

THE MANITOBA

Teacher

SEPTEMBER 2014 VOLUME 93 NUMBER 1 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

A CASE OF THE

VAPOURS

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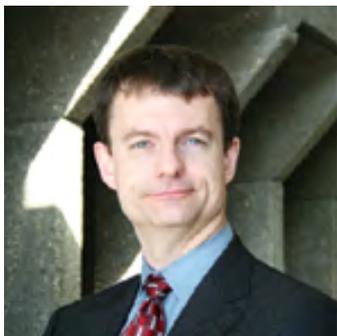
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

PAUL OLSON

Happy New Year, everyone!

After all the planning, prep, and setup in the sweltering final days of summer, we've started another year off with no small measure of optimism.

Of course, optimism is not for the faint of heart. And woe to the fool who confuses it with naiveté. It's not pie in the sky; it's just hard work.

I can't remember what I had for breakfast this morning, but I can clearly remember what got me hooked as a teacher activist in the Winnipeg Teachers' Association all those years ago, and kept me engaged ever since. And it doesn't make me unique. If anything, it makes me typical of the activists you'll find in any union, rights group, or professional or political organization.

One particular kid at the beginning of my career had a range of needs and challenges that made school harder for them than for most kids. To this day, I also still remember how great my Principal and other teaching colleagues were from that year—they were rock stars, and it was my honour to work with them.

Despite my amazing colleagues, I saw these things:

- I was fully certified, but had zero coursework on special needs.
- The school-based supports for this child were intermittent and inadequate, and
- That inadequacy was systemically driven, not locally caused or fixable.

I realized that I was in for a long year, that this child deserved better, and that we both deserved better from the education system. I realized I'd be spending a lot of time compensating for weak or outright bad decisions made by people in other places and times—decisions about laws, budgets, policies, guidelines, and processes.

At this point, one can retreat to the lunch room, and whine. Or.

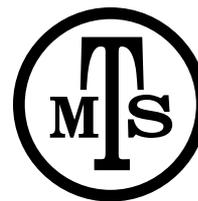
I opened my classroom door, and also the school door, and peeked outside. I found people who were talking about these same problems and challenges, and what could be done about them. Many of those people were teachers. Some were trustees and superintendents. A few were MLAs. But it was fellow teachers, volunteering in WTA and at MTS, who were really trying to engage and make a difference.

Think of your crustiest bargainer. Your most passionate equity advocate. Your toughest president. Your wettest coach, standing in the rain for hours and days on end.

Optimism (and teaching) is seeing what isn't there yet, and then setting out to make it happen. Refusing to give up until it does. And then making it better, yet again. (All without burning out.)

We're in our 15th consecutive year of education funding increases. Special Education is now a B. Ed. graduation requirement. Appropriate Education is enshrined as a right in the Public Schools Act. And we are still neck deep in a host of challenges that need optimists to engage, to challenge, and to make the needed changes happen.

As I enter my last year as your President, I'm still far from satisfied, and it seems that I never will be. Neither, I hope, will any of you.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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Published seven times a year (September–June) by The Manitoba Teachers' Society. Articles and views published herein do not necessarily represent the policies nor the views of the Society.

The Manitoba Teacher welcomes story ideas and submissions from members. Contact the editor.

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Publications Mail Agreement

40063378 ISSN 002-228X

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

Information Management
The Manitoba Teachers' Society
191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
email: mts-im@mbteach.org



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INSIDE MTS

KEN PEARCE, GENERAL SECRETARY

What does it mean to be a member of The Manitoba Teachers' Society? What rights and obligations are placed upon a member? These questions were considered in the two-year review of the Society's Constitution, Bylaws and Policies. The revised handbook, approved in May, more clearly defines the rights and obligations of members. Now, it is easier to find the principles by which The Manitoba Teachers' Society operates and the processes employed to govern the administrative aspects of our organization.

Why is this important? Well, if we look to the ever changing nature of our public schools and the cyclical attention paid to how they operate, it is evident that across the country, indeed around the world, pressures are being exerted on the teaching profession, not least of which is the attention being placed on teacher competency and professionalism.

In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation has found itself in the position of having to defend teachers against an increasingly negative government position that teachers are not being held to account for unprofessional behaviour.

Similarly, tensions between the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta government have heightened since the May release of a provincial task force report that educators say attacked the profession. The report said that the ATA appeared to have a conflict of interest in both advocating for teachers and disciplining them. Among its recommendations was that the review process be assumed by the education minister.

