



EXPERIENT 24

Issue 4 | Spring 2018

Experient (adj) *having experience; having knowledge or skill from observation or participation. Synonyms: experienced*

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Storm Watch Training Session – well timed!

Geoff Coulson of Environment Canada delivered a full CANWARN briefing at our Tuesday May 1st ARM meeting. He gave a very interesting and informative audio-visual presentation designed to let people know how they can recognize the warning signs and protect themselves from dangerous weather.

Geoff showed video clips of tornados, lightning strikes, flooding, hail storms, wind damage, falling trees and fallen power lines. Thanks to YouTube, he also had many examples of what NOT to do when dangerous weather approaches, (hint – try “weather fail” to find both funny and terrifying examples).

Three days later, on Friday May 4th, Waterloo Region, Wellington County and other areas experienced a major windstorm. Thanks to Geoff’s presentation I realized that the wind damage in my own backyard was most likely due to a downburst (a circular pattern of destruction). We were fortunate that most of the damage was confined to our yards. Other people lost roof sections, outdoor structures, shingles, trees and much more.

Photo – Wendy Foxall



Retirement does not mean leaving - Keep this link strong!

YOUR EXECUTIVE FOR 2017-2018

President: Richard Clausi, Vice – President: Joe Amatruda
Political Action: John Ryrie, Secretary: Rennie Ladan Treasurer: Brenda Wiles
Newsletter Editors: Wendy Foxall and Michele Altermann

President's Update

- Richard Clausi)

Colleagues, ARM Chapter 24 had an outstanding second year.

Our original goals included: monitoring pensions, watching OTIP benefits, developing a platform for political action, and providing a venue and communication tool for social contact among retirees. The latter is especially important in what we are trying to do.

In this regard, I want to focus on a key element in our original planning and, indeed, a requirement for our ARM Chapter 24 Charter. That item is our newsletter.

Wendy Foxall and Sue Senior stepped forward to plan and edit our first edition. Sue, in particular, brought an incredible depth of expertise and insight into the format of the newsletter. Hers was the inspiration to name the newsletter "EXPERIENT24". The banner is especially appropriate to retired teachers. Michele Altermann joined the team in our second year when Sue found her professional employment dominating her time. Together, Wendy and Michele developed the content format and breadth that you see today in those newsletters which you can inspect at our

website. I am also grateful to those who have contributed articles on an ongoing basis.

It goes without saying that the job of editor requires a great deal of flair and taste. This was especially evident as our team solicited, filtered and proof-read content. This effort has been recognized in a significant way.

At the recent ARM Biennial, our editorial team was awarded the Ian Cameron ARM Award in recognition of the excellence of EXPERIENT24. I am including the certificate for your reference, below. The original framed copy will hang at the District 24 office.

Michele, Wendy and Sue we thank you for your leadership and hard work in supporting the goals of our fledgling organization.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge the support and wisdom of your executive as we build a framework for ARM Chapter 24. We hope that each of you will consider attending our meetings. Perhaps, you might participate, in any fashion that you wish, in our ongoing activities.

Regards,
Richard Clausi, President, C24
OSSTF ARM



Disabled Seniors Face Additional Hardships

- Gene Peter Heesaker

The province of Ontario regularly boasts about the benefits of socialized medicine. Indeed, many of our American “cousins” may fondly look northward towards a province they believe provides superior health care. Perhaps they should not be so envious!

My 70 year old sister-in-law is developmentally delayed and as a resident of Ontario she was on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) which provided her with financial support for living expenses, including prescription medications and essential vision and dental care. **She was on ODSP until the day she turned 65 years of age and became a senior citizen in Canada.** The day she turned 65 the Ontario Government passed the responsibility of her health and welfare to the Federal Government. Who knew that her 65th birthday would create serious health and financial hardships for her?

As a result of becoming a senior citizen in the province of Ontario my disabled sister-in-law LOST her essential vision and dental care. As a low income senior citizen she does receive the maximum Old Age Security (OAS) and also qualifies for the maximum Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). She does receive most, but not all, of her prescription medications at no cost, however, she has lost her essential vision and dental care through no fault of her own...just because she became a senior citizen. She resides in a nursing home in Waterloo and her monthly accommodation fee at the nursing home is subsidized by the Province of Ontario because of her low income. The provincial government allows her to keep a small sum of money each month; however, this pittance is not enough to buy her new clothing let alone purchase new glasses or pay for a dental examination.

I do not believe that this ugly secret concerning disabled seniors in Ontario is well known by most of us. Indeed, when I mention this fact to my circle of friends or even to some provincial or federal politicians they are stupefied by my sister-in-law's situation. **I realize that many senior Ontarians do not have vision or dental care,**

but my disabled sister-in-law DID have these benefits until she turned 65 years old...and then they were taken away from her. Talk about an extreme case of discrimination based on disability and age and to add to my sister-in-law's struggle she has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and is now confined to a wheelchair.

