



# Unit Updates

## Christmas Message *Elaine McMahon*

### Important Dates

- Christmas Break  
Dec 24—Jan 4
- OECTA Funspiel  
Feb 2
- Dance  
Feb 9
- OCS New Teacher  
Induction Program  
Feb 19
- Unit General Meeting  
Feb 20
- AGM Delegates  
Feb 28
- OECTA AGM  
Mar 7—10

### Contact Us

30 - 30 Concourse Gate  
Nepean, Ontario  
K2B 8K4

Phone: 723-0959  
Fax: 723-6590  
[www.oectaottawa.ca](http://www.oectaottawa.ca)

For those of us too busy to know what date it is the snow has been a gentle reminder that Christmas is fast approaching; soon we will be surrounded by family and friends to share in the magic of the day. While we reflect on the past year and what it has brought, let us be mindful of all that we have accomplished by touching the lives placed in our care. Let us celebrate not only Christ coming among us at Christmas but how He has been present in our lives throughout the year.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that this has been an unusually hectic school year for all. It is due to this rapid pace that we often lose sight of the need for community and companionship at work. By our very nature, we teachers love people and will give generously of ourselves, sometimes to a fault. Yet, we fail to nourish the need within ourselves to be loved and accepted, and on occasion helped by colleagues.

Our hope as a Unit is that you will each thank God for the gift of "You" and all that you bring towards building God's kingdom on earth. As witnessed by many

of our community this year life is not only precious but fragile, and so must be treated with dignity and respect.

May your Christmas be peace-filled and blessed by the presence of those you love and who love you. May you have a wonderful holiday and come back refreshed and renewed in the knowledge that you are valued by all who know you and have the privilege of working with you.

Have a safe and peace filled Christmas. See you in 2008.



*The light of Christ has come into the world.*

## While You Were Teaching Carol Lo Mascolo

### On-line Resources

**Employment Insurance**  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca)

**Canada Pension Plan**  
[www.sdc.gc.ca](http://www.sdc.gc.ca)

**Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan**  
[www.otpp.com](http://www.otpp.com)

As we prepare to depart for a well deserved rest this Christmas Season, it is always important to reflect on the previous four months of the school year. Much has occurred since our secondary teachers passed through the doors of their respective high schools for that first staff meeting in late August. Many new Ministry initiatives have kept teachers ‘hustling and bustling about’ in their persistence to help our students succeed.

Your OECTA officers have also been busy meeting with the Board on different levels in an attempt to express the views of our members on these many new initiatives. OECTA has met with the Board’s Student Success Team and Joint Consultation Committee to review and discuss the need for the enactment of these new ventures to occur at a more manageable pace. Our teachers need the opportunity to be able to take the time to prioritize their ‘must do’ list, so they may continue to be positive about our profession. On the OECTA provincial front, the Unit Presidents voted, at the last Council of Presidents in October, to request a private meeting with the Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynn, to discuss OECTA’s response to ministerial secondary initiatives. The Provincial Secondary Schools Committee Telephone Survey some of you have responded to, is part of OECTA’s attempt to keep its finger on the pulse of our high school members’ reaction to the many new initiatives sponsored by the Ministry of Education.

A number of our secondary teachers are going through the first enactment of the

new Teacher Performance Appraisal. There are a number of changes that make it less cumbersome to follow and a more positive experience. It is important that if our members have any questions about this process that you feel comfortable to contact the Unit office. Answers are a phone call/email away.

The Legislation Committee has revamped the *Bylaws and Procedures Booklet* (formerly called the *Constitution*) and it is now available, along with the Collective Agreement, on the OECTA website. The site can be reached at [www.oectaottawa.ca](http://www.oectaottawa.ca). The Communications Committee will begin posting articles that are relevant to teachers on this site. Please feel free to send to the Unit office (via the Pony) any article you may find that you think would be a valuable addition to the website postings. As well, there will be a new subtitle called *Be Wary Be Wise*. Two new articles under this subtitle are “Teacher Charged with Sexual Offences” and “Teen Denies Teacher Sex Charges”. Both articles are related to an incident in a Toronto high school in mid November. The articles serve as a valuable reminder to us all.

Finally, I would like to personally wish each and every one of you the most joyous Christmas, a peaceful and restful holiday, and much good fortune and success in your endeavours in the New Year. May your families keep safe during this Holy Season - safely protected by the love of our Dear Lord, Jesus Christ.

God Bless

## 100 Day Blitz Elaine McMahon

The Help Lesotho Project is well on its way to completion and on behalf of the Unit Executive and the people at the Help Lesotho organization I wish to extend our deep gratitude for your generosity. To date we

have forwarded over \$76,000 to Help Lesotho and at last count in excess of \$12,000 has been pledged to the end of the school year. Our goal is \$120,000.

*Continued on page 3*

### Catholic Register On-line

[www.catholicregister.org](http://www.catholicregister.org)

### Catholic New Times On-line

[www.catholicnewtimes.org](http://www.catholicnewtimes.org)

Login: OECTA

Password: teacher

## Enjoy the Miracle of the Season *Anne Lamont*

As Term 1 comes to a close and we prepare for the season of Christmas, my hope for you is that you will catch your breath long enough to reflect on the numerous tasks you have accomplished this fall and the hundreds of expectations you have addressed as a generalist Elementary Teacher!