As many of you are aware, in some provinces, teachers must pay an additional fee to a College of Teachers, a supervisory body that investigates complaints and imposes penalties for those members it finds guilty of unprofessional activity. In Manitoba, the disciplinary process is the responsibility of MTS. The government of Manitoba recently responded to requests made by the Society for significant changes to potential penalties for members who breach the Code of Professional Practice.

Let us be clear; ongoing supervision of teachers as employees in Manitoba remains

at the school level, involving largely cooperative endeavours between employers and employees. Staff officers of the Society are sometimes involved in negotiations between the two, solving issues that arise from time to time. The vast majority of employment difficulties are resolved through such interaction.

In those rare cases where MTS members are accused of unprofessional conduct, a Society process begins with a written complaint being sent to the General Secretary. If the matter is serious and cannot be resolved through mediation, the issue is then sent to a committee of members charged with investigating the complaint. If this committee and its legal counsel determine that there is sufficient evidence to support the complaint, the concern is forwarded to the General Secretary to be considered by the Review Committee, another group of members supported by legal counsel. The Review Committee undertakes a formal process which is very much like a court, with sworn testimony from all parties concerned. It then makes a decision as to whether or not the member breached the Society's Code of Professional Conduct, and decides on an appropriate penalty.

If a member is found guilty of breaching the Code of Professional Practice, it can impose one or more of the following:

- Admonishment
- Censure
- Suspension of membership
- Termination of membership
- Imposition of a fine of up to \$2,000
- Ordering of costs of investigation and hearing, up to \$5,000
- Recommendation to the Minister to revoke or cancel the teaching certificate

What does termination or revocation of membership mean? Well, the rights of membership outlined in the bylaws would no longer exist and further, the member would not be able to access the Society's disability plans or its EAP service. Local or provincial participation in any political or committee process would also cease and Staff Officer or legal counsel supports from the Society would be limited to issues that arise specifically from administration of

the collective agreement. No additional supports would be extended.

The categories of membership have also been reviewed and outlined in the new bylaws; if you are on leave you may no longer be eligible for participation at the local or provincial levels. The basic rule is, to participate and enjoy the benefits of membership while on leave, you must pay the membership fee and be teaching in a particular membership year at least 40 days in order to be eligible to participate in the local or provincial political process.

In summary, the Society pursues the following objectives:

Mission

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is dedicated to safeguarding the welfare of teachers, the status of the teaching profession and the cause of public education in Manitoba.

Goals

- I. To provide for its members an organization that will give them an equal, effective and democratic opportunity to pursue their interests and aspirations as teachers.
- II. To achieve for and utilize on behalf of its members a system of collective bargaining that will permit a fair and open negotiation of all economic benefits, professional rights and conditions of work of teachers.
- III. To ensure for its members opportunities to develop their professional skills as teachers.
- IV. To protect and defend the individual rights of its members as teachers.
- V. To positively influence educational change.
- VI. To be recognized as an effective agent of public education so that government will consult and maintain a continuous dialogue with teachers.

The bylaws of the Society will guide our efforts in the years to come—to review the new handbook, go to the member portal and look at it online. If you have any questions, ask your local president or contact me.



A Case Of The

They're stylish, electronic, tasty, and controversial. And, if they haven't already, they're bound to show up at your middle or high school, sometime soon.

BY RAMAN JOB

Vapes or e-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that vaporize e-juice, a combination of propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, flavouring and nicotine.

E-cigs look like regular cigarettes. Vaping pens are not pens at all, but reusable personal vaping devices. They look more like fancy handheld mini-bongs. But in each case there's no tobacco and no smoke, just nicotine and vapour. The disposable Smoke NV brand sold from convenience store counters and some types of e-juices, contain zero nicotine.

Proponents say vaping is healthier for you than smoking traditional cigarettes because no organic matter is being burned. That means no tar and none of the 70-odd carcinogens associated with tobacco smoke—just a pure nicotine hit. Others warn the research isn't in yet on the long-term effects of inhaling vaporized e-juice.

Adults are using vapes as alternatives to traditional cigarettes and even as smoking

cessation devices. E-juices come in four "nic levels" and hundreds of flavours from peach to waffles to gummy bears.

Many former smokers who now vape swear their senses of smell and taste have come back, and they've lost their nagging cough.

And it seems more Canadian youth are starting to experiment with e-cigarettes and vaping pens, as well. A 2012 study of almost 1,200 Canadian youth and young adults found that awareness of e-cigarettes was "quite high" and nearly a fifth of those surveyed had tried them.

Henri Péroquin, Principal of J.H. Bruns Collegiate, says we're starting to see "the tip of the iceberg" here.

