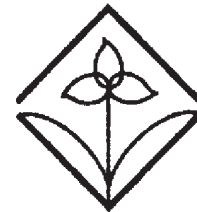


Home Rules

YOU CAN EDUCATE YOUR CHILD AT HOME!



OFTP

VOLUNTEERISM — OR MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

Volunteerism is a crucial part of any healthy organization. It is always easier to share the load among many than it is to leave only a few dedicated individuals doing the majority of the work.

OFTP has been extremely lucky over the years in that we have had many, many individuals give of their time and talents. Some of these individuals have contributed hours and hours of their time to working with Ministry officials to find equitable solutions to issues such as PPM 131 or the Learning to 18 directive. Others have contributed their time and expertise to helping families in crisis or by maintaining our membership database or keeping the website up-to-date. Still others give of their time and talents behind the scenes in such roles as hotline coordinator, printing and mailing coordinator and newsletter editor.

However, times change or personal situations arise or our children enter "the system" and our ability to spend that time working on behalf of OFTP and our membership becomes more challenging than rewarding.

You will note that there are several requests for volunteers in this month's Home Rules (see page 2).

Laurie Little has been a very capable and dedicated printing and mailing coordinator since June 2004. Her request for a new coordinator was published in the last issue but there has been no response. She is now working full time and her children attend an alternative school.

Katherine Marschal-Chan eagerly took on the reins of Hotline Coordinator quite a while ago and she has been doing an excellent job. Her personal circumstances have changed and she needs to pass her job to someone else by the end of October. Katherine, like Laurie, is now working full time.

Sadly, my circumstances have also changed and a bright, new editor of Home Rules needs to be found immediately. This will be my last issue as I will not have the time and energy to devote to the Nov/Dec publication. I will, of course, be happy to help whoever decides to take on the task in any way that I can!

These tasks can be perceived as "big" but really it's a matter of a few hours a week. In the case of editor it can be a little intense as those hours tend to be condensed all into one week every two months. It is **urgent** that volunteers be found to fill these positions.

Finally, Marina DeLuca-Howard is hard at work checking dates and looking at venues for a possible Diversity in Education Conference sometime in 2008. She is looking for committee volunteers to get things up and running and "day of" volunteers once a date and venue have been decided.

If you can help fill any of these positions, please contact enquiries@homeschool.org or introduce yourself on the OFTPExec List. Newcomers are always welcomed!

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Deadline for submissions to the next issue of *Home Rules* is the third Friday in November 2007 at 6 p.m.

ONGOING AND NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFTP NEEDS YOUR HELP! NEW VACANCIES

OFTP is run completely by volunteer labour. If you have a free few hours a week and would like to help in the following administrative positions, please contact enquiries@ontariohomeschool.org or post on the ExecList **right away!**

PRINTING AND MAILING COORDINATOR

Newsletter (Home Rules) mailing every two months:

- receive master copy of newsletter from Newsletter Editor and have it printed based on quantities given by Membership Secretary, plus sufficient extra for any conferences/expos/info nights that may be scheduled before the next newsletter issue, as well as extra copies for new member packages
- prepare envelopes (return address, postage, labels based on current database)
- stuff envelopes with newsletter, any inserts and membership renewal notices where necessary
- place newsletters in the mail
- mail renewal notices to expiring members who receive the HR via email

Other mailings:

- send new member packages and renewal packages whenever Membership Secretary provides this information (roughly weekly)
- send general information packages at request of area reps, hotline volunteers, enquiries recipient, or by any other source
- send hotline instruction package to hotline volunteer whenever Hotline

Coordinator provides volunteer contact information

- maintain adequate supply of OFTP handouts and brochures for use in new member packages, general information requests, as well as for conferences, expos and information nights
- send supplies of brochures to any member requesting them for distribution in libraries, local support groups, etc.
- maintain hardcopy newsletter archives

HOTLINE COORDINATOR

- ensures that the OFTP phone line is answered by members every month
- puts out the call for volunteers on the OFTP email lists for answering the phone line
- ensures that hotline volunteers are subscribed onto the hotline email list in order to post queries as is necessary and get responses from others on this list
- mails out all the necessary documents to the hotline volunteer... e.g. instructions for answering phone, log sheets for expenses, log sheets for recording who called and what they called about, sample of an information package, return envelope with postage to mail back log sheets and expense claim
- maintains a file of reports received from hotline volunteers
- the Hotline Coordinator can also take a turn answering the phone line if they wish
- when a caller asks for information about homeschooling and OFTP, the hotline volunteer emails the Hotline Coordinator with the name and address and the Hotline Coordinator mails out an information package

- checks in with the volunteer periodically to see how things are going and perhaps assists with their queries if no one else has offered assistance on the hotline email list to ensure that the volunteer receives support and that the callers question has been answered

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

- responsible for finding and compiling complete content for the newsletter (note: newsletter is published 6 times per year - February, April, June, August, October, December)
- handles all advertising requests and places them in the newsletter
- lays out the content into a desktop publishing program
- gives master copy of the newsletter to Printing and Mailing Coordinator either by mail or electronically
- maintains newsletter archives (paper and electronic)

PLEASE NOTE: None of these jobs takes a huge amount of time but they are all integral to the successful functioning of OFTP. If you can offer your own time and talents, please don't hesitate to contact us on the ExecList or by email (above).

