is a member of the CTF Ad Hoc Committee for National Issues in Education. A strong believer in a publicly funded school system as the foundation of a democratic society, he is also an advocate of the network of services CTF provides for teachers across Canada.

Events

NOVEMBER 16-18 LONDON

Supervisory Officer's Qualifications Program

Contact: Colleen Lee, ETFO
Tel: 416-962-3836/1-888-838-3836
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JANUARY 25-27, 2002 TORONTO

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FEBRUARY 1-2, 2002 TORONTO

ETFO Representative Council Meeting

Contact: Mary Morison
Tel: 416-962-3836/1-888-838-3836
Fax: 416-642-2424
Email: mmorison@etfo.org
www.etfo.ca

FEBRUARY 1-2, 2002 TORONTO

And Still We Rise ETFO Women's Conference

Contact: Kathleen Loftus
Tel: 416-962-3836/1-888-838-3836
Fax: 416-642-2424
Email: kloftus@etfo.org
www.etfo.ca

FEBRUARY 22-24, 2002 LONDON

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Solidarity Statement

The success of union action depends on the strength of commitment and unity of its members. The collective actions of individuals build a strong union. Our opposition to recertification provides an opportunity for ETFO members to stand together in a common cause.



**Elementary Teachers'
Federation of Ontario**

LEFT TO RIGHT - BACK ROW:
 At OTF's Annual Meeting in August, Roger Régimbal, President, OTF Presented OTF Fellowships to Randy McGlynn, Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan (non-member category); and
 FRONT ROW: Jim Smith, OECTA; Emily Noble, ETFO; Beverley Saskoley, ETFO; Jeff Heximer, OECTA; Yvan Roy, AEFO; and Rachelle Chrétien, AEFO.



OTF REPORT

Phyllis Benedict, President, ETFO, and OTF Table Officer

We are all aware that since the inception of the College of Teachers and Bill 180, the traditional roles and functions of the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) drastically changed. What did not change were the objects of OTF as set out in the *Teaching Profession Act, 1944*

The objects of OTF are:

- to promote and advance the cause of education;
- to raise the status of the teaching profession;
- to promote and advance the interests of teachers and to secure conditions that will make possible the best professional service;

- to arouse and increase public interest in educational affairs;
- to co-operate with other teachers' organizations throughout the world having the same or like objects; and
- to represent all members of the pension plan established under the *Teachers' Pension Act, 1989* in the administration of the plan and the management of the pension fund.

While most of these Objects were written in 1944, the current political climate in Ontario emphasizes that public education and all educational stakeholders would be well-served by the implementation of these statements.

As President Pearse Shannon begins his term in the office of OTF President, it is no easy road that lies before him. On September 28, 2001, Justice Archibald rendered his decision regarding the OTF versus the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) case. The decision denied OTF's position.

While legal counsel is reviewing this decision, it is clear that the suspension of OSSTF participation on the OTF Executive and Board of

Governors must be lifted. This begs the question that when, and if, OSSTF returns to the OTF Executive and Board of Governors, will the atmosphere of dissension and non-involvement by that Affiliate continue?

The position of the ETFO Executive remains the same. We recognize that the world has changed and OTF needs to respond to those changes. ETFO also understands how critically we need a united voice and united actions to not only deal with the continual onslaught of this government but to coordinate actions for the future. We believe that OTF can fulfill that role, while respecting the autonomy of the Affiliates.

This has definitely not been the time to be divided. The power of unity can never be underestimated.

ETFO Award Winners 2000-2001. **LEFT TO RIGHT, BACK ROW:** Betty Ellis, Outstanding Bus Driver, Kawartha Pine Ridge. Kelly Hayes, Local Leadership Award, Hamilton-Wentworth. Frank Rossbottom, Educational Support/Professional Support Person of the Year, Renfrew. Gordon Hough, Newsletter Editor's Award, Upper Canada. Cliff Kraeker, Local Website of the Year, Thames Valley.

