

ARM 18/21

2017 Jan 9

Active Retired Members of OSSTF

VOL 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

HBO CURC

Wednesday, January 11th
D21 1423 Upper Ottawa Street, Unit 2
10:00 a.m.

OTIP Update

Tuesday, January 17th
D21 1423 Upper Ottawa Street, Unit 2
10 a.m. Breakfast – 10:30 a.m. meeting

ARM Lunch

Tuesday, February 21st
Fool & Flagon, 2255 Barton St E
12 p.m.

Canadian Warplane Heritage

Tuesday, March 21st
9280 Airport Rd, Mount Hope
12 p.m. Lunch - 1 p.m. tour

Editors: R. Giles, M. Payne, T. Viola

OSSTF ARM Website

For a compendium of information regarding ARM chapters from across Ontario, please see <http://www.armcouncil.osstf.ca/>.

Executive Meetings

Meetings for the executive are scheduled for Mondays: 6 February and 6 March. Meetings begin at 10:30 a.m. at the D21 office. All are welcome.

The Battlefield House Tour



President's Report

Recent Socials—

In November we were pleased to have Jennifer Stebbing (P: 905-667-6407) from Ross & McBride, LLP talk to our group about wills and Powers of Attorney. Thanks to Barb Brown for arranging our speaker.

In December we had a very informative tour of the two buildings at the Battlefield Museum. We had a large number come out on a brisk December day. After the tour we had a leisurely lunch at the Powerhouse Restaurant. Thanks to Colleen Wray for setting up a great day.

OSSTF representatives met again with reps from the provincial government on November 23 and 24th to discuss the extension of the present contract and a remedy as a result of the charter challenge. We were assured that school boards would not play a significant role and would not prevent a deal. It is now clear that the Liberal government had no intention of limiting the boards involvement or even discouraging the board's place in the path to an agreement. OSSTF will turn our focus to preparations for the next round of central bargaining and will continue to prepare for a return to the courts for a ruling on the Bill 155 Charter challenge remedy.

A discussion was held on the election polling process.

HBO CURC

The next Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC) Area Council Meeting will take place at the OSSTF Office at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 11.

Scott Duvall, MP Hamilton Mountain, will make a House of Commons report on important pension issues, including Bill C-26 (CPP Expansion); Bill C-27 (Target Pension Plans). Bill C-27, if adopted, may have some negative impact on the OTPP and OMERS.

Scott will also talk about the government's proposal to ban all imported and exported asbestos and asbestos containing products. Many Hamilton-Wentworth schools, especially those built in the 1960's, contained asbestos in their construction.

Other issues and topics to be discussed include "pharmacare", Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), and Canada Post.

District 21 ARM is an affiliate of CURC. All ARM members and supporters are welcome.

One Publicly Funded School System

Click onto the link below and follow the instructions. Also click onto the additional links once the page is open for further information:

<http://www.onepublicsystem.ca/support-the-charter/>

Our Group

President: Milt Payne; V.P: Frieda Smyth (D18); Benefits Officer: Jay Parekh; Secretary: Mary Lou Mattucci; Membership Secretary: Barb Brown; Editors: Tony Viola, Milt Payne, Ruth Giles; Treasurer: Bob Thompson. Members at Large: Malcolm Buchanan, Suzanne Burchell, Chester Faulknor, Warren Johnson, Murray Kilby, Pat Lachapelle, Jan Lukas, Anna Misiti, Brian Radke, Norm Urhig, Colleen Wray

Your 2016—2017 ARM Executive

President:	Milt Payne
Vice-President:	Frieda Smyth (D18)
Benefits Officer:	Jay Parekh
Secretary:	Mary Lou Mattucci
Treasurer:	Bob Thompson
Membership Secretary:	Barb Brown
Newsletter Editors:	Ruth Giles, Tony Viola

In recognition of Jan Lucas, ARM Member:

Meet: Jan Lucas



When it comes to volunteering, this is a name that is on everyone's lips. For more than 50 years, Jan Lukas has given of her time as a volunteer.

She is a retired high school guidance counsellor/teacher and a community activist in the areas of social justice, new Canadians, youth and women's Issues. No matter what the issue, no matter how difficult the debate, you can always count on Jan to connect people to the issues. Few are the people whose natural inclination is to bring individuals and communities together for a common good. The ripple effect of all of her years of volunteering cannot be accurately measured.

Numerous awards such as the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship, Ancaster Citizen of the Year, Paul Harris fellowship and many others are a testament to her volunteer efforts.

Organizations she has been involved with include CAVEAT, IEC, United Way, HCCI, HMAAC, Grandmothers of Steel, 25 in 5, SAC, ACC, Ancaster Food Drive, Elect More Women, to name a few.

HOW DOES SOMEONE GO ABOUT CHOOSING A VOLUNTEER ROLE?

“Choose something you love to do or have a special interest in! What special talents do you have? If you're good with languages, help with ESL once a week as an example. If you drive, maybe it's driving seniors to appointments. If you have very little time but still want to do something, there's always one-day volunteer opportunities. It's doing what you can and it's amazing when you realize that what you think may not be enough can mean the world to someone else.”

