

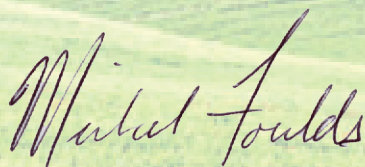


A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Last week I had the opportunity to speak to a group of Grades 7 & 8 students at the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity - Ontario Leaders of Today Youth Forum. From the list of topics I was given, the one which caught my attention as an educator, and perhaps as a sometime Civics teacher, was the idea of civic engagement. Immediately my favourite statement on democracy by Norman Cousins came to mind. "In short, freedom's main problem is the problem of the individual who takes them self lightly historically."

Each and everyone of you is a member of a union. Each of those unions is a democracy. Do not take yourself lightly as a member of that union. I would urge you all to be active, to be informed, and to be engaged in the work of your union. It doesn't require a great deal of time and the benefits to yourself and the union are many. Union work is bargaining, professional development, social justice, human rights, women's rights, curriculum and policy critique, health and safety, international support, curriculum development, awards, scholarships, and many other activities. Our unions require members to step up and offer their expertise and abilities to enrich the whole.

As my term winds down, I want to tell you that it has been a privilege, as President, to represent the teachers in Ontario's publicly funded education. My thanks to all of you and my very best wishes for a safe, healthy, and relaxing summer.



Michael Foulds
Ontario Teachers' Federation

“What is the eternal and ultimate problem of a free society?

It is the problem of the individual who thinks that one person cannot possibly make a difference in the destiny of that society.

It is the problem of the individual who doesn't really understand the nature of a free society or what is required to make it work.

It is the problem of the individual who has no comprehension of the multiplying power of single but sovereign units.

It is the problem of the individual who regards the act of pulling a single lever in a voting booth in numerical terms rather than historical terms.

It is the problem of the individual who has no real awareness of the millions of bricks that had to be put into place, one by one, over many centuries, in order for them to dwell in the penthouse of freedom. Nor do they see any special obligation to those who continue building the structure or to those who will have to live in it after them, for better or worse.

It is the problem of the individual who recognizes no direct relationship between them self and the decisions made by government in their name. Therefore, they feel no special obligation to dig hard for the information necessary to an understanding of the issues leading to those decisions.

In short, freedom's main problem is the problem of the individual who takes them self lightly historically.”

Norman Cousins, American political journalist

FIX OUR SCHOOLS 2017 GREER AWARD

On Friday, April 7 at the Spring Board of Governors' meeting, the organization, *Fix Our Schools*, received the Greer Award for outstanding contributions to publicly funded education in Ontario.

Fix Our Schools is a grass-roots, non-partisan, parent-led campaign of citizens across Ontario. Its major goal is the promotion of safe, well-maintained schools that provide a positive learning environment for our students.

In a little over two years, the organization has shifted the narrative around school conditions and disrepair in schools to ensure that schools are considered integral public infrastructure. Their pressure on the provincial government to recognize the chronic and gross underfunding of school repairs was confirmed in the 2015 Auditor General's report. The provincial government subsequently released an additional \$1.1 billion of funding for school repairs over two years, effectively bringing annual funding for school repairs to the \$1.4 billion per year which is deemed necessary to keep Ontario schools in a state of good repair.

Fix Our Schools continues to build their network and lobby those in power to work together to ensure that all Ontario students attend school in buildings that are safe and well-maintained. As stated on the Fix Our Schools website, "We are parents, students, teachers, grandparents, principals, caretakers, and voters who believe all Ontario students should attend safe, well-maintained schools that are funded as a critical part of our public infrastructure - on par with transit, roads and water."



L to R: Bill Mboutsiadis, *Fix our Schools*; Krista Wylie, Co-Founder, *Fix our Schools*; Mike Foulds, OTF President; and Sam Hammond, ETFO President

2017 TLLP TRAINING SESSION



OTF President Mike Foulds joined over 200 participants at the TLLP Training Session

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP), an initiative of the Ministry of Education administered by OTF, provides funding to experienced teachers for professional development and leadership enhancement experiences and for sharing their learning with others.