"It's coming up and it going to get huge. Especially the vaping pens, I can see them coming into great popularity. The e-cigarettes—the kind you buy from the gas station—are going the way of the dodo bird."

Péroquin has had just a few instances of vaping at his school. In one case, a group of students stole an e-cigarette from a gas station. So the discipline and suspension were more for the theft than for vaping. In another case a student was vaping in the cafeteria.

"In each case we confiscated the items,

contacted the parents, and even asked if they wanted to come and collect the e-cigarettes," says Péroquin.

Principal Michelle Jean-Paul was previously at a high school in Seven Oaks and still keeps in touch with some students there.

"They tell me it's mostly students who are already smoking who have tried vaping, and some of them don't show any interest at all in it."

Jordan Vedoya, Owner of Fat Panda Vape Shop, knows vaping can be attractive to kids.

"Cigarette smoking among youth has been around forever. Vapes appeal to kids because they provide sinful pleasure without real sin. It's a simulated bad thing.

"But in order to keep our souls clean, we have to proactively adhere to standards," he says emphatically. "We only sell to customers 18 and up. We post that on the door and we check. And we never ever sell our products as smoking cessation devices."

Vedoya's two stores both feature comfortable vaping lounges, but there's no thick stench of tobacco smoke here, only the faint sweet smell of vaped e-juice and an atmosphere reminiscent of a small ultra-clean electronics boutique or Apple Store.

"I'm not going to hide from the truth that people who haven't been smoking before might want to try these, that's always a

OVAPS

possibility,” says Vedoya, who is articulate and straight up about vapes.

“You could definitely get addicted as you could with TV, shopping, or Starbucks. I’m selling an addictive product. Nothing in this store is being sold as a harmless product, but they’re less harmful than something else.”

The question of where vaping might fit into school smoking policies is clear for Vedoya.

“Personally, they should respect all the rules that smoking entails.”

Last May, several B.C. school districts banned e-cigarettes by including them in their smoke-free policies. That same month, two Edmonton school boards banned e-cig devices over concerns some students were using them to smoke pot.

The “healthier” reputation of e-cigs is raising many questions. Will the devices outsell traditional cigarettes within a decade as experts predict? Will the optics of e-cigs normalize smoking again? Will they eventually lead to TV ads for e-cigarettes as they have stateside?

And just how will vaping impact other laws? If you can’t smoke with children in your car, can you vape? Moreover, how exactly will e-cigarettes be regulated?

Health Canada has not chosen to regulate e-cigarettes. Back in 2009, it issued a statement that vaping devices need to be approved and maybe even licensed for sale. It added that anyone selling them should “stop doing so immediately.”

More recently, it added, “To date there is not sufficient evidence that the potential benefits of e-cigarettes in helping Canadians to quit smoking outweigh the potential risks” and “Without scientific evidence, Health Canada continues to advise Canadians against the use of these products.”

A \$133,000 study has been commissioned by Health Canada to study retail sales of “electronic cigarettes and non-pharmaceutical nicotine replacement therapy products.” The contract runs from 2014–2015, but no legislation is currently in the works, so the products still exist in a kind of legal grey market.

In the meantime, vaping is poised to become even more popular among youth. A casual search on YouTube, Instagram or Twitter will pull up any number of videos from “extreme vaping tricks” to “power vaping” to a slew of vaping video selfies.

Ultimately, many people fear vaping will be the gateway to turning teens

onto tobacco. Hugh Marcus, owner of Winnipeg E-vapes, disagrees. Marcus, who also will not sell to minors, says he can’t see switching from e-cigs to tobacco as a valid concern.

“Vapes have great taste,” he says. “Nobody says that when they take their first drag of a regular cigarette.”



A 2012 study of almost 1,200 Canadian youth and young adults found that awareness of e-cigarettes was “quite high” and nearly a fifth of those surveyed had tried them.

BY MATEA TUHTAR

When they're not focusing on the three R's in school, over 3,000 young people in Manitoba are working on their 4-H's—Head, Heart, Hands and Health. Chances are if you grew up in rural Manitoba you're familiar with the 4-H Club.

The organization just finished up a year of celebrations in honour of the 100th birthday of its first Canadian club, formed in 1913 in Roland, Manitoba. This makes 4-H one of Canada's longest running youth organizations.

"If you look at the club over the last hundred years, its main principles remain the same," says Clayton Robins, executive director of the not-for-profit Manitoba 4-H Council. "Not a lot has changed, and that's really a testament to how successful it is."

