



# PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

## From the Editor:

It has been a very busy year for APSSSP. Our membership has grown to 630 across the province.

All Provincial and Chapter Executive members met in October at our annual Education/Planning weekend in Niagara Falls. Throughout the rest of the year members have been involved in many different activities including Governing Council and Committee meetings. To keep you informed, the following articles highlight information on topics which your Provincial Executive has been working on.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the AGM on Thursday May 20, 2010. Please let me know if you have any members in your chapters that you would like to recognize for their dedication and work on behalf of APSSSP.

*Kathy Miles*



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## APSSSP Provincial Executive

▶ President	Kathi Page
▶ Treasurer	Tim Jenkins
▶ Secretary	Marieke Favrod
▶ VP Negotiations	Glenn Webster
▶ VP Public Relations	Kathy Miles
▶ VP External Affairs	Dan Milne
▶ VP Grievance & Constitution	Carmela Diano
▶ Past President	Georgia Steinhart

## Provincial Chapter Members

- ▶ Bruce-Grey Catholic District
- ▶ Dufferin-Peel Catholic District
- ▶ Durham Catholic District
- ▶ Halton Catholic District
- ▶ London District Catholic
- ▶ Niagara District
- ▶ St. Clair Catholic District
- ▶ Toronto Catholic District
- ▶ Waterloo Catholic District

# Strategic Planning and Initiatives

**I**N the past year, APSSP has worked to define important issues and develop plans for future directions. A two day meeting was held at the end of June with executive members and others from various chapters who had been involved in negotiations or on the reference team for the provincial level discussions. It was an opportunity to discuss the recent negotiations and initiatives that flowed from the provincial framework as well as the committees that the government formed to follow up on particular issues.

Our goal was to identify positive aspects of the negotiation process as well as determine strategies that would enhance our ability to reach our goals the next time around. As a union, we have had multiple opportunities this year to be included in provincial level consultation meetings around new legislation and to offer our own unique perspectives. The need for effective and efficient communication between executives, negotiation teams, and our consultants was highlighted as an area to build on. Preparation, training, and clear objectives were also discussed. In October at our Educational Weekend, we further explored these issues with executives and Governing Council representatives.

Three significant areas were identified as starting points - Pay Equity, Professionalizing our Image, and Preparing for the Next Round of Negotiations. Committees were formed from GC members and others and they met on February 6, 2010 in St. Jacob's. We exchanged ideas and questions together and also broke into specific groups to explore each issue in depth and to develop specific action plans. The pay equity group looked at the processes involved in updating and maintaining agreements in the various chapters. The prep group discussed communication strategies and ideas to begin developing more general goals and language for all chapters, and we are awaiting provincial comments on future rounds at the April SWAG meeting. Finally, the third committee discussed various ways to enhance our professional profile and ability to meet the needs of our union members in the future.

Ideas ranged from simple PR items, a consideration of increased use of technology and communication tools, to a need to provide more physical infrastructure for equipment, long term storage of important records, and meeting and work spaces to conduct our business in a professional manner. Motions will be brought forward at Governing Council to pursue various initiatives with their direction. We are planning for the future and updating our organization to be ready for new challenges.



Pay Equity Committee



Professionalizing Our Image Committee



Negotiations Committee

# Guidelines for Allegations of Abuse

Allegations of child abuse made against APSSP members, while rare, do happen. It is important that members know how to protect themselves against such allegations, and what to do if an allegation of abuse is made against you or another member.

APSSP's "Guidelines for Allegations of Abuse" is on line at [www.apssp.org](http://www.apssp.org) under the "Policy Manuals" section. "Guidelines" outlines a member's legal rights, the services that APSSP will provide, and explains what to do when informed that an allegation of abuse has been made.

If an allegation of abuse is made against you, immediately contact your Chapter President who will, in turn, contact the Provincial President to obtain approval for a legal consultation. If you are called into a meeting and discover that it involves an allegation of

abuse, insist on APSSP representation. No matter how outlandish the allegation may seem to you, do not attempt to resolve it on your own.

Most APSSP members have access to private Professional Liability Insurance through their professional associations. Private Liability Insurance provides you with legal coverage in the case a professional error or negligent act, and in the event of a Children's Aid investigation or charges of a crime related to your work. Do not assume that your School Board's liability insurance is adequate to protect you in these situations. APSSP strongly urges all members to consider obtaining private Liability Insurance coverage.

Malicious allegations, where there is a deliberate attempt to falsely accuse, are rare. Allegations of inappropriate conduct

that arise from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of a person's intent, are more likely. None of us can, nor should, conduct our professional practice "in a bubble". However, it is important to use common sense and be aware of behaviour and situations that could be open to misinterpretation. "The Guidelines for Allegations of Abuse" provides an excellent list of recommendations for avoiding false allegations.