All three current volunteers have an urgent need to pass these jobs on to new volunteers *as soon as possible*.

DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION CONFERENCE - 2008

If you are thinking about the Diversity in Education Conference, you are not alone. Send Marina an email with your ideas regarding speakers, or to contribute your labour. Email is delucahoward@gmail.com.

OPERATION SUPPORT GROUPS!

Is your support group included on our list? Please submit the your group's information and help homeschool families across the province by providing them with valuable information and a means through which they can connect with others. Visit <http://www.ontariohomeschool.org/supportgroups.html> to add or update your support group's profile. Or contact the Area Reps and Support Group Coordinator, directly at: reps.groups@ontariohomeschool.org

OFTP HOTLINE

1-416-410-5218 OR 1-800-704-0448

Please contact Katherine Marschel-Chan at hotline@ontariohomeschool.org **if you are interested in volunteering** to help answer the OFTP Hotline. It's a great way for you to help OFTP help others and it doesn't involve a huge time commitment! A package will be sent to each volunteer to provide them with information on retrieving the messages (calls are left on a central message center and do not forward to your home) as well as advice on responding to the callers' requests. We also have an OFTP Hotline email list that you can sub onto to get further assistance from other OFTP members if you need it.

Volunteers are needed for the months of September, October, November and December. Please help out - It's easy!

Also seeking a new coordinator! Please see page 2 for details.

Education is not preparation for life. Education is life itself.

John Dewey

ON THE JOURNEY TOWARDS WHOLENESS

Third Annual Fall Conference of The Wind-Rose / La Rose Des Vents

Parents, Caregivers and Educators:

Who intuitively feel there is more to childrearing and education than pushing children to high intellectual performance and future employment, Who would love to learn more about developing the WHOLE CHILD by allowing the HEAD, HEART and HANDS to be continuously engaged, Who are brave to question the corporate marketers and media dictating our children's taste, values, entertainment options and fashion choices, Who are looking for a supportive community to make changes from within for a more peaceful and healthier planet.

The conference will be held in Ottawa on **November 2nd to 4th, 2007**

With main guest speaker Gene Campbell on "Raising Loving Children". Gene is an educator from Chiron Toronto with over 30 years teaching experience in the public system and Waldorf schools. She currently guides homeschoolers (local as well as from abroad) and mentors Waldorf initiatives mainly in Ontario.

Other school and family issues likely to be discussed:

- the deficiencies of the main schooling system,
- the effects of multi media technology on children,
- the importance of creative play,
- adult development and community building
- Break-up sessions offering practical workshops on Engaging Arts & crafts

Cost per person:

\$35.00 for Fri pm session,

\$ 65.00 for Sat whole day,

\$65.00 for Sun whole day or \$135.00 for whole weekend. Discount rates for early registration before Oct 15 and for couples. Prices include wholesome snacks and lunch for Sat and Sun.

For more info, please contact Ellen at (613)832-7770, Kaeli at (613)565-5150, or Suyin at (613)797-7030 or e-mail the_wind_rose@yahoo.ca.

WRITING COMPETITION

Electronically Published Internet Connection (EPIC) established the annual New Voices writing competition to encourage reading and writing among middle school and high school students and to promote e-book literacy. The contest is open to both school students and homeschoolers, and each entrant is permitted to submit one entry in each category.

Guidelines, Entry Form, and Permission Slip are available at <http://www.epicauthors.com/newvoices.html>

Forty-five prizes were awarded to forty students in the 2007 competition. The grand prize winners received \$100 in cash, first place winners received Palm handhelds, and second and third place winners received gift certificates for e-books. Awards of excellence, honourable mention, and judges' awards were also presented.

All winning entries were compiled into an anthology, EPIC New Voices 2007, available for download at no cost from the website: http://www.epicauthors.com/EPIC_NewVoices_2007ebook.pdf

NEW MILITARY DIRECTIVE

NEW DIRECTIVE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WISHING TO HOMESCHOOL OUTSIDE OF CANADA

The Department of National Defence has informed us that there have been major revisions made to the directives on home schooling for military families posted outside of Canada. The relevant information is in the *Outside Canada Education of Children "How To" Book*, of which the following are excerpts:

2.1 Parents electing to provide instruction at home rather than enrolling their child in a local day school must proceed through the following steps:

- (a) Select a home-study program. An education allowance will only be provided for students following a Canadian provincial curriculum as taught in Canadian public schools. Students enrolled in a non-Canadian provincial ministry curriculum do so as parent choice with no available education allowance.
- (b) Enrol your dependent with the administering Outside Canada Support Unit. This has to be done on an annual basis.
- (c) Provide your Outside Canada Support Unit an instruction at home - education plan and required instruction at home forms [forms 9HSI and 9HSE]

4.1 The education plan provided to the Outside Canada Support Unit Approving Authority will include:

- (a) An instructional plan regularly planned instructional time, and a daily work schedule;
- (b) List subjects being taught;
- (c) Outline curriculum being used i.e. Ontario, Nova Scotia;
- (d) Documents used to support the curriculum;

- (e) Describe the typical kinds of activities provided to home-schooling student;
- (f) Provide samples of child's work in each subject;
- (g) Outline types of materials being used; (encyclopaedias, texts, magazines, internet, television programs, etc);
- (h) what techniques are used to access learning;
- (i) List community resources, if any, used.