This year, 110 projects were launched; participants will share the results of their projects at the TLLP Summit in November 2018.

www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/teacher-learning-and-leadership-program/



Sonia Prevost-Derbecker, Vice-President of Education, Indspire, addressed the OTF Board of Governors' meeting in April. Indspire is an Indigenous-led registered charity that invests in the education of Indigenous people for the long-term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER



It is always amazing how quickly a school year passes. Teachers mark the time during the year by various events - new classes, reporting periods, exams and so on. For OTF, our markers are different.

This issue of *Interaction* will give you a glimpse of what OTF has been doing over the last few months but it will also tell you a little of what is to come. At present, we are busy preparing for summer institutes and conferences. Be sure to follow us on Twitter or Facebook and check the OTF website often for registration opportunities. This time of year, we are also sprucing up the OTF campground at Quinn Lake, near Parry Sound, for this summer's campers.

As well as many learning opportunities, OTF has several important events during the summer. The Canadian Teachers' Federation's Annual Meeting and President's Forum take place in July. In addition, Ontario is hosting a national meeting for teacher pension representatives from across Canada in Ottawa. And the last major event before the school year begins is the OTF Annual Board of Governors' meeting in August.

As reported in our spring issue of *Interaction*, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan had a surplus once again. Watch for pension news from OTF before the end of the school year.

So, just as the school year passes very quickly, so does the summer. Take advantage of the learning opportunities which OTF offers but also take time to relax and enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rhonda Kimberley-Young'.

Rhonda Kimberley-Young
Secretary-Treasurer

FAKE NEWS HAS INVADED OUR WORLD...



and educators play a key role in the fight for truth

Mark Kelley, the well-known CBC television journalist and one of the hosts of the Fifth Estate, brought this message to the OTF Governors at their meeting on April 7.

Mark spoke of the role that fake news plays in our lives today. Mainstream news outlets are no longer the mainstay of truth. It has become the norm to use alternative facts and intimidation to counter the truth. Apparently, during the 2016 US election, fake news had 3X more shares than the true story. There are more than 100 pro-Trump websites which promote falsehoods and innuendos. Note that President Trump himself seems intent on delegitimizing journalism as being partisan.

Some social media services are trying to counter this trend. For example, Facebook has published a factsheet of 10 tests of legitimate information; unfortunately, many people probably won't take time to check it.

Information empowers us as citizens in a democracy. An ill-informed democracy results in little respect for institutions and an indifferent society.

This is where educators come in. It is important for students to learn to ask the tough questions and to learn the difference between the truth and fake news. It is part of our role as educators to teach students the importance of truth, of digging for the truth and of standing up for the truth.

[@cbcmackkelley](http://www.cbc.ca/fifth)

As a matter of fact: media literacy in uncertain times

Given the predominance of fake news in society today, the OTF Curriculum Forum meeting on April 29 focused on the theme, "As a matter of fact: media literacy in uncertain times."

Special guests, Matthew Johnson, MediaSmarts; Carol Arcus, The Association for Media Literacy; Franklin Carter, The Book and Periodical Council's Freedom of Expression Committee and Emily Keeler, PEN Canada, guided the forum in exploring this theme and learning more about both challenges and opportunities related to critical and media literacy.

Attendees came away from the meeting with a deeper understanding of the key

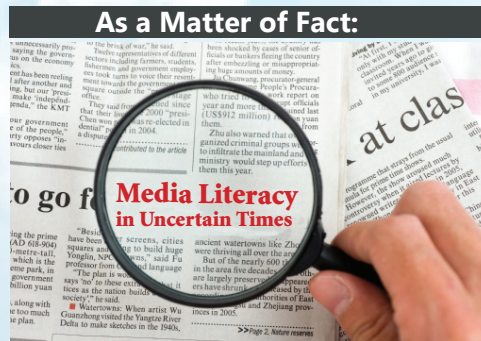
principles of media literacy as well as some practical tips and tools to use in their own divisions and disciplines.

mediasmarts.ca

www.aml.ca

www.freedomtoread.ca

pencanada.ca



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