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THE INFORMER

The Official Newsletter of O.E.C.T.A. - Simcoe Muskoka Elementary Unit

ELEMENTARY UNIT

Changes Coming!

The school board is currently piloting an on-line attendance program at a few schools. This means that teachers will be responsible for recording attendance in their class using a board-issued laptop. Part of this pilot includes an option for parents to pay online for school events and items online as well. So in the near future, money collecting, recording and counting will no longer be a time consuming daily chore in your classroom!

Good to Know:

Parental Harassment is an ongoing concern for teachers and it **must stop**. We have enough stresses in our jobs and lives, and the last thing we need is to feel intimidated and scared of a parent. If you feel that you are being harassed by a parent, report it to your principal. Gather evidence such as screen shots or photocopy notes and correspondence. Call Kent or Shannon at the Unit Office if you require assistance.

President's Message

OECTA Annual General Meeting 2017

I wish to thank those delegates that took time out of their March Break to be part of this year's AGM.

The delegates were treated to some guest speakers, such as, Mitzie Hunter (Minister of Education) and Naomi Klein. Highlights and minutes of the meeting can be found in the member's section on [OECTA Provincial's Website](#).

The focus of our Saturday debate revolved around a fee increase. An increase to the base fee from \$1000 to \$1100 was passed, with any future increases to the fee being tied to any salary increases. This will allow OECTA the opportunity to meet their budgetary obligations and still allow us to build our reserve fund.

The election of our **2017-18 Provincial Executive** took place, congratulations to those elected:

Liz Stuart – President
Warren Grafton – 1st Vice President
Barb Dobrowolski – 2nd Vice President
Andrew Donihee – 3rd Vice President
Michel Derikx – Treasurer
Rene Jansen in de Wal – Councillor
Anthony Rocchio – Councillor
Chris Cowley – OTF Governor
Ann Hawkins – Past President

This was also an election year for OTF Governors.

Congratulations to those elected:

Rick Belisle
Chris Cowley
Tracey Pecarski
Sean Roberts
Andrew Robertson

Lunch Thoughts

Teachers are always being pulled in different directions. Every day there are extra-curricular events, teams and play practices that people can be a part of while on breaks. We are entitled to a 40-minute uninterrupted lunch and it is important that we take it in order to rest our bodies and our brains. We need to use those 40 minutes to rejuvenate ourselves for the next block of teaching and learning. Ensuring that teachers take their 40-minute lunches will decrease your stress level and you may have a few laughs in the staff room with colleagues. If you need to, use the time to take care of personal business at lunch, perhaps freeing up other time for yourself. Not only do you need a lunch break but your students will notice when you are more rejuvenated and your patience is restored. So remember, as we get busier at school with all the events of Spring, take your lunch break for a breath of new life to you and others around you!

Tina Marie Lockyer

Benefit Transition

We have now transitioned to the OECTA Benefit Plan provided through OTIP/Manulife. **Members have until May 2nd to enrol, but are encouraged to enrol as soon as possible, if you haven't already.**

Things to remember with our new plan:

Beneficiary Designation:

You are reminded to complete, print and mail it back to OTIP as soon as possible. A reminder that this designation differs from our Teachers' Pension Plan – where our spouse is automatically assigned as the primary beneficiary. With our benefits life insurance, we can designate a primary, as well as, a secondary beneficiary. There isn't an automatic designation to our spouse.

Direct Billing:

For those service providers who offer direct billing, you will need to provide your new plan # and ID #. As well, you need to complete the direct deposit information on the registration site for information to be processed.

Online Billing:

Our new benefit plan allows us to submit certain claims online. However, you will need to log into the benefit provider's website, and complete the service provider information. Unfortunately, you are unable to complete this information in advance, but once you submit a claim, the service provider information will be saved.

Prescriptions:

You will need to provide your new plan # and ID #.

If any of your claims are still being processed through Sun Life, it is encouraged that you stop that process and redirect the service provider to process claims through your new benefit provider-OTIP.