Note 1: Home schooling is challenging, demanding, requires patience, persistence and an incredible ability to network—not to mention the ability to have one parent stay at home. Students who are following a home study program prior to posting outside Canada may be approved to continue with instruction at home outside Canada. Normally instruction at home, unless no other education alternative is available at the outside Canada posting location, will not be authorized for a student entering a home study program upon receipt of posting instruction for outside Canada.

The full text of the "How To" Book can be found at http://www.forces.gc.ca/dgcb/educat/howto/docs/PDF/howto13_e.pdf

If you have questions, you can contact Rod Thibodeau:

DGCB/Dependent Education Management 3
Outside Canada Allowances
Tel: (613) 995-7021/ Fax: (613) 992-2073
Internet: www.forces.gc.ca/dgcb/educat/
Thibodeau.RE@forces.gc.ca

INTERESTING LINKS



www.ottawa.anglican.ca/cathedral/choir.htm

For those living in the Ottawa area, the Ottawa Anglican Cathedral Choir is a wonderful opportunity for your child to learn music. They have a girls choir and a boys choir. The ages range from 7 - 14 years old.

www.csc4k.com

Canada's Scrapbooking Crop for Kids is holding events Canada-wide over the weekend of October 12 -14th. There are two locations in Ontario: Toronto and London. The events will help raise funds for local childrens hospitals. Visit the website for more information.

<http://tinyurl.com/26e4ok>

The Myth About Boys by David Von Drehle (for Time Magazine).

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>

Project FeederWatch is an annual survey of birds that visit feeders in the winter. To participate for winter 2007-2008, follow the link under "new seasons starts soon". Or click "find out more" at the top of the page.

<http://tinyurl.com/274qce>

The Great World Wide Star Count is taking place between October 1 - 15th. If your child is into astronomy this is the place to be and you'll be helping scientists world-wide to determine the extent of light pollution!

<http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/polarbound/>

Now in its seventh year, *Canadian Geographic's* Polar Bound Contest sends deserving secondary school students to the Arctic or Antarctic on once-in-a-lifetime educational expeditions. This year's deadline is October 22, 2007. Visit the website for contest details.

(cont. on page 5)

NEW SUPPORT GROUPS

Durham Young Elementary Homeschoolers

Contact Name: Michelle James Phone Number: 905-576-2069

Email Address: mkatjames@gmail.com

Other Links: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/durhamyoungelementaryhomeschoolers/>

Area Served: Durham region, from Pickering to Bowmanville

Description: New, secular group looking for young homeschooling families in the area. Prefer young elementary aged children (app. JK age - 8 years). Younger siblings welcome.

Activities: (types, frequency, etc.): Meet twice a month for socialization and group activities.

Membership Fees/Requirements: No fees. There may be occasional costs for outings, as decided upon by the group.

Quinte Northumberland Home Learners (qnhl)

Contact name: Allie Mackay Phone Number: 613-394-5312

Email Address: jrlees@canada.com

Other Links: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/qnhl/>

Area Served: Quinte and Northumberland

Description: Quinte Northumberland Home Learners (QNHL) are a group of diverse families connecting through educating our children at home. We are open to all styles of home learning, religions and ethnic backgrounds. Everyone has a equal say in the group and everyone helps out. All ages welcome. No membership fees although everyone is required to help with the group.

Freethinking Homeschoolers of Canada

This group is for Canadian homeschooling parents who are atheists, agnostics, or who otherwise don't believe in god(s) or subscribe to a religion (or UFO religion). We encourage discussion on any topic, including the arts, philosophy, science, history, politics and current events. We maintain a database to help members find secular curricula.

http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/Freethinking_Homeschoolers_Canada/

BOOK REVIEW

The Cardboard Shack Beneath the Bridge

Written and illustrated by Tim Huff

Published by Castle Quay Books; www.castlequaybooks.com

ISBN: 978-1-897186-09-1

8"x6.5"; 32 pages; \$10.95

The Cardboard Shack Beneath the Bridge uses simple but colourful artwork and rhyming stanzas to convey in easy to understand language what it means to be homeless. The story does not judge but asks, instead, that we all open our eyes to understand and to try to help. The book is targeted at jk - grade 3.

The book includes a foreword by the Honourable Hilary M. Weston (former Lt. Governor of Ontario) and a page by page discussion guide for use in helping children answer questions about the homeless.

The author is a full time worker in the GTA through Youth Unlimited. He is also a member of the National Roundtable on Poverty and Homelessness and sits on the Board of Directors of The Daily Food Bank in Toronto.

