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February
2018



THE LINK

Happy
Valentine's
Day!



Dates of Interest:

Feb 2nd: P.A. Day

Feb 7th: District Executive
Meeting 4:00 pm

Feb 13th: Ed Services
Meeting 4:00 pm

Feb 14th: Valentine's Day



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President's Message

Harvey Bischof, Shelley Page and our D3 team completed the work site visits on Wednesday. The visits were well attended by many staff interested in the upcoming bargaining preparations. I realize that we have until August 2019, but it is never too early to begin preparations. The feedback we received was documented by Shelley and D3 members gave the provincial executive a lot to think about before they went back to Toronto.

Issues such as professional judgement, workload, supports for staff dealing with mental health challenges in workplace, benefits and wages, were all raised and flagged as concerns. Sue also received over 80 responses to the Google Form that was accessed by staff

Feb 19th: **Family Day**



Feb 20th **Health & Safety
Committee Meeting** 4:00 pm



Feb 21st: **TBU Meeting**
4:00 pm

Feb 22nd: **Status of Women
Meeting** 4:00 pm

Feb 26th: **Political Action &
Communications Committee
Meeting** 4:00 pm
*Staff Reps needed!
Ask us how you can get
involved!*



as they responded to a series of questions that will inform the bargaining process. All of this information will be very helpful when OSSTF begins the process of creating the central brief, and when D3 begins its local process.

Thank you very much for attending the meetings and submitting responses to our Google Form. We appreciate your engagement in this very important bargaining preparation process.

District Officer Message

There's a committee for that!

Back by popular demand! Here's a reminder of the types of activities that OSSTF members engage in that connect us to the broader community.

Do you have strong opinions about professional development, Ministry of Education initiatives, or classroom resources? There's a committee for that! Come out to the next District 3 **Educational Services Committee** meeting to join the conversation around constructive and interesting professional development. Date: **4pm on February 13th** at the D3 office.

Are you interested in women's issues, #MeToo, #TimesUp, universal daycare, pay equity, or work-life balance? There's a committee for that! Come out to the next District 3 **Status of Women Committee** meeting to help us plan our annual Spring Gathering. Date: **4pm on February 22nd** at the D3 office.

Do you want to get involved in the upcoming provincial election? Are you interested in working with other unions on common labour issues? There's a committee for that! Come out to the next District 3 **Communication & Political Action Committee** meeting to hear what's happening provincially and locally. Date: **4pm on Tuesday, February 26th** at the D3 office.

Are you a social justice advocate or activist? Are you concerned about the plight of people living on reserves and their access to fresh water? There's a committee for that! Come out to the next District 3 **Human Rights/Equity Committee** to learn more about how you can make a difference. Date: TBD.

Joining a standing committee is a great way to learn more about OSSTF. Come on out!

Latest Additions to the D3 Website:

In the past month, we have added the following to the D3 website:

- Advisory on Adverse Reports
- Advisory on Workplace Injuries
- Two updates on OSSTF ELHT Benefits
- Poster inviting applications for the District 3 Student Citizenship Bursaries
- Poster for OSSTF Financial Assistance Awards
- Posting for the District Officer position in District 3.

If you have not checked out the website lately, take a look! www.d03.osstf.ca

Meet your OSSTF Executive!!

Feb 28th: ESSU Meeting
4:00pm

March 7th - District Meeting
4:00 pm

March 8th - OTBU Meeting
4:00 pm



This month's feature Rep is Kyle Craftchick. Kyle is a member of the Occasional Teachers' Bargaining Unit and recently became the OSSTF D3 Website administrator.

Hi Everybody!

I'm Kyle Craftchick, a seven-year occasional teacher in the Rainbow Board. Since graduating with qualifications in junior/intermediate science, I've added senior chemistry, senior math, and mostly recently, an honour specialist in chemistry to my list of qualifications. I've been on the LTO list for a few years now and have been fortunate enough to find long-term positions at several schools. I'm still working toward a permanent position somewhere and although I've taught a variety of subjects, my passion lies in chemistry! It's always interesting to see students gradually realize that chemistry is everywhere around us, in some form or another.