Even more importantly, I hope that you will give yourself the time to appreciate the sense of community with which you have welcomed your students. The classroom is a “comfort space” for many of our children; you are the centre of that space.

Your job description is huge...from delivering the Ontario curriculum expectations to securing a safe and healthy environment for those who are entrusted to your care; give yourself the permission to slow the pace.

This year, already, far there has been a decrease in the number of Ministry initiatives. There is an awareness at all levels that the programs that address essential expectations need to be the focus and that these programs require mastery before moving on. This takes time! Assessment, the key issue of late, is being streamlined to

meet the needs of our students more effectively. This data-driven focus has been the topic of discussion in recent meetings with Board personnel. The consensus is that there is a necessity for a consistent and timely focus in the area of assessment.

The biggest challenge facing Elementary teachers this fall was probably the new report card. Even though some schools had experienced this new philosophy and technology at the end of last year, the new reporting system posed challenges. Although change is a part of life, this change came simultaneously with the anxiety of student assessment, parent-teacher interviews and a packed Term 1. But you survived and we can only hope that Round 2 will be a little less onerous.

Finally my hope for each of you is that you will leave your classroom, books and all on December 21 and take time for yourself, your family and your friends. Christmas is a time for peace and a time to enjoy the miracle of the season and to reach out to those who are not as blessed as we are.

I wish you a sincere Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2008!

### *100 Day Blitz* Continued from page 2

We live in a time and in a city where we are constantly being called upon to give to those less fortunate than ourselves. The teachers of the OECTA Ottawa Unit have always responded over and above and you are doing it again for this worthy cause.

In the New Year we have planned a few fundraising activities that we hope will generate some fun in our school communities while enabling us to build the youth centre. February 9 is the first dance and it will be held at the Msgr Paul Baxter Centre in Fallowfield. There will be a live band and snacks provided and you are guaranteed a great time. We are also planning another dance with a live band, a *Beers of the*

*World Pub Night* with live music and an auction. Plan to attend so you don't miss a good time.

We hope that you continue to plan dress down days, pot luck lunches and bake sales in your own schools as part of the final **100 Day Blitz**. You can also make donations through our office and receive tax receipts for donations of \$15.00 and more. No amount is too small and no effort goes unappreciated.

Thank you for your contributions and continued support. Know that each of you has reached beyond our borders and has started to build a better world in Africa. As the song says, “In the end only kindness matters.”

## Announcements

### *Congratulations to . . . . .*

Jen Castellarin (St. Joseph) on the birth of her son, Charles.  
Suzanne Fortier (Blessed Kateri) on the birth of her son, Owen  
Ann-Marie Fraser (St. Joseph) on the birth of her daughter, Adrienne  
Anna Panuccio (St. Joseph) on the birth of her son, John Marco

### *Sincere condolences to . . . . .*

Sandra Bartlett (St. Matthew) on the death of her mother, Joyce Smith  
Richard Bercuson (St. Nicholas) on the death of his mother, Pearl Kanter Bercuson  
Matt Charbonneau (Sacred Heart) on the death of his grandmother, Eleanor Horan  
Sandra Dattilo (St. Joseph) on the death of her mother, Elana Dattilo  
Patricia Footit (St. Paul) on the death of her father, Jack Knight  
Josephine Gifford (L.B. Pearson) on the death of her father, Harold Cumming  
Anne Gorman (T.D. McGee) on the death of her husband, Ken  
Tim Graitson (Bayshore) on the death of his mother, Joyce Graitson  
Alison Hicks (St. Monica) on the death of her uncle, Vern Hicks  
Lucy Huisman (St. Emily) on the death of her father, Charles Huisman  
Carol James (St. Monica) on the death of father, Ronald Shields  
Stephanie Kit (St. Monica) on the death of her mother  
Anna Matwijkenko-Jaz (Blessed Kateri) on the death of her father-in-law, Dmytro Jaz  
James Kavanaugh (St. Nicholas) on the death of his mother, Frances Kavanaugh  
Elizabeth Knowles (Prince of Peace) on the death of her husband, Ronald Knowles  
Deanna MacDougall (Student Services) on the death of her father-in-law, Thomas MacDougall  
Jill McGrath (St. Peter) on the death of her father-in-law, Dick McGrath  
Mary McKenna (St. Patrick's Int.) on the death of her mother, Brigid McKenna  
Nona McMillan (L.B. Pearson) on the death of her mother, Shirley Mae Luchenski  
Patrick McNulty (St. Matthew) on the death of his brother, Bill McNulty  
Chantal Murphy-Lalonde (Chapel Hill) on the death of her grandmother, Juliette Labelle  
Joyce Nolan (St. Pius X) on the death of her father, Bob Nolan  
Sue McGraw O'Connor (Holy Family) on the death of her husband, Tim O'Connor  
Shannon Oxley (Brother André) on the death of her father-in-law Harold Oxley  
Ulana Pawlowsky-McCreath (St. Monica) on the death of her brother-in-law, John McCreath  
David Peddie (Holy Trinity) on the death of his brother, Steven Peddie  
Phyllis Perry (Student Services) on the death of her brother, John White  
Michelle Wallace (Msgr Paul Baxter) on the death of her grandfather, James Ranger

*Teachers wishing to have a birth, marriage or death announcement included in Updates, please e-mail the information via FirstClass or send in writing by internal courier to Beth Marcella, OECTA Unit Office.*

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