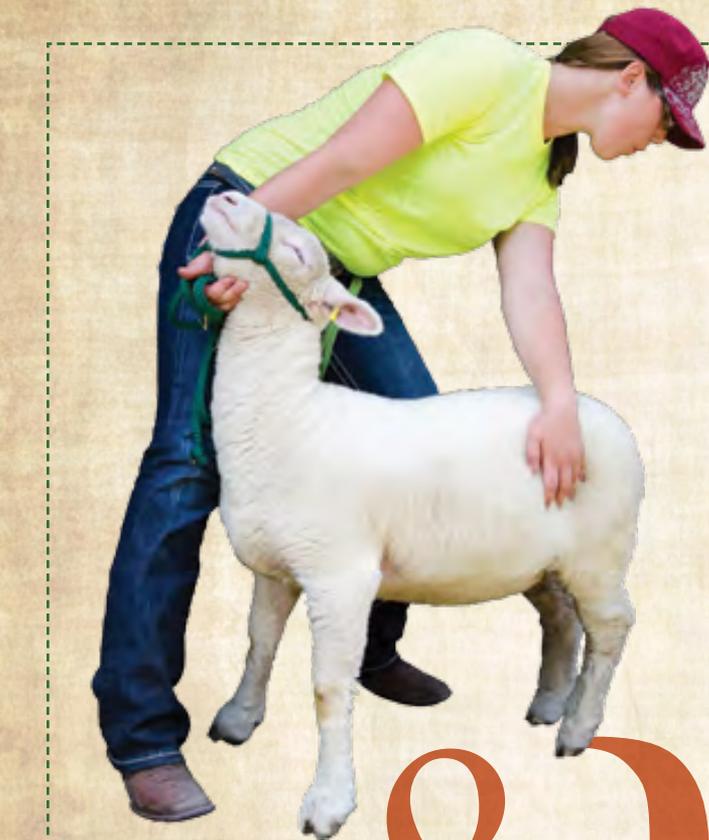
The council works in partnership with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) and Robins says that 4-H is really a part of Manitoba's history. He is working to make it a part of Manitoba's future as well.

Manitoba has 160 clubs spanning the province, including Beef, Equine and Variety Clubs, but if cattle and horses are what you think of when you think '4-H', Robins says there is now a lot more to it than that.

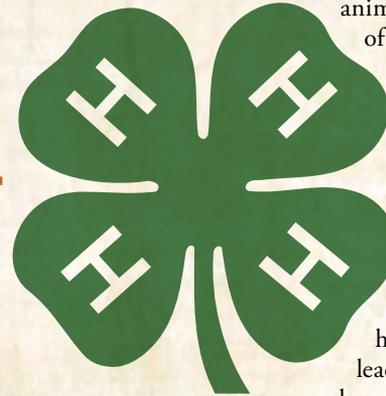
"That's really an old image. Only about 50–60 per cent of 4-H projects are agriculture based," he says. "You don't need to own animals or live on a farm to be part of 4-H, there's so much more you can do."

4-H clubs are open to youth aged 6–25 who also fill the executive roles such as president, vice-president and treasurer. Projects range from technology, fibers and fabrics, woodworking and foods, to showing and handling animals. Each club has leaders that help with the projects who are often previous 4-H members and community members.

"4-H is all about mentoring—the kids really listen to other youth. Our kids become natural leaders in the program, they don't even know that they're doing it, it just evolves naturally. The club



3R's & 4H's





offers so much—our emphasis is on life skills—they learn soft skills, hard skills and make friends and connections for life.”

Some even learn life lessons—after showing their cattle at 4-H shows, the kids auction the animals they’ve raised to the highest bidders who usually pay well above market price for the meat. “Usually there are a few tears when they’re eight or nine and that first 4-H calf is sold,” Robins says. “But the kids can fund their entire university education by raising a few calves.”

4-H Club offers the chance for kids to compete on the regional, provincial and national level, and also provides chances for travel across the world. For Manitoba youth it’s great to come together for fairs, competitions and local activities and connect with communities they might not otherwise get to visit.

“Currently we don’t have any clubs in the city of Winnipeg,” says Robins. “But there’s a few just outside of city limits that youth can join. We’d love to expand into the city and reach more kids.”

The club also offers a number of scholarships and 4-H members can use some of their projects towards a S.I.P. (Student Initiated Project) credit in high school.

“Being involved in 4-H really looks good on students’ resumes and portfolios. It speaks highly of the individual if they’ve been involved in 4-H, particularly in leadership roles. It really helps them in their education, and eventual careers.”

Sheila Stark-Perreault, a human ecology teacher at East Selkirk Middle School, sees first-hand how 4-H contributes to students’ learning. A former 4-H Manitoba ambassador, Stