

# THE NEWSLETTER

OSSTF DISTRICT 27

NOVEMBER 27, 2013

ISSUE 1 VOLUME 3

## DEFEND OUR CLIMATE - DEFEND OUR COMMUNITIES

By Andrea Loken

On November 16 over 130 communities across Canada rallied to Defend Our Climate – Defend Our Communities. Tens of thousands of people raised their voices to demand better from governments, especially from the pipeline-loving, science-hating

Harper conservatives. Canada's shameful behaviour with respect to climate

policy is being noticed worldwide. Canadians are waking up to the climate crisis and are seeing Canada's plan to develop the tarsands of Alberta as incompatible with a livable planet.

In Kingston, Limestone District 27 OSSTF helped to host of the Defend Our Climate event at the office of Ted Hsu, MP for Kingston and the Islands. Kingston sits on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples. The First Nations communities are the

biggest impediment to the tarsands and the building of pipelines in Canada. Working together with First Nations people is essential to the climate fight.

The tone of the rally was set by aboriginal drumming and singing by students from the Four

**THERE IS TIME TO ACT -  
BUT JUST BARELY. OSSTF AND  
OTHER UNIONS MUST GET  
BEHIND THE CLIMATE FIGHT.**

Directions  
Aboriginal  
Centre at  
Queen's.  
Former  
Chief of  
Ardoch

Algonquin First Nation, Mireille LaPointe, spoke with tremendous humility and wisdom, followed by Bryan Bowers, a First Nations elder who, through an interpretation of an aboriginal painting, explained our connectedness with the Earth.

Other speakers included well known singer-songwriter Sarah Harmer and fellow OSSTF member and writer Adam Davidson-Harden. Local politicians, Dan Beals (federal NDP), and Robert Kiley (provincial Green), and Ted Hsu

## CPAC CHAT

DAVID MATHERS, CPAC CHAIR

Welcome to the latest edition of the D27 newsletter! I am pleased to serve as the Chair of your District 27 Communications and Political Action Committee, having taken over when Joan Jardin assumed her new role as our Interim District Officer. I congratulate Joan on her new position and thank her for her service.

You will see from this newsletter that there are many issues and actions that are of concern to our committee. One of our objectives will be fulfilling our part of the "Together, Fairness Works" initiative. This is a program from the Canadian Labour Congress. It seeks to remind us that the real strength of our union comes from our members and the power of solidarity. We know that unions, including our OSSTF, are under attack as never before. Our response to this attack will be built around the value of fairness.

You will see, in this edition of our newsletter, reference to some of the other concerns of our CPAC. These include defending our environment in the face of disastrous climate change, ethical investing, and supporting our local Kingston and District Labour Council. Please let us know what other concerns and interests you may have, or come out to a meeting. For more information, call me directly at 613-531-9365 or email: [dmathers9@cogeco.ca](mailto:dmathers9@cogeco.ca)



MUSICIAN & ACTIVIST  
SARAH HARMER  
SPEAKING AT THE  
NOVEMBER 16 RALLY

*(Continued from page one)*

(in absentia) all spoke about the need for a shift in climate policy and the need to work together. In between speeches and songs the crowd chanted "Hey hey, ho ho, Harper's pipelines got to go"

and "Fossil fuels are not the tools!"

As former Irish president and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson put it, "Progress on climate won't come from the Canadian Government unless it comes from the Canadian people." Don't think we can affect change? We have no choice but to try. Right now, the IMF and others are saying the world is on track for 4°C warming before the end of the century. In case that sounds okay, it's not. It means glaciers and drinking water for many millions of people will gone, massive food shortages, war and conflict over food and water, and unprecedented global flooding and weather events.

And it's not far off – it's the world your children will try to live in.

World leaders agree that warming above 2°C will be catastrophic. Climate models calculate that to stay below 2°C the "carbon budget" is around 600 gigatonnes – an amount which will be released within 15 years if the world doesn't change course. And according to the fossil fuel companies there are about 3000 gigatonnes in known fossil fuel reserves – 5 times more than what is quasi-safe to burn. The truth is becoming more inconvenient by the minute. Fossil fuels must stay in the ground. There is time to act. Just barely. OSSTF and other unions must get behind the climate fight. So let's get busy.

## OTPP ADDED TO "HALL OF SHAME"

### Ethics, Investment, and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan

By Michael Byrne

Did you know that, as a teacher, you recently owned shares in the world's largest manufacturer of military weapons? Canadian doctor and founder of the organization "War Child", Samantha Nutt, states in her book, *Damned Nations: Greed, Guns, Armies, and Aid*, that the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan in 2010 had over \$90 million invested in Lockheed Martin, the world's biggest military producer.

And you are not merely a shareholder in conventional weapons. OTPP was inducted

into the "Hall of Shame" in the October 2013 "Don't Bank on the Bomb" report produced by Dutch peace organization *IKV Pax Christi* because we held shares valued at \$55 million in nuclear weapons producer Rockwell Collins.

Hopefully we will never forget the slaughter of innocents at Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown Connecticut. Following this incomprehensible tragedy Chicago mayor, Rahm Emanuel, called upon Canadian bank, Toronto Dominion, which provides gun maker Smith & Wesson with a

\$60 million line of credit, "to stop providing Smith & Wesson financial services until the gun maker co-operates on gun reforms". (Globe and Mail, Jan. 25, 2013). The Smith & Wesson AR-15 assault rifle was used to kill 12 movie-goers and wound 58 others in a cinema in Aurora, Colorado. We have shares, 4.1 million of them worth \$285 million, invested in TD bank.