(cont. from page 4)

http://www.hillsdale.edu/hctools/imprimis_archive/2007/02/

Michael Flaherty is the co-founder and president of Walden Media. The link leads to a speech entitled "Let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage" that he gave to an assembly of students and guests at Hillsdale College on January 30th, 2007.

<http://tinyurl.com/2ea66r>

I found this article, while looking for something else, and thought it would be valuable for many people – including myself – who are unschoolers at heart, but struggle with it. Here's the first paragraph:

Do you vacillate between child-led, developmentally appropriate, interest-initiated unschooling on one hand, and traditional, structured, academic-based education on the other? These mood-altering swings in methodology creep up unexpectedly on homeschooling parents and are often exacerbated by events beyond their control. I know. I am recovering from homeschool split-personality disorder.

<http://www.bridgetoremembrance.com>

A Bridge to Remembrance is a new resource for parents and teachers to use in planning for Remembrance Day. At the website you can order the 4-part DVD as well as a musical CD and sheet music.

We don't see
things as they
are, we see them
as we are.

~ Anais Nin

E-LEARNING IN ONTARIO

by Carlo Ricci

Given all of the confusion and misinformation swarming around the issue of e-learning in Ontario I tried to go to primary sources as much as possible to give us a sense of what they may reveal about what the policy is. My focus will be AMDEC because they seem to be generating the most attention. First, for those who just want a quick, "what do I do," I suggest that if you have any issues please contact Eleanor Salmond from AMDEC. I dialled 519-527-0111 or 1-800-592-5437 ext.140 and asked for Eleanor Salmond. Alternatively, you can contact Ron St. Louis. He is a Ministry contact and can be reached at ron.stlouis@ontario.ca. Either of these two should be able to help. The information I am sharing with you I gathered after talking with Eleanor Salmond and Ron St. Louis and the two Ministry Documents that you will find referenced below.

The issue

1. Students are now required to register with their local secondary school and then need to ask to be enrolled with a publicly funded online provider (for example, AMDEC).
2. AMDEC will liaise with the local schools. The local schools will hold the OSRs and AMDEC will forward the grades. Previously, AMDEC held the OSR.
3. The director and superintendents at AMDEC are working hard to make this work.
4. Especially, if the student is already an AMDEC student they are trying to ensure that you will be able to continue unchallenged, but you still have to register with a local school.
5. Reason for change: AMDEC went from being a part of the

independent study register to the day school register.

In my conversation with Eleanor, I brought up an issue that I came across at the Ministry Days at OISE/UT this past year. I went into a session about virtual learning and what we were told then was that they do not want students to shop around. The boards want their boundaries respected and the Ministry agrees with that. (After all, schooling is a business and a hugely lucrative one at that.)

On May 30th an e-learning seat reservation process was introduced. This means that before students can register in a course with another board the local school can check the online local board register and see if it is offered locally through their board and if it is and there is space available, students may be forced to take the virtual course through the local board. If it is not offered or if the course is full, then students can take it elsewhere. Again, I believe that this is about territory and money. They are protecting their turf like any good thug would—sorry I can't resist sometimes. Again, this is what I was made to understand, but it may not be supported by the primary documents (see below).

Some people have shared their concern around anonymity, and so I want to share my perspective on that. If you were registered at AMDEC or any other publically funded school technically you are no longer a homeschooler, but a student in the public system. AMDEC is a publically funded school and so you are no longer "invisible" to the system.

AMDEC offered 55 courses last year and had 950 registered students. They are trying hard to woo homeschoolers and to protect their turf and to that end are very helpful and interested in

ensuring that people will be able to take courses with them if they choose. Again, Eleanor said that, ultimately, boards should have the right to offer a course through their virtual school if there is room. In short, no one knows what will happen once the e-learning seat reservation process is up and running full force, or how this will ultimately play itself out. Again, the primary documents may help to clarify some confusion around this (see below).

The primary documents

All students accessing e-learning courses must do so by applying, receiving permission from and enrolling in the course through their home school (as described above and in the Education Act). Students remain a student of their home school even if the course is delivered by a teacher in another school. Virtual schools or totally online schools are not allowed to be established using the provincial LMS (learning management system) and LOR (learning object repository). Any student who wishes to enroll in a secondary school e-learning course that is delivered through the provincial LMS must be registered with the board in which he or she is qualified to be a "resident pupil" under the Education Act. (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 2)

A.7.2. Rights and Responsibilities of the Principal of the Student's Home School: the enrollment and withdrawal of a student in an e-learning course; (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 5)

A.7.3. Rights and Responsibilities of the Principal of the School Delivering the E-Learning Course: giving permission for an eligible student from another board to take an e-learning course; (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 6)

Students who are being home-schooled can become an authorized user of the LOR if they apply to their local district school board for a user account. (Ministry of Education, 2006 p. 8)

E-Learning Courses

Enrolment in day school e-learning courses will be recorded in either the full-time or the part-time day school enrolment register in the same way as enrolment in courses delivered in the classroom. Where a pupil is taking an e-learning course, the board that the pupil has the right to attend under the Education Act (the home board) shall report the enrolment of the pupil in the course. Where a school of a board other than the home board is providing the instruction in the e-learning course, the home board shall pay a fee that is established by e-learning Ontario to the board that is providing the instruction. (Ministry of Education, 2007 p. 6)