Hamilton dad loses fight to pull kids from school over “false teachings”

Joanna Frketich, Hamilton Spectator, Nov 28, 2016

A Superior Court judge has rejected a Hamilton dad's fight to be warned in advance about what he considers to be “false teachings” so he can pull his kids out of class.

Steve (Eustathios) Turloukis wanted to be alerted by Hamilton's public school board anytime a long list of topics he considered an attack on his Greek Orthodox religion came up in lessons.

In turning down the request, Justice Robert Reid also refused to declare parents have the final authority over the education of their children in a ruling last Wednesday in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Hamilton.

The ruling puts inclusion and equality before individual religious accommodations in public education and in a diverse society.

Reid said allowing Turloukis to “isolate” his children from aspects of the curriculum would be conflicting with “competing legislative mandate and Charter values favouring inclusivity, equality and multiculturalism.”

Some Christian groups call the decision a blow to parental rights while advocates of the province’s anti-bullying legislation see it as a victory.

“This is a landmark decision removing parental authority when it comes to the education of the children,” said Charles McVety, president of the Canada Christian College, which helped fundraise for Turloukis’ legal fees.

“It should be most troubling to every parent because this will be a case used as precedent ... For me, it’s a dark day for children and it’s a dark day for parents when special interest groups supersede the rights of a parent to protect their child.”

But others see it as a win for Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, which led to new policies across the province — including in the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board — to remove biases and barriers to ensure all students feel welcomed and accepted.

“It’s definitely a step in a positive direction,” said Maya Roy, executive director of Newcomer Women’s Services Toronto.

Toronto sexual health educator Stephanie Baptist said, “I’m not OK with one person’s religious accommodation trumping another person’s human rights.

“We’re all different and our public system must make it safe for all of us. It is by participating in that learning that all students grow up with that open-hearted acceptance of folks of all different backgrounds so we can live together in this pluralist society.”

Father demands court force board to alert him to ‘false teachings’ on sex and gay

‘I believe in public education’

The Spectator’s View: Intolerance disguised as parental rights

Turloukis brought the case forward because he believed his Charter right to freedom of religion was being violated, the ruling noted. He believes it’s his “obligation to shield his children from ‘false teachings,’ which he considers indirect attacks on his faith.”

Furthermore, “it would be sinful for him to fail to provide that protection.”

The HWDSB, which was at the centre of the case, emphasized in an interview with The Spectator that schools regularly work with parents to accommodate religious beliefs such as absences for special holidays or making it possible for children to pray during the school day.

There is also the option of removing children from the classroom for certain parts of the new sex education curriculum. Turloukis wanted the option of removing his kids from any class every time certain topics came up.

“A lot of folks brand the public board as anti-religion but that is not the case. In fact, we’re comprised of all religions you can think of and we want to celebrate that,” said board chair Todd White.

“We reflect our communities and we accept anyone and everyone for who they are and we want to make sure they feel safe in our classrooms.”

He said it would be impossible to remove children every time topics some parents find objectionable arise in the curriculum or just naturally in classroom discussions.

“Religion is taught in a number of different formats but it’s not there to indoctrinate students,” said White.

“We’re not here to teach which one is right or wrong. We’re there to educate. That includes providing the information about all of our students and the diversity that is reflected in our population.”

The judge agreed it would not be practical to inform Tourloukis in advance every time a long list of topics came up in school — including sex, environmental issues, practices like astrology, wizardry, witchcraft and spirit guides, the LGBT community, euthanasia and infanticide.

“The list of objectionable subject matter provided by the applicant was extensive,” states the ruling.

“It would be extremely difficult for teachers to be sufficiently familiar with the variety of concerns raised by parents for individual students so as to advise in advance of their mention in lessons.”

Tourloukis mounted his constitutional challenge in 2012 when his children were in junior kindergarten and Grade 2 at Gordon Price Elementary School.

The case was heard June 23.

“Justice Reid’s decision is very disturbing,” said Phil Lees of Public Education Advocates for Christian Equity.

“We live in a pluralistic and inclusive society but the decision is not inclusive ... The family was asking to be informed so that they can be involved in their child’s learning — and the court says no.”

Tourloukis’ supporters worry how the loss will affect him financially as the matter of costs has not yet been settled. He is a dentist and his wife is a high school math teacher in the public board.

“This could bankrupt this poor dentist who is only seeking to protect his children,” said McVety.

He says the Christian community will do what it can to fundraise for him.

The judge encouraged all involved to come up with an agreement regarding costs. The case also involves the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

“Our federation supports the perspective that Ontario public schools should be religiously neutral environments that foster equality for all students and staff,” said the ETFO in a statement.

One factor in the judge’s ruling was that Tourloukis can leave the public board if he disagrees strongly with the curriculum.

“Independent schools whether faith-based or otherwise, may be available as is, of course, the option of home-schooling,” states the decision.

But the judge agreed the HWDSB couldn’t accommodate Tourloukis because of the

“need for religious neutrality and tolerance in a public institution.”

Correction Published: 20161129 - A story Monday about a father losing his bid to pull his child from class incorrectly identified the school involved. It is Gordon Price Elementary School. The Spectator regrets the error.

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