Because of my sister-in-law's economic reality, my wife and I pay for her optical and dental care. Without our economic assistance my sister-in-law would not be able to afford new glasses or to see a dentist. One dental visit to the nursing home costs \$250.00 and this is just for a check-up and a simple cleaning. The University of Waterloo Optometry Department comes to the nursing home and completes eye examinations for free, however, we must still pay for her new lenses and frame. The costs of her optical and dental care mount up each year and I cannot fathom why the provincial/federal government has abandoned my sister-in-law. **Without our direct economic involvement in the health and welfare of my sister-in-law her overall health would be compromised. Indeed, many disabled seniors face this dilemma by themselves! If you know of any seniors currently on ODSP...this future awaits them too when they turn 65 years old. This vulnerable sector of the senior population needs to be protected.** Not all disabled seniors have loved ones who can provide the additional funds necessary to provide them with essential vision and dental care. Many disabled seniors living in nursing homes across Ontario have no one to be their advocates and therefore suffer in silence.

I realize the government of Ontario does not have unlimited economic resources and it has just begun to offer free prescription medications to those young people under the age of 25 years old who have a valid OHIP card. I think this is great and it is a good start to providing universal pharma-care to all citizens in the province, and eventually the whole country. But, as we move to help the youngest members in our province, we should not forget our seniors...especially those disabled seniors who once possessed provincially funded vision and dental care and then had it STRIPPED away because they became senior citizens. **We need to make certain that our socialized medical system protects the most vulnerable amongst us. We can and should do better.**

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Gene Peter Heesaker

In early January of 2018 my wife and I were watching T.V. in the early evening when we were suddenly plunged into total darkness. The Westvale Neighbourhood in Waterloo, where we live, had suffered a major power failure. We had no electricity for lights, and more importantly, no electricity for the fan motor on our furnace. It is amazing how quickly your home can cool down...especially in the dead of winter. The power failure lasted for about three hours and we luckily survived the minor inconvenience because we were prepared. We had flashlights, candles and matches, and some warm blankets to cuddle up with each other. But I wonder if all of my neighbours came through the three hours of darkness as well as we both did?

Do you have a survival kit at home in case of an emergency? An emergency survival kit contains all the basic items that you and your family will need to remain comfortable for 72 hours. It is important to keep your kit in a bag that is easy to carry, and to check its contents every six months to make sure the food and water contained in the kit remain fresh. As global warming continues to cause our weather to become more extreme and natural disasters seem to be happening with ever increasing frequency, it is critical to have an emergency survival kit.

Check out the Emergency Preparedness Guide provided by the Province of Ontario at www.ontario.ca/beprepared.

A survival kit can also be a life saver when you are driving. I have been a member of the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) for over 40 years and the organization has many great resources.

The CAA has a checklist of the items one should have in the trunk of their vehicle in case of emergencies. The checklist can also be amended for winter/summer driving and it can be found at the following internet address:

www.caasco.com/Insurance/Auto-Insurance/Safety-Kit-Checklist.aspx

If you check out both of these web sites and take the advice provided by both the Ontario Government and the CAA you should be in great shape the next time an emergency hits close to home or on the road. Good luck and be prepared!!

Here is a quick overview of what you require in your personal survival kit:

Personal Survival Kit

- ✓ Non-perishable food items
- ✓ Manual can opener
- ✓ Bottled water (4 liters per person, per day)
- ✓ Prescription medications
- ✓ Flashlight (with batteries) or a crank flashlight
- ✓ Radio (with batteries) or a crank radio
- ✓ Candles and matches/lighter
- ✓ First-aid kit
- ✓ Whistle and a portable mirror (for signaling for help)
- ✓ Clothing and footwear appropriate for all seasons
- ✓ Blankets and sleeping bags
- ✓ Toilet paper and other personal hygiene items
- ✓ Extra car and home keys
- ✓ Cash (just in case the ATM's are not working)
- ✓ Important papers (identification, insurance, prescriptions etc.)
- ✓ Playing cards (to pass the time)

Political Action Report

OSSTF District 24 ARM

May 1, 2018

Most of the following derives from a District 24 all-bargaining unit political action committee meeting in early April. As such, some of the information may seem a bit out-of-date, which is regrettably unavoidable.