Home Schooling

Pupils who are excused from compulsory attendance because they are receiving satisfactory instruction exclusively at home (i.e., through home schooling) or elsewhere (e.g., at a private school) must not be recorded in the full-time, half-time, or part-time register(s). If, however, they are receiving some instruction provided by the school, this instruction time will be recognized for grant purposes. These pupils must be recorded in the appropriate register in accordance with the amount of instruction provided. (Ministry of Education, 2007 p. 8)

Home Schooling

If the principal indicates that pupils who are receiving home schooling are taking some instruction at the school, record the enrolment of these pupils in the register and record each pupil's attendance in a Daily Attendance Record. (Ministry of Education, 2007 p. 9)

Discussion

It seems clear from the above references that students have to enroll in their local school first. It also seems clear that it is the responsibility of the principal of the student's home school (there are others, of course, that I did include, but that you can look up—see references below) to enroll and withdraw a student in an e-learning course, and that it is the responsibility of the principal of the school delivering the e-Learning course to give permission for an eligible student from another board to take an e-learning course. If this is the case, then it seems to be up to AMDEC, for example, to decide whether to give students permission. Given that AMDEC seems eager to accept students, it would seem that students ought not to have problems taking courses through them. I just hope that this is interpreted by those in positions of authority in the same sense that I have interpreted it.

OFTP may want to notify the Ministry that our members are unhappy with the lack of choice and we would prefer that our children take courses with any public provider they choose rather than be limited to the local publicly funded board. We may want to share the primary document quotes I outlined above as support. Of course, they are trying to set up virtual boundaries in the same way that they set up traditional school boundaries. Mostly, you go to your neighbourhood school, regardless of whether that school will work for you or your family. Just to clarify, I emailed a friend about how flex boundaries work and this is the response I got:

"You can apply to the principal of the school you want to send kids to for a flex boundary but it is up to him/her and their numbers. If the school experiences a high influx, they can potentially kick you out but that rarely happens." (personal communication, 12 September, 2007)

References

Ministry of education. (2007). Instructions for the use of

computerized enrolment registers for elementary and secondary schools 2007–08 School Year. Retrieved September 19, 2007, from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/forms/enrol/212372e.pdf>

Ministry of education. (2006). E-learning Ontario: Policy document. Retrieved September 19, 2007, from http://www.elearningontario.ca/eng/pdf/Policy_document.pdf

Carlo Ricci currently teaches in the faculty of education's graduate program at Nipissing University and he founded and edits the online Journal of Unschooling and Alternative Learning (JUAL). He tries to incorporate the spirit of unschooling, democratic and learner centered principles in all of his classes. Everything of value that Carlo has learned, he has learned outside of formal schooling. He has never taken a course in school connected to what he now teaches and writes about. He has taught in elementary and high school as well as in undergraduate, teacher education programs and graduate programs. Carlo's personal schooling experience as a student and later as a teacher has inspired him to revolt against institutional schooling. He continues to heal from the wounds inflicted on him by formal schooling. Carlo has two daughters ages 2 and 4 that he hopes will decide to be unschooled.

.....
• The Master in the art of living •
• makes little distinction between •
• his work or his play, his labor •
• and his leisure, his mind and his •
• body, his education and his •
• recreation, his love and his •
• religion. He hardly knows which •
• is which. He simply pursues his •
• version of excellence in whatever •
• he does, leaving others to decide •
• whether he is working or •
• playing. To him he is always •
• doing both. •
• ~ Zen Buddhist text •
.....

SCHOOLING OUTSIDE THE BOX

by Donna Fawcett, Author of *Thriving in the Homeschool*
and Donna Dawson novels *Redeemed* and *The Adam and Eve Project*

As a new year of schooling begins it is important to remember why we chose to home teach. For me a large part of the decision came from the desire to tailor make an education package for each child. Having been educated through the public school system, I found it sometimes challenging to think beyond that system's boundaries. My first year home teaching was almost a mirror image of a public classroom. I had three cute, second hand desks that I had scrubbed and lined up neatly in a row in my kitchen. I had my formal curriculum—Board of Education cast-offs. And I had my schedule prepared to the nth degree. The only differences—really—were location and teacher. I knew no better. I had been programmed to follow the program. But as the years piled up and I wound down, I found myself increasingly discovering new and interesting ways to teach my children—individualized ways—creative ways.

After that first year—a year where I nearly burnt myself and my children out—I began to search for—yes I admit it—easier educational styles. We spent time experimenting and while sometimes it felt as though I was wasting time when I should have been focusing on getting those math and English papers marked, often it was in those moments when I stepped out of the box. Case in point.

We had purchased a neat little curriculum that studied the war of 1812. Our daughters were in Grades 4, 5 and 7 and groaned at the thought of one more text book to add to their collection. I was adamant that they learn some of our Canadian history and so we began yet one more foray into structured learning. At the end of the two month course I administered the obligatory test—and nearly cried when all three girls had

low marks. And so we did it again. You would think I would have learned the first time. Again the groans. Again the work. Again the poor grades. My girls just weren't getting it. What was wrong? The curriculum was great. I found it interesting and easy to understand. The girls certainly were capable. But that secret ingredient was missing—the one that public systems seldom have the time or manpower to implement. Hands-on involvement. I needed to get my girls to live the history—to make it real to them. So how was that possible? We were in the midst of a snow-abundant winter and making the three hour trek to Queenston Heights was not exactly a favourable option. What could I do?

At the time I lived close enough to a fellow home teacher to make team classes part of my school year. Sometimes we traded off. She would teach the whole gang one subject and I would teach another. Maybe that was the solution. I placed a call of desperation to Cheryl and together we formulated a plan. She would do a science lab while I did a history re-enactment. While it wasn't too difficult for her to get the internal organs of a cow from the local butcher, I wracked my brains on how we could make the War of 1812 come to life in her overlarge back yard. The solution came to me quite by accident.

Being a youth group leader in our church I was a bit of a target for some of the teens' more mischievous moments. The weekend following our discussion I found myself quite literally a target as a snowball sailed through the air and caught me on the left shoulder. *That's it!* I had my 'eureka' moment. We could design the whole set and armaments out of snow. Excited I called Cheryl and told her my idea. And so our War of 1812 re-enactment shifted into high gear.

The thirteen children were divided into two sides and the older children were assigned the positions of the key players. We formulated battle strategies based on the historical accounts. We built mounds of snow and ridges to simulate the Niagara escarpment and the terrain surrounding it. And we stockpiled snowballs. The older children studied the historical roles so they could get their battles just right and then we mothers stepped back and let them 'have at it'. It was a long and terrible battle filled with laughter and learning and very soggy mittens and jackets. But at the end of it all they knew. They understood. Because they had lived it.

These so many years later when occasion has it that the families reunite (we're still in Canada while Cheryl and her family moved to the States) we laugh and reminisce over that fierce war of the snow. And our children can still recall the names, dates and battles from that re-enactment. Time and again we implemented this strange but effective style of learning and each time our children excelled. Is formal written curriculum then to be cast aside? No. We continued to use our workbooks and texts but in those times where the girls weren't connecting we stepped outside the educational box and lived the lessons. Isn't that the beauty of home teaching?

Donna Fawcett is a retired home schooling mother turned freelance writer and conference speaker. In her book 'Thriving in the Home School—A Parent's Guide', she shares some of the lessons learned in her own home school. To contact her, visit www.homeschoolblogger.com/authordonna or email her at hometaughtfawcetts@hotmail.com.

At 16, Homeschooler Publishes First Comic Book

Now his second issue is out! Will Erskine is Editor-in-Chief of Clover Comics (www.clovercomics.com) and with submissions from other homeschoolers, he put together a 22 page comic book and had it photocopied. The first run had 50 copies and there are only two left.

However, it seems demand may warrant another run of that issue #1, with a different cover, as the first is the collector's edition!

In our local paper in Oakville, they published a full page story on him. If you go to www.oakvillebeaver.com and click on arts and entertainment you can type in the search box "Comic book hits shelves of Kerr St. bookstore" and it should dig up the article for you.

He sent ten copies to Victoria and they *sold out* - in a big a city comic book store where they don't even know the kid and he wasn't even in the paper there!

This inspired him to get the second issue out and it is on the stands here, in Victoria, and in Toronto (both issues) at the Silver Snail on Queen St. West.

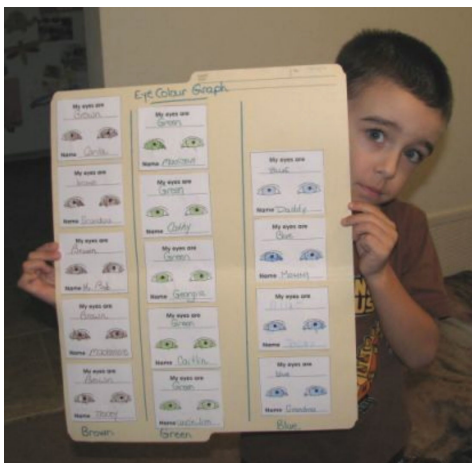
It has some fiction, science fiction comics , continuing stories, and lots of humour - and terrific art work! It has to sell for \$6.49 to cover the expense of printing this way (and to cover the next ones coming out) but even adults seem to really like "More Adventure Comics".

Write to Will at the website if you want to order any (probably a dollar mailing too) . He has done a lot of research into the comics field and is an expert. It is his passion and that shows! Yay homeschool! It has to be for age thirteen and up because of mild language and violence, though.

Will Papple Erskine is now a 17 year old Unschooler (for 6 years) from Oakville. He is an avid reader and writer. He does stand up comedy with original material and performed on the Toronto Mainstage of Second City doing Improvisational comedy.



Will by William Papple Erskine



Jake Santor and his mom recently completed a science unit on the Human Body & what makes us all different/the same.