FRONT ROW: JoAnne Gallaway, Outstanding Role Model for Women, Waterloo. Marian Wong, Occasional Teacher of the Year; Waterloo. Karen McIlwain, Newsletter Editor's Award, Superior Greenstone.



In June, ETFO announced the winners of the 2001 scholarships and bursaries. For more information on ETFO's Awards Program, ask your ETFO Steward for a copy of this year's Reference Book.

ETFO Scholarship & Bursary Winners

Doctoral Scholarship

Linda Lemon, Waterloo

Doctoral Scholarship (Women's Program)

Marni Binder, Toronto

ETFO Bursaries for sons and daughters of ETFO members

Kara Anne Chapman, Toronto
 Rebecca Marie Gera, Peel
 Jocelyn Gordon, Peel
 Occasional Teachers
 Eric Slyfield, Toronto
 Stephanie Van Egmond, Thames Valley

ETFO Bursaries for Persons with a Disability/Visible Minorities/Aboriginal Persons (Women's Program)

Mary Jin-Moore, Algoma
 Occasional Teachers
 Lynn Lockhart-Menzies, York Region
 Lorraine Mention, Thames Valley

Master's Scholarships Awards

Lois Brown, Toronto
 Lorelei Crump, Durham
 Lowell Davis, Thames Valley
 Sheila Farnsworth, Near North
 Kristin Frank, Waterloo

Rachel Gencey, Durham
 Jason Ieraci, Peel
 David Mastin, Durham
 Curt McQueen, Upper Grand
 Mark Toale, Peel.

Master's Scholarships Awards (Women's Program)

Daniela Bascuñán, Toronto
 Barbara Cameron, Upper Canada
 Virginia DiMeglio, Toronto
 Lesley Fisher, Algoma
 Susan Gillies-Rezo, Hamilton-Wentworth
 Jennifer McFadden, Toronto
 Dorothy Ramsay, Simcoe
 Melody Ann Robinson, Bluewater
 Keri Shepherdson, Lakehead
 Carol Smiley, Toronto

Women's Studies Scholarships Award

Linda Spence, Ottawa-Carleton

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Body Image Puppet Project:

The National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) is inviting teachers to participate in a pilot project on healthy eating and healthy body image. The puppet show aims to promote positive body image by celebrating diversity of body sizes and shapes, and to help children recognize and respond to the complex social and cultural pressures about body image.

If you are a grade 2, 3, or 4 teacher in the Toronto area, and are interested in having NEDIC present a puppet show to your class, please call Mary Tangelder, Project Manager of the Body Image Puppet Project, before December 1, 2001. Tel: 416-604-3913, Email: mtangelder@sympatico.ca

Canadian Center for International Education is hiring English teachers in China.

BA Degree required, free round airfare, North American styled accommodation and Chinese lessons. Minimum one year commitment. Interested candidate send resumé to samuelrong@home.com or fax 905-361-2604.