Some observations from the April 5th meeting:

- The Liberals have gained some ground on the Conservatives in recent polls.
- An undetermined number of PCs, disillusioned that Christine Elliot did not become their new leader, are looking to ‘park’ their votes with one of the other parties.
- The Conservatives are trying to ‘contain’ Rob Ford and limit his media exposure so he does not misspeak to the public and compromise the party’s current lead.
- The Conservatives may not develop or adopt a detailed election platform of any kind; various specifics in the last three elections ruined their election prospects.
- Although some Conservative candidates in our local five ridings (recently interviewed by local OSSTF members), appear to be knowledgeable about education and have thoughtful perspectives and are not Rob Ford enthusiasts our provincial organization nevertheless finds itself unable to endorse the Conservative party since its new leader and his supporters are explicitly determined to cut public service

funding, jobs, Ontario ministries, and publicly funded assets.

- Some local ridings were won in the last election by as little as 2% of the vote, so it is really important that our local OSSTF members get out and vote
- A lot can happen to the political landscape between now and June 7th. (Recent examples: the additional funding for OECTA members for grid –step displacement in the last round of negotiations has deeply eroded Liberal support from OSSTF and ETFO teaching members who were told these monies were ‘off the table’. On the other hand, the revelation that Doug Ford appears bent on covering Ontario’s green belt with construction and development has exposed a political agenda that conflicts with the idea that he cares about the province.)

Many OSSTF ARM members will have long-standing loyalties to specific political parties. Nothing is likely to change this support. For those who are considering alternatives, the information below may be helpful if OSSTF members want to prevent a Conservative majority.

In the last election, the candidates received the following percentages of support from local voters. The incumbents are named under their winning percentage.

NOTE: the figures for Kitchener South-Hespeler, a new riding, have been calculated from the voting that took place last time round in this new geographic area.

RIDING	LIBERAL	NDP	CONSERVATIVE
CAMBRIDGE	38.9% Kathryn McGarry	21.67%	32.51%
KITCHENER CENTRE	40.52% Daiene Vernile	26.44%	25.6%
KITCHENER – SOUTH HESPELER	36.51%	22.81%	32.63%
KITCHENER – CONESTOGO	34.38%	21.05%	32.30% Michael Harris
WATERLOO	30.17%	36.95% Catherine Fife	26.97%

Political Action Report

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The figures from the last election suggest:

- A small switch of votes in Kitchener-Conestoga could lead to a Liberal seat.
- The new seat (Kitchener South Hespeler) could go Liberal or Tory.
- Voters in the other three constituencies will need to maintain their allegiances to repeat the 2014 results.

Together-in-Education (the local collaborative efforts of OSSTF, ETFO, and OECTA) is planning to produce an election card with key information about voting days, voting hours, how to determine your riding, and other pertinent election details. D24 ARM is hoping to e-mail this out to our chapter’s members as soon as it is available.

Lastly, below are the seven OSSTF provincial election goals; keep in mind that OSSTF now represents members who work in Ontario’s elementary schools and universities, as well as the province’s secondary schools.

OSSTF PROVINCIAL ELECTION GOALS

1) EARLY LEARNING	To have more adults in the classrooms and stringent focused funding
2) MORE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS	To address mental health issues, violence in our schools, and exceptional needs
3) PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT AND COLLABORATION	To enable proper student assessment and solid instruction, and involve OSSTF members in school board decisions,
4) THE FUNDING FORMULA	To correct the 20-year-old flaws in the provincial funding model so that all schools benefit
5) UNIVERSITY FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT	To improve spending on students and the campus services that support them, and stop unreasonable tuition hikes
6) ONE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN EACH OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	To force an all-party review of the current structure with the intent of reinvesting savings as a benefit to all schools and students
7) THE SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT	To a) change the Act to prevent unproductive school board participation at the central table, and b) create one central table for OSSTF/FEESO teachers and support staff so equal consideration is given to all education employees

In anticipating the June election, perhaps most important of all are the changes that have been made to election funding. Unions and companies can no longer provide substantial support to any party or individual. In this context, OSSTF ARM members need to:

- 1) vote for a candidate/party that is going to substantially support public education, and
- 2) donate time and/or money to a local or provincial campaign. Donations from individuals are going to have a far bigger impact than last time around.

John Rynie,
District 24 ARM PAC Representative

Are you or someone you know,
looking to live a healthy and
active life over 55?

Join us!



Saturday May 26 from 10 am - 2 pm
Kitchener City Hall Rotunda
(free event parking in the City Hall Parking Garage)

At this free event you will find:

- Free tote bag for first 300 attendees
- Over 50 exhibitors
- Free refreshments
- Kitchener Senior of the Year Award presentation
(11:00 a.m. Council Chambers)
- Various demonstrations and information seminars
about topics that matter to you!

Exhibitors and event schedule can be found at
www.kitchener.ca/livingwellexpo

Hosted by the Mayor's Advisory Council for
Kitchener Seniors (MACKS)

We look forward to seeing you there

Where can I recycle my old electronics?