Important Dates

- Apr 14-17-Easter Weekend
- Apr 20-Executive Meeting-Unit Office
- Apr 24-28-Administrative Professionals week-thank your Office Administrator!
- Apr 28-National Day of Mourning for people who became ill, were injured, or died at work
- Apr 29-Retirement Workshop
- May 11-Executive Meeting-Unit Office
- May 11-Unit General Meeting-Elections, Unit Bylaws, Unit Levy-Liberty North
- May 25-President's Dinner (Barrie Area Schools)
- May 27-OECTA Golf Tournament
- May 30-President's Dinner (Surrounding Schools)

@oectasm.ca Email Accounts

Please encourage your colleagues to log onto our local website.
www.oectasimcoemuskoka.on.ca

It is full of current, relevant information relating to your job! You will find both current and archived memos, forms for Conferences, Parental and Pregnancy Guide, current events, this years issues of the Informer, etc, etc, etc. Please take a few minutes and have a look!

Join the Walk for Social Justice!

Week of May 15 - 19, 2017

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association local units' Human Rights Committee would like to invite you to join us in the Walk for Social Justice post-Catholic Education week (May 15 – 19, 2017). Our goal is to have as many schools participate as possible in the walk. It's easy: your school chooses a day and time (May 15 - 19) to walk with your Social Justice group or classes that involve a planned walking route around your school's community. With banners, your message of the social-justice actions your school or individuals have undertaken in supporting various social-justice causes locally, nationally, and/or internationally, will be heralded throughout the community. In the upcoming months, support material will be provided through templates, black-line masters and permission forms. Remember: no action is too small if it helps to dignify the humanity of others.

Register Here: <https://goo.gl/forms/ZFRbkZgzqtlmC933>

OR send Nicole van Woudenberg an email for further details or assistance.

OR see QR Scan code on Logo below.

Resources are coming soon and will be sent to those who have registered.

This year's logo was inspired by original artwork by a Gr. 7 student-Jenna, in Ms. Angela Lemay's class at FFX.



QR Scan to Register



Benefits Changeover

Although there have been some bumps and a few glitches here and there, overall, the transition to OTIP/ Manulife has been smooth. Learning a new benefits package and claims process is going to take a little getting used to! For example, entering your dentist's information onto the website for direct-pay claims ahead of time, is a new process. OECTA members in other boards have been happy overall with the new providers. There are a few things that OTIP is still working on with regards to their website. Once all members across the province are enrolled, they have assured us that they will be able to focus more attention to these details. If you have any issues with making claims, being denied claims, website issues, or otherwise, for help please call OTIP: **1-866-783-6847**

President's Dinner

You know the 2016-2017 school year has been flying by when we start to think about the President's Dinner. The president's dinner is held each year to celebrate both retirees, and those employees that have been teaching for 25 yrs as an OECTA member. This is also the venue when the Catharine Barker Memorial award is presented.

This year, we have had a record breaking number of retirements, and one of the biggest years of members being recognized for 25 yrs of service. As a result, we have had to split the dinner into two nights. We understand the logistical difficulties this may create, but there is no venue in Barrie that can hold and feed that many people. People may know members accepting awards on different nights, but unfortunately, there is no way around this. Everyone is encouraged to come to either or both nights if you so choose!

Births

Congratulations goes out to:

Robin Murray, teacher at St. Noel Chabanel Catholic School, her husband Travis, and big sister Ella, on the birth of their daughter/sister Cora born on February 21, 2017.

Vanessa MacLellan, teacher at St. Noel Chabanel Catholic School, and her husband, Colin, and big brother Colton, are pleased to announce the arrival of Jacob James on March 16, 2017.

Bereavements

Please Keep In Your Prayers:

Cristina Crittenden, teacher at Holy Cross Catholic School, on the passing of her grandfather Jack Crittenden.

Kelly Quinn-Fraser, teacher at Saint Marie of the Incarnation Catholic School, on the passing of her father, Gary Quinn.

Andrea Donato, teacher at Father F.X. O'Reilly Catholic School, Brittany Sepper, teacher at Father F.X. O'Reilly Catholic School, and Lynette McKenzie, teacher at St Nicholas Catholic School, on the passing of their uncle/grandfather, Jack Maher.

Cathleen Vanderpost, teacher at Saint John Paul II, on the passing of her mother, Marianne Clairmont.

Colleen Magennis, teacher at St. Monica's Catholic School, on the passing of her sister Adrienne Magennis.

Michelle Scott, Elementary Literacy and Numeracy Coach at the Catholic Education Centre, on the passing of her father-in-law, Randall Scott.