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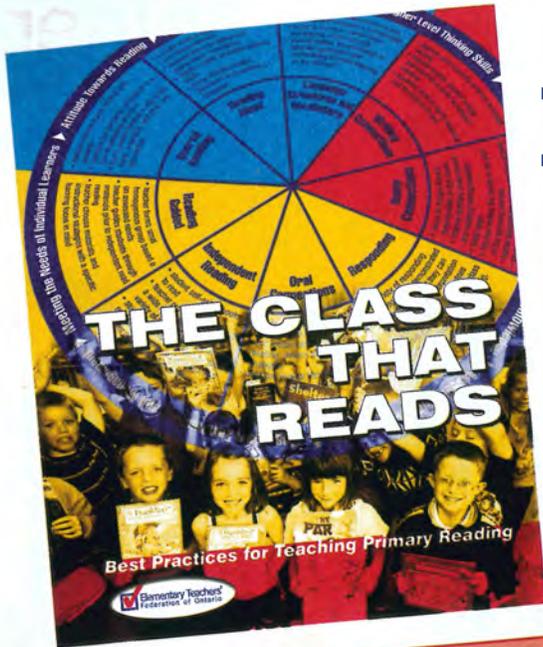
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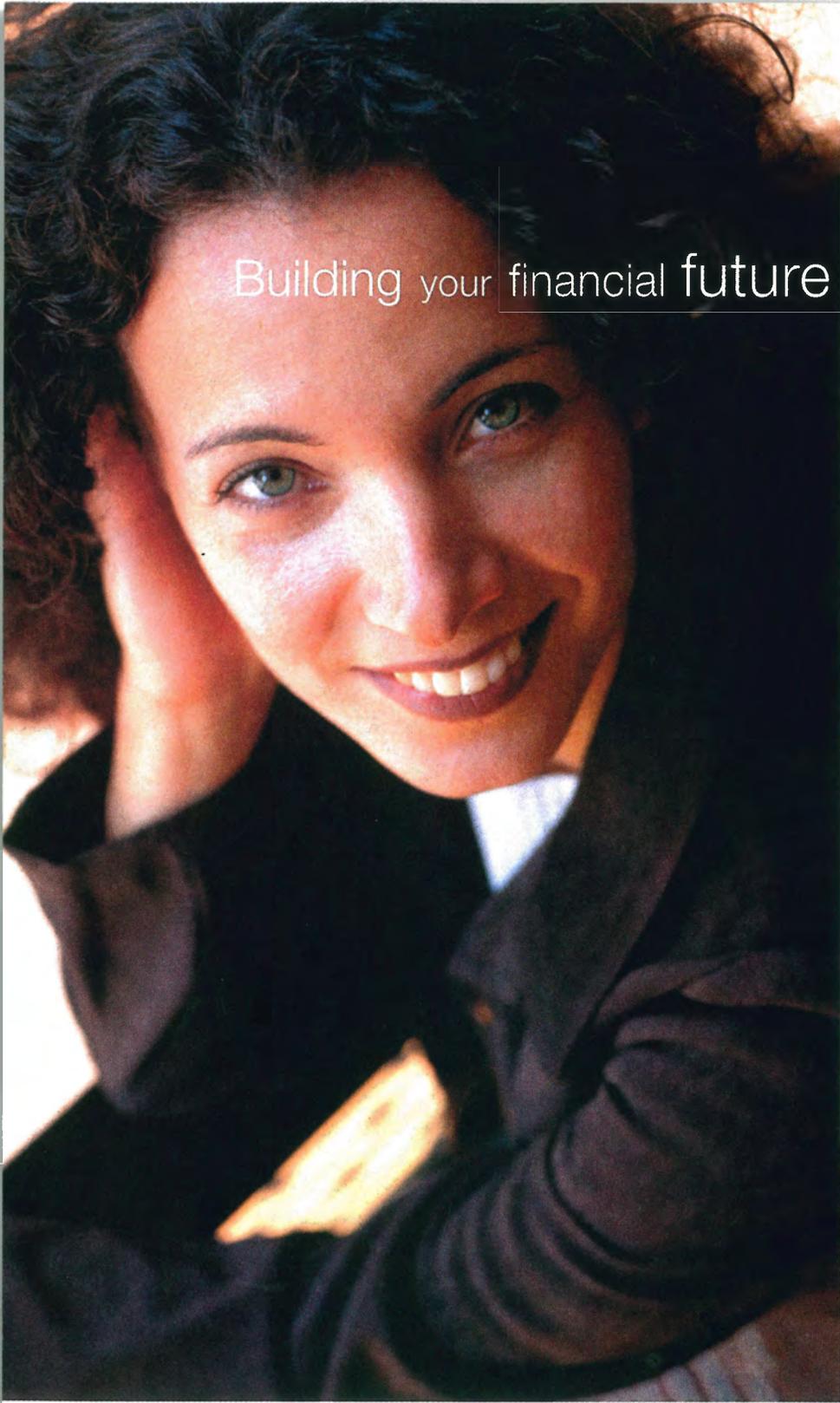
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