The original APSSP "Guidelines for Allegations of Abuse" was written by Lilli Jones in 2003, and revised in 2007. Georgia Steinhart, Past President, is currently working on an updated version which will reflect changes in legislation and APSSP policy.

## AGM Moves to a New Location

As a result of feedback from the membership after last years AGM the executive directed Kathy Miles, Vice-President of Public Relations to explore other potential venues. After a number of inquiries and following a report to the executive a decision was made to move to a new location.

APSSP is pleased to let the membership know that the AGM this year will be held at the Mississauga Grand Banquet Hall. This is a facility that has been used for conferences and workshops by both the Dufferin Peel Catholic Board and the Peel Board and comes with their recommendation. It is hoped that this proves to be a suitable venue as we all understand the challenges of moving too frequently for general meetings. This Banquet Hall is located just south of the 401 off Hurontario Street, a location that should be handy for all the membership.

Although the location is changing, APSSP will continue in its tradition of providing a fantastic opportunity for all members to participate directly in the operation of their union. The meeting will be used to hear executive reports, conduct elections for office, consider constitutional changes, and to connect with colleagues from across the province.

Invitations will be mailed to all members within the month. So mark your calendars for Thurs. May 20. We look forward to seeing everyone there!





# Education & Planning Weekend 2009

Rob Crofts from Corporate Benefit Analysts gave a very informative talk about “How Benefits are Broken Up for Employees” focusing on “Enhancing Benefits: Strategies and Suggestions.” The information he shared will help APSSP chapters make informed decisions in the future.

Larry Robbins presented an update on Pay Equity, particularly around maintenance and issues that can affect current agreements. He shared history about the Chapters and an overview of the Pay Equity process.

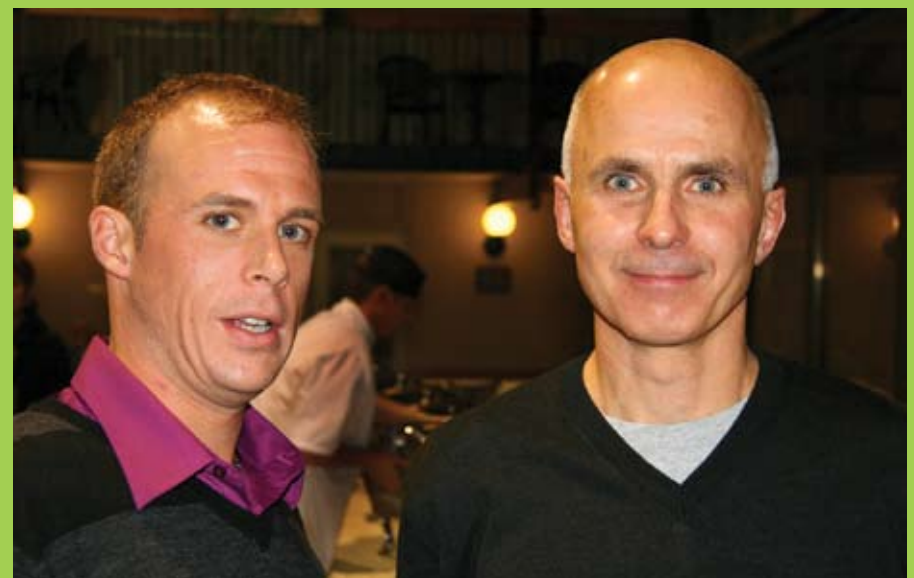
A presentation was made by Kathi Page, Dan Milne, Cathy McDonald-Reis and Julie Mazzuca-Peter regarding the Strategic Planning meeting in June. They also discussed an overview of the P.D.T.(Provincial Discussion Table) and APSSP involvement at the Ministry level.

In the afternoon all Chapter and Provincial Executives broke into smaller groups to discuss issues and share ideas relative to their various portfolios.

When the meetings were over, it was time for socializing with colleagues from around the province. There were lots of smiles and good conversations.

Photos by Jim Steinhart of [TravelPhotoBase.com](http://TravelPhotoBase.com)





# OMERS and Contract Workers

Throughout the last couple of years we have made great progress in rectifying some members' pension contributions while they were on contract. These members were able to regain some of their employer-paid pension contributions during the time they were on contract. Of course, these members were responsible for their own portions of their contributions.