They conducted their "research" and collected the eye colours of all the friends & family members they encountered. Then they put all the data together to make the graph. It was a dead even tie between green & brown among their circle of friends!

MORE INTERESTING LINKS

http://support.pcrm.org/site/PageServer?pagename=dissalt_digital_frog2

Each year, thousands of students sit in biology class with a chemical-soaked frog pinned before them, wondering if there is a better way to learn about anatomy. With today's advanced technology, there are now many humane alternatives that have been proven to teach just as well or better than dissection. PCRM is pleased to offer a free copy of one of these alternatives, Digital Frog 2, to students, parents, and teachers. You can also download PDFs for a Teacher's Manual and a Student Workbook.

http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1.html

In today's schools, too many children struggle with learning to read. As many teachers and parents will attest, reading failure has exacted a tremendous long-term consequence for children's developing self-confidence and motivation to learn, as well as for their later school performance.

<http://www.howtoteachscience.com/>

This site has been put together by a former science teacher turned homeschooling mom. There are freebies and lesson plans, experiments and ideas, and lots of funny articles about how to teach science or how NOT to teach science. I haven't spent a lot of time at this website but it looks good so far!

ENJOY IT WHILE YOU HAVE IT!

by Barbara Frank

Writing my book Life Prep for Homeschooled Teenagers four years ago helped me through a difficult time of my life: letting go of our two oldest children. Over the course of three weeks, our daughter moved to the city and our son left for college. After homeschooling them all of their lives, it was a tough transition for me. (They held up just fine.) Working on the book kept my mind busy so that I didn't do anything stupid, like body-blocking the front door so they couldn't leave home.

Now we've reached another milestone: our son graduated from college last month and is getting married this weekend. He is already living in another state, where his bride will join him after they say their "I do's."

Isn't this silly? I feel like I'm letting go of him all over again, and yet he's been away at college the past four years. The summers and brief school holidays that he was home were just enough time with him that I never quite let go of him completely. But now he'll be living with his wife six hours away from here. That's ample reason for Mom to let go, don't you think?

But the thing is, after homeschooling them all of their lives, I got used to having them around, and I liked it. I never could understand parents who live for the first day of school each year. I like being with my kids, and all the time I spent with them as they grew up only solidified that feeling.

Fortunately, we still have two children at home; our 16-year-old does not seem to have the independent nature of the older two, so I'm hoping she'll stick around a while. And our youngest, now 14, will probably never

live on his own because of his disabilities. God knew what He was doing when he sent that little fellow my way! He is staving off Empty Nest Syndrome for me.

... I got used to having them around, and I liked it.

I do have a few regrets, though, and I want to share them with you in hopes that you don't make the mistakes I did. For one thing, I wish I hadn't been in such a hurry for these guys to grow up. With our eldest, particularly, I found each stage of development so exciting that I couldn't wait for the next one. Why did I want to rush things along? Back then I had no idea that even as the days were long, the years would be short.

I also wish I hadn't tuned out my children at times. When we had all four at home, sometimes it was so chaotic that I, a person who needs

her quiet time, would stick my nose in a book and get lost in it for an hour (or more, if it was Maeve Binchy's newest novel). I considered it a way to keep my sanity back in those days, but now, on the rare occasions when all four of our kids are together, I sit and

watch them interact and just enjoy the pure pleasure of it. But it never lasts long, because someone has to catch a train or get home so they can get up early for work the next morning. Back when all six of us lived here together every day, I never realized how soon that would change. It seemed like it would always be that way.

Before I go completely regretful on

you, I should also share what I will never regret. I will never regret choosing to keep our kids home from school. I will never regret the mornings spent doing our version of

school in our jammies. I will never regret the chocolate chip pancakes for lunch, the untold hours in our van spent singing along to tapes, or the finger-painting sessions in the basement. I will never regret the hours I spent in the vendor hall at the homeschool convention each year, picking out just the right books for each child, nor will I regret the time I put in searching out art supplies, every color of construction paper known to man, glue sticks on sale, and cool pens that made them want to write. I especially will not regret the money I spent on all these things; we saw much better results from those few dollars than the thousands we pay in property taxes each year to support our local schools.

I'm going to throw in some gratitude while I'm at it. I thank God every day that He led us to homeschooling. I am incredibly grateful that homeschooling gave us so much valuable time as a family. There's a six-year gap between our first and second pairs of children; how close would they have been if they'd gone to school? The older ones would have been gone all day when the younger ones were little. They would not have seen each other much. Instead, they all grew up together, and what a blessing that has been to their relationships with each other!

Are you getting the vibe yet? It may hurt more to let go of my kids because of all the years we had together, but that pain is a small price to pay for

(cont. on page 11)



(cont. from page 10)

the experience of living together as a family for all those years. We were especially fortunate that my husband has worked at home for the past 12 years; most kids nowadays don't even have one parent at home during the day. Homeschooling has been a tremendous blessing to our family.

So.....when you're tired, when you're discouraged, when you go through the hard times that make you wonder if it's time to quit and put them on the school bus, please remember that I went through those times, too, and I'm here to tell you that it was all worth it. Tape a little note to your bathroom mirror, where you'll see it every morning:

ENJOY IT WHILE YOU HAVE IT!