*Would you like to finally get rid of your Commodore
64 or your old printer? Well you can.*

*There are many free drop-off locations to recycle
electronics. These sites can be found at:*

Recycleyourelectronics.ca

Submit articles to Your Newsletter

We are looking for reader submissions
for the following regular features:

Viewpoint/Point of view

An opinion piece on a topic that
concerns you personally.

After-School Activities

An update on what you have been
doing since retiring from your job in the
education sector.

Photo Captions

An interesting or entertaining photo
that could be used for a caption contest.
Please include the location and
necessary background information.

Around the World

A report on interesting places or
people you have meet while travelling.
Include a few pictures when relevant.

*All members are invited to submit items
of interest for retirees and for those
who are within sight of retiring. Articles
need to be proof-read and not exceed
600 words.*

*Images no less than 1MB will be
accepted. Please provide the name of
the photographer and/or source and
identify the people or places in the
photo.*

Note: Editing will be done for clarity and
space limitations

Send submissions to:

experient24@gmail.com

by October 5th, 2018 to be included
in the Fall edition of EXPERIENT24.



ARM Trip to Vila Senhora da Rocha, Portugal

This article was submitted for our newsletter by Terry Taller, ARM District 25. It was written by Carol Farrar from C22 about her stay with ARM members at Vila Senhora da Rocha. —

I first heard of the opportunity for retired teachers to go to Portugal through ARM at a retirement seminar.

Having just newly retired in June 2017, I wasted no time in pursuing my dream of skipping winter altogether, and signed up for three weeks as a starting point. Later, I was given the opportunity through a cancellation to stay for 2 months in total, a chance that I gladly welcomed.

I quickly learned that Portugal has everything to offer.

I have often heard people say that "this vacation is for R&R, and later that vacation will be for discovery..." Portugal, and specifically the location of Vila Sra da Rocha, has it all in one place.



If you want a lazy time for reading books and lounging by the pool, it has that.

If you like playing bridge, cards, or knitting, it has that.

If you want a trip of discovery and cultural immersion, it has that to offer.

If you like delving into history, or trying local cuisine, or exploring mountains and villages and castles on back roads with spectacular views, it has that.

If you like shopping for treasures, there are gypsy markets and town fairs.

If you want to get or stay fit, there are aquafit classes, great places to run and walk that are minutes from your door, and bicycles are easy to rent.

If you like live music, there is Fado Night.

There truly is something for everyone here. No separate vacations for different purposes required.

However, *the* most important aspect of my time at Senhora da Rocha was the spectacular people I met during my stay.

If such a thing as 'travel angels' exist, I truly felt their presence here, and met many of them. They walked into my life just exactly when I needed them.

When I inquired about renting a guitar, the manager Jose just simply went out and bought one for me to use. [Later, along with a colleague I had just met, I was allowed to play a set of live music which filled the restaurant to capacity and hopefully helped to offset the cost of the guitar.]

When I needed to buy running shoes and had no car, Terry and Anne personally took me to buy them.

When I was staying alone, I was invited to share in countless road trips, dinners, and wine.

People went well out of their way to include me.

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When I felt unsafe, people walked me home.
[caveat: I was new and was unsure of the safety levels for a single female traveller there; I came to learn that Sra is quite safe.]

When people knew I was on my own, there was a knock on my door and I was invited out for pizza or a cliff walk, or wine.

More than one person walked over in the absolute pouring rain to make sure I knew about the day's plans. The exceptional kindness and generosity of those who continued to include me in their activities was beyond

anything I could ever dream of, and there are no words to express how grateful I am to my many 'travel angels' associated with ARM, who have become my good friends

The resultant feeling amongst the group is that of a strong family bond.

This is what ultimately sold me on this beautiful place, and will keep me returning to Vila Senhora da Rocha, year after year.

You will not find that anywhere else.

- Carol Farrar

SCHEDULE OF DISTRICT 24 ARM MEETINGS FOR 2018

Tuesday June 5th **Anita Chamberlain, OTIP - Changes to health benefits and premiums**

Have a great summer!

Wednesday September 5th **Note the change in day of the week.**

Tuesday October 2nd **Annual General Meeting & Election of Executive**

Tuesday November 6th **Guest Speaker – TBA**

Tuesday December 4th **Breakfast meeting - location TBA**

Meetings are open to all District 24 ARM members.

They will take place at 9:30 am at the District 24 Office unless otherwise noted.

[check the website or email Rich Clausi].

HELPFUL WEBSITES

District 24 OSSTF	d24.osstf.ca
District 24 OSSTF ARM	d24.osstf.ca/active-retired-members-chapter.aspx
ARM Council	armcouncil.osstf.ca
Edvantage	edvantage.ca
OMERS	omers.com
Ontario Teachers Pension Plan	otpp.com
OTIP	otip.com
OTIP's Carepath Program	otip.carepath.ca