I've been involved with OSSTF since very early in my career, although at first it was simply attending OTBU meetings to stay informed about what was happening at other schools and across the province. I really found the meetings helpful in keeping up with everything that goes on (and it's nice to socialize a bit with other OTs). I eventually became the TBU Rep for the occasional teachers, which allowed me to voice some OT concerns at the TBU meetings and bring back information to my colleagues. I am currently serving as the District Rep for the occasional teachers and continue to pass on relevant information to other OTs when I can. Recently, I've also taken on the role of web master for the District 3 website and have been trying to breathe new life into it and make it more user-friendly. I hope everyone has had a chance to check out all the changes!

Over the last couple of years, I've attended several OSSTF events including local training about being an effective representative, a few collective bargaining regional workshops, the Leadership Training Conference in 2016 and 2017, and the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) in 2017. These events have helped me to broaden my understanding of OSSTF; what happens behind the scenes and what it does for each of its members locally and provincially. If you've ever considered getting involved (or more involved) with OSSTF, go for it! Having more information and being an active participant can only make things better.

Thanks for reading!

Kyle Craftchick



**Kyle Craftchick - OTBU
District Representative**



Update: Kyle will also be attending AMPA in March 2018!



10 Defensive Driving Tips



We can control our driving, but we can't control the driving of others. Driving defensively, rather than aggressively, helps maintain focus and control allowing you to anticipate things before they happen and react appropriately when they do. It is less about what you're doing and more about giving yourself enough time and space to respond to what other drivers are doing. It's as much an exercise in caution as it is a disciplined practice.

Here are 10 tips to help you become a more defensive driver, which will ultimately help to keep you safe, your driving record clean and your car insurance rates low.

Assume the worst – Right off the bat, set the expectation that other drivers won't follow the rules so you can give yourself enough space and time to adjust your driving appropriately.

Don't fight with nature – Drive for the conditions you have, not the conditions you want. Slow down in rain, snow and severe weather, put your hazards on when visibility is jeopardized and use your high beams when driving at night in dark areas.

Remain focused – Distracted driving is an increasingly fatal problem on our roads. Avoid distractions to optimize your focus and prevent potential disaster. This includes anything from leaving your phone alone (texting and using a device while driving is illegal in Ontario) to avoiding driving with your dog on your lap.

Related Read: [Teenagers and distracted driving: Know the facts](#)

Know the rules – Pull over when an emergency vehicle is trying to pass, slow down in construction zones and when passing accident scenes, be mindful of school zones and speed limit changes, give cyclists enough space and so on. Refusal to do so is not only dangerous, but can result in serious fines.

Signal – Your signals are your way of communicating with drivers in other vehicles. Take advantage of your signals when changing lanes or directions and be mindful of the signals of others. Slow down when you see others put their blinkers on and give other drivers enough time to do the same for you.

Respect speed limits – This sounds obvious, but many drivers are guilty of speeding from time to time. Slow down to avoid penalties, tickets and collisions. Speeding tickets can have a big impact on your [car insurance](#) rates, not to mention being a dangerous practice in general.

Look ahead – Pay attention not just to what is happening directly in front of you, but also what potential hazards lay ahead. Allow yourself the time to get familiar with what's going on in the distance so that you have the opportunity to make changes accordingly.

Related Read: [5 bad habits to break while driving](#)

Locate your nearest exit – When you get on a plane, it is customary to be asked to locate your nearest exit, and the same is true for the road. Have an escape plan so you can get out of or avoid a situation if needed. This includes things like not allowing yourself to get boxed in by other, larger vehicles on the road and driving in any lane but the fast lane (which is actually the passing lane, and typically located furthest from the exit). Mentally figure out your exits when driving.





Give enough space – A good driver gives other drivers enough space, to give you enough time to react if they make a mistake. Giving enough space is a safe driving practice in general, but it is also crucial to preventing things like rear-ending another driver and similar collisions.

Pay attention – Your eyes should be focused on the road, but they should also look around to ensure you're aware of your surroundings. Be mindful of drivers that are behaving aggressively and try to get away from them by slowing down or switching lanes when you can. Look for pedestrians, cyclists, animals and children that may also be on the road and give them enough space. Paying attention is truly your best defense.

There are a number of refresher courses out there to help experienced drivers become more defensive drivers, some of which may make you eligible for insurance discounts.

To find out more, contact your OTIP Broker today at 1-866-523-4111.

Did you know...OSSTF has collaborated exclusively with OTIP to offer great rates on insurance needs?

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