The OTPP is not compelled to invest directly or indirectly in weapons makers but chooses to do so. Next issue: Our pension fund! Our choice?

## WHAT IS “RIGHT TO WORK”?

Fairness, equality, and an unprecedented attack on unions

By Francine Leblanc

Would you ever consider taking a taxi ride, and when you got to your destination decide not to pay the driver? Of course, this would be wrong. However, that is exactly what the Right-to-Work law suggests for unions. This proposed legislation would have unions continue to represent and negotiate all members' contracts, but members would no longer be required to pay union dues. They would get all the benefits of a full-fledged union member, without having to pay for the services required to maintain those benefits.

The Right-to-Work law is a statute in many states in the USA that disallows unions to require the employees' membership to pay fees or dues as a condition of their employment. It is not, as the term suggests, aimed at providing a guarantee of employment to people seeking work. It is a government regulation that interferes in the contractual agreement between employees and their labour unions. In the short term, this legislation could financially cripple unions who would be expected to provide the same services on a fraction of the budget. In the longer term, it can lead to a collapse of unions in the workplace and leave all workers unprotected.

Could this ever happen in Ontario? Let's not forget that Bill 115, passed by the Liberals, has hindered teachers' collective bargaining rights. Mr. Hudak has already confirmed his stand on the Right-to-Work law; he will pass it through legislation if he gets elected in the next election.

One way to get rid of unions is to starve them financially out of existence. That is exactly what the government and big corporations want to do. Let's work together to ensure the preservation of Labour unions and our rights as workers! Watch the video here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhlnxpMMqk0>

And visit <http://fairnessworks.ca/> for more information on CLC

### NAME “THE NEWSLETTER”!

Think we could do better than “The Newsletter” as the title for this publication? Us too! Submit your suggested titles for the District 27 newsletter to [officer@kinston.net](mailto:officer@kinston.net) by January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Suggestions will be judged by members of CPAC, and the best title will be used in our first edition of 2014! Plus, the member who suggests the best title will win a fantastic prize of OSSTF swag! Impress your friends and colleagues with this stylish array of OSSTF paraphernalia.

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

John Vince, District and TBU President

I hope you have had a good fall and that you will use the upcoming break to recharge and reconnect with family and friends. I welcome you to attend our Holiday Drop-In on December 13, here at the District Office.

Communication is our most important tool. This newsletter, the website, emails, branch meetings, my Presidents Memos; all of these are ways for your Union to communicate with you. More difficult is the development of ways for your Union to **hear** from you. Only by listening will we be able to maximize our time locally on the issues that matter most to you. Only by listening to the grassroots will we be able to take your concerns and direction to the Provincial Level for Action.

One step towards improving how we hear your voice will be a “Question” or “Topic of the Month” series. Each month, I will post a question or solicit feedback on a particular topic. Your responses will be read, discussed and acted upon. These can be accessed through our website.

To help in hearing from you, we have revamped our website. The new website launches at the end of November. The address will remain the same: [www.osstf27.ca](http://www.osstf27.ca). Please be patient while the bugs and kinks are destroyed and straightened. On this site will be links to Provincial information; such as Bill 122, Together Fairness Works and Regulation 274 as well as items of local interest such as forms for leaves, links to your executive and more.

I take seriously the trust and confidence you have placed in me. Please let me know what I can do to help you and support the members at your site!

## EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Katie Ohlke



### HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM OSSTF!

*Please join us for a holiday event this December!*

On Friday, December 13, stop by the Branch Office for an Open House for all members from 3-6 pm. Drinks and snacks will be provided!

Saturday, December 14 is OSSTF Family Fun Day at the Cataraqui Arena. RSVP at the District office to arrange for your child to receive a gift from Santa.

Have a happy and relaxing holiday- from your D27 CPAC: David Mathers, Emily Cavers, Simon Baron, Francine Leblanc, and Micheal Byrne.

## STAFFING NOTES...

John Vince, District and TBU President

For some, it has been a financially challenging Fall. Through this time, some members remained surplus, and many of our partial entitlement members have had difficulty in being "topped-up" in their worksites.

During staffing we seek to ensure both that all of our members have jobs so they can support themselves, and that the Board increase teachers with partial entitlement to 6/6 before hiring anyone new.

In our District, there are nearly 20 members with at least two years of seniority that are STILL with partial entitlement. It is fair to bring these members up to 6/6 BEFORE the Board hires new members. One of the 'costs' of this fairness, is that some of you may have to teach subjects in which you are qualified but have not taught for some time. This allows us to place surplus members into jobs for which they are qualified and to top up partial entitlement teachers. I regret the hardship this has caused, and I accept that this has generated some anger.

We have asked the Board over the past few months to problem solve and develop a strategy that best serves our members. Unfortunately, this problem-solving meeting has not occurred.

Ultimately, we want our members to be able to earn a living wage. It is not fair when the Board hires new teachers while our partial entitlement teachers are left scrounging and scrimping. I will continue to fight for members to have full entitlement.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS - UPCOMING DATES:

*Note: Meetings will take place at 4 p.m. at the District Office - 735C Arlington Park Place, Kingston*

December 9:	Together Fairness Works Training Session
December 9:	CPAC Holiday Meeting, Occasional Teachers Meeting
December 11:	CBC Meeting
December 13:	Drop in for all members at the District Office: 3-6 pm
December 14:	OSSTF Family Fun Day at Cataraqui Arena
December 19:	Last day of classes before Christmas Holidays- enjoy a well-deserved rest!
December 20:	Unpaid PD Day – Contract teachers do not work on this day.
January 6, 2014:	Back to school!