Every employee for whom a pension plan is established by their employer is entitled to become a member of that pension plan. There are different factors involved in knowing whether or not a member would qualify for this, whether if you were full time or part time; how many years you were working on contract; and when you actually

joined OMERS. If you were on contract for more than a two year period and did not enrol in OMERS by the two year mark, please contact me for further information.

As I come to the end of my second term as VP – Grievance & Constitution, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for allowing me to represent you in various capacities. Your support and trust in my abilities has allowed me to enhance my knowledge of many different aspects of union responsibilities.

Remember, protect yourselves by enforcing your Collective Agreements and by better understanding your rights under the Occupational Health & Safety Act.

## Provincial VP (Grievance & Constitution) Welcomes New APSSSP Member!

Carmela Diano, Provincial VP Grievance & Constitution and member of Toronto APSSSP, has been busy on several fronts for the last few months. In addition to her dedicated work on APSSSP's Provincial Executive, and working full-time as a social worker for the Toronto Catholic District School Board, Carm has recently become a full-time mom for the very first time!

Carm and husband Walter welcomed their beautiful son Royce Diano Rodriguez at 3:22pm on Friday, February 19, 2010. Baby Royce, described by mom and dad as their "precious little-big one", weighed in at 10 pounds, 5 ounces. The family are all doing well and are enjoying time together at their new home in Maple. That's right – in addition to everything else, Carm and her husband moved house just prior to Royce's arrival. Talk about a busy first quarter! We wish Carm and her family great joy during this exciting time!

# Benefits Analysis for APSSSP Chapters

Rob Crofts of Corporate Benefit Analysts has been working on a complete overview of all APSSSP benefit packages. In addition, we have been seeking advice for employees who are 65 and still working and for those who are retired or planning to do so in the near future.

As baby boomers reach retirement age, they need to know whether they can still get life insurance and/or extended health care including vision, medications and dental care. The quick answer is yes. The details are, of course, more complex and require more research. There are choices and we hope to report and advise all APSSSP members fairly soon.

Rob is studying the Collective Agreements (CA) of each individual chapter. Since recent

Provincial legislation abolished mandatory retirement, it has had significant implications for benefits. Some boards are extending benefits on a year by year basis to over 65's while they review their obligations and choices. Others have extended coverage for multiple years for permanent employees. The status with different employers is quite variable and still subject to ongoing changes.

Other issues being studied include retirement gratuities for unused accumulated sick days. This is a programme that is largely being phased out in unionised work forces but some chapters, including Toronto Catholic, still have it. Naturally, there is reluctance for staff to give this up. Recent CA negotiations with CUPE and the city of Toronto provided some grand-parenting but it will no longer be available to new employees and is

being replaced by a short term disability programme.

There are also implications for Long Term Disability (LTD) plans with changes in age and the end of mandatory retirement. Rob is also looking at LTD programs for some chapters. LTD is connected to sick leave benefits with respect to when one benefit ends and the other begins. LTD used to be simpler to define in that you were either off work or not. Now it is more flexible with graduated returns and accommodations and more complex to work out the details.

Increasing our knowledge and understanding of our Collective Agreements and Benefits packages will help our individual members as well as provide information for future negotiations.

# Protecting our Work and our Students

## PPM 149 and Partnership Protocols

APSSP, as the only union in the province that exclusively represents professional student service staff, was at the forefront in consulting with the Ministry of Education towards the development of PPM 149. As most of our members are aware by this point in time this PPM (Policy and Program Memorandum) has led to the development, and in some Boards of Education the redesign, of partnership protocol agreements that lay the ground rules for any community agency that would like to work in our schools.

All APSSP chapters, as a result of the language in the PPM had a role with each of their individual Boards in completing the local protocol. Each APSSP chapter identified a lead member who communicated with the Provincial Association in the development of the local Protocol to ensure that it was consistent with the PPM and respected the union input.

It is now the duty of each and every APSSP member to develop some familiarity with their local protocol and to follow up with their local executive

if they become aware of a community agency that may attempt to set up shop in one of our schools. Not only do we have an obligation to protect the work of our bargaining unit, we also have an obligation to the students, who depend on our work to be successful in school, to ensure that all partnerships are developed in a professional and respectful fashion. A significant part of each partnership protocol is to ensure that the work offered by our agency partners does not duplicate our work and is set up in a way that protects privacy, confidentiality and respects the obligations of professional colleges.

So.... if you see someone in your school who looks like they are doing your work, or if your administration invites in community agency programs, do your part by letting them know that each and every School Board in the province has a process that must be followed prior to beginning any work of that nature. Follow this up with a call to a member of your local APSSP executive.