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Barbara Frank is the mother of four homeschooled-from-birth children ages 14-23, a freelance writer/editor, and the author of "Life Prep for Homeschooled Teenagers," "The Imperfect Homeschooler's Guide to Homeschooling," and "Homeschooling Your Teenagers." To visit her Web site, "The Imperfect Homeschooler," go to www.cardamompublishers.com.

Since I have abandoned the idea of regular lessons, I find that Helen learns much faster. I am convinced that the time spent by the teacher in digging out of the child what she has put into him, for the sake of satisfying herself that it has taken root, is so much time thrown away. It's much better, I think, to assume that the child is doing his part, and that the seed you have sown will bear fruit in due time. It's only fair to the child, anyhow, and it saves you much unnecessary trouble.

~ Annie Sullivan

Give Them Love

by

Angel Goulet

Give them love to learn and to grow.

Let the information flow.

Allow them their talents to show.

While they're young, let learning seeds sow

Their spongy curiosity.

Sometimes we grown ups do not see;

They surprise us by what they know.

You never know what they may be.

Give them love.

Ask them where they would like to go-

Museum, gallery, or show.

Help them grow up smart, strong, and free.

If we take them seriously,

Natural abilities will glow.

Give them love.



**I'M ALWAYS LOOKING
FOR ARTWORK CREATED BY
ALL OUR WONDERFUL
HOMESCHOOLING KIDS. PARENTS
CAN EVEN SEND IN PHOTOGRAPHS
OF SCULPTURES AND OTHER 3
DIMENSIONAL ART.
SEE SUBMISSION INFO ON
PAGE 12.**

WANT TO PLACE AN AD?

Send your ad to *newsletter*
@ontariohomeschool.org

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND DEADLINES FOR 2007

If you are interested in making a submission for the newsletter, here are some guidelines to follow:

Topic Suggestions - your 'style' of homeschooling; curriculum critiques or reviews; teen stories; research studies on homeschooling; educational articles; book reviews; tell us about your support group etc.

Length Restrictions - There are currently no restrictions but attempts should be made to keep articles concise. When making a submission, please include a brief bio about yourself, approximately 2 to 3 sentences in length.

Book Reviews - Please include the author, ISBN number, publisher, copyright date and name of reviewer. If a homeschooled child has reviewed the book please include the child's age.

Curriculum Reviews - Include curriculum name, supplier name and contact information, price, appropriate age/grade level and name of reviewer.

Format - See "Newsletter Inquiries/Submissions" to your right for contact information. The Editor can accept most file formats. Articles can be attached to a regular e-mail or included within the body of the e-mail message. Articles may also be sent through traditional mail (be sure to allow sufficient time prior to the deadline).

Issue Deadlines - Submission deadlines are the third Friday of each odd-numbered month (ie: January, March etc.) by 6 p.m.

Send me your drawings, photographs, stories, reviews and poetry. Would you like to write an article? Go for it! I'm always looking for submissions.

OFTP E-MAIL LISTS (FOR MEMBERS ONLY)

To subscribe to the **OFTP Exec List** please go to <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/OFTPEXEC>. This list is open to all members and its purpose is to discuss OFTP operations and initiatives.

To subscribe to the **OFTP List** please go to <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/oftp>. The purpose of this list is to discuss and share ideas and information about homeschooling. Discussions may include daily homeschooling issues, passing along articles or conference information, product reviews and questions about legalities.

To subscribe to the **OFTP Chat List** please go to <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/oftpchat>. The purpose of this list is to provide a forum for members to share thoughts, feelings, questions and information on "off topic" (non-homeschool) issues.

To find OFTP's specialized lists, please visit <http://ontariohomeschool.org/oftpgroups.html>

Home Rules is published bi-monthly by the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents (OFTP). OFTP is a non-profit, volunteer-managed group committed to providing information about and support for home-based education to our members and the public at large. OFTP supports parental choice in education as stated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (26.3). We act as a link between home educators and institutions such as the provincial government and local school boards. OFTP believes that parents have the right to determine the satisfactory nature of instruction for their children.

The views expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the writers and are not necessarily the views of OFTP. OFTP believes that parents need to find the method that works for their particular family. OFTP does not espouse any one method of home education over another.

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General inquiries should be directed to: enquiries@ontariohomeschool.org or send by regular mail to the newsletter editor at the address immediately below.

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Any editorial contributions, letters and advertising inquiries should be directed to the Editor at: OFTP c/o Wendy Wagner, 12 Bannock Crescent, Kanata, Ontario, K2K 2P8, or via e-mail at newsletter@ontariohomeschool.org

MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES

To join OFTP or to renew your membership, send a cheque or money order for \$30.00 for one year or \$75.00 for 3 years payable to OFTP to: OFTP c/o Lisa Kondrat, 352 Dundas St. E, P.O. Box 1423, Waterdown, ON, L0R2H0 or via e-mail at membership@ontariohomeschool.org

If your e-mail address and/or mailing address has changed, please notify the Membership Secretary immediately.