## Support Worker Advisory Group

The SWAG (Support Worker Advisory Group) has continued to meet with the Ministry of Education throughout this academic year. SWAG was formed as an outcome of the last round of negotiations as a vehicle to continue to discuss issues that were identified during negotiations and to allow an opportunity for the unions to consult with the ministry on emerging initiatives. Dan Milne continues to represent APSSP on this committee.

The SWAG was involved in providing input on the changes to the Safe Schools Legislation and the policy and procedure memorandums that followed. Additionally the committee received a report from the unions that represent education assistants on their roles and responsibilities.

APSSP is continuing to encourage the unions that represent professional student services staff to come together to prepare a joint position on the inclusion/recognition of our services in the Education Act. APSSP has already prepared a draft brief on this issue but have experienced some delays in getting the other unions to move forward.

2012 and the expiration of our present collective agreement is not too distant when we understand that the process of negotiations will begin in 2011 (next year). At the April SWAG meeting the Ministry has shared its intention to provide the unions with its initial view on structuring the next round of negotiations. APSSP will use this information as we continue our preparation work by building on our experience from the last round.

## Budget Highlights: 2009-2010

At the January 23 Governing Council meeting at St. Jacob's, Provincial Treasurer Tim Jenkins was pleased to report for the 2009 fiscal year that APSSP realized a significant budgetary surplus. This marks the tenth consecutive provincial surplus.

In preparation for the 2010 budget, chapter treasurers provided input at the October APSSP Planning Weekend. Chapter needs and concerns were discussed and priorities were established. A budget was then prepared and presented to the Provincial Executive in December and then brought forth for discussion and approval at Governing Council. A surplus is again anticipated in 2010 as chapters will not be engaged in contract negotiations.

The 2010 APSSP budget reflects the priorities of Chapters and the Provincial Association. Additional funds have been earmarked for public relation initiatives and technology. In addition, financial motions were approved that will ; a.) reimburse chapters on a yearly basis for the purchase of technological items, b.) provide release time for APSSP provincial business and c.) set aside funds from the 2009 surplus to be earmarked for the next round of negotiations in 2012.

# Cuba Education Tour

Gladys Cook, Halton Secretary

If you are looking for more than a suntan, I have the life changing holiday experience for you.

Last summer, I had the privilege of spending one week in Cuba, 5 days in Havana and 2 days in the country side in Vinalyes and Pinar del Rio. I was on an escorted tour with 23 other people( 4 from Canada and 20 from the United States). Our group consisted of educators at all levels, journalists ,a lawyer, and a union President.

This adventure was so unique because doors were opened for us that I did not even know existed. The following is just a brief example of the exhilarating itinerary:

- ▶ Visiting the University of Havana with a presentation by a Lawyer and a Professor of History
- ▶ Tour of urban garden Alamar
- ▶ Presentation and entertainment by the children at Casa del Nino y la Nina
- ▶ Visit and tour of the Latin American Medical School
- ▶ Regia Museum and Church to see the Black Virgin
- ▶ Presentation of their program for third world countries at the Literacy Museum (note: Cuba has a 98% Literacy rate)
- ▶ Las Terrazes,tour of the community and the Kindergarten Circula Infantil
- ▶ Ceramic artist, Jose Fuster, tour of his gallery and lunch on the premises
- ▶ Learning to dance the Rhumba,Cha Cha and Salsa on the roof top of someone's home in Old Havana, complete with our own band and dance instructor.

I hope that this gives you a flavour of the diversity of our experiences.

The entire trip was magnificent from our fabulous guide Tatiana, to the wonderful music, culture and history that was bountiful. Every day was a gift.

Cuba is my obsession. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions. I invite you all to check out the website and enter the contest to win a trip to Cuba ([www.cubafriends.ca](http://www.cubafriends.ca)).



## Upcoming Meetings:

### Governing Council Meetings

- ▶ Saturday April 17, 2010  
Best Western St. Jacob's

### Provincial Executive Meetings

- ▶ May 4, 2010
- ▶ June 8, 2010

### Annual General Meeting

Thursday May 20, 2010 - 5:30 pm  
Mississauga Grand Banquet Centre  
35 Brunel Road, Mississauga

Elections will take place for the following positions:

- ▶ Secretary
- ▶ V.P. Grievance & Constitution
- ▶ VP Public Relations

### Education & Planning Weekend

- ▶ October 23 & 24 2010  
Best Western Cairncroft  
Niagara Falls

How to Contact Us:

### ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SERVICES PERSONNEL

60-8 Bristol Rd., East, Suite 737  
Mississauga, ON L4Z 3K8

Tel: 905-460-6629  
E-mail: [info@apssp.org](mailto:info@apssp.org)  
[www.apssp.org](http://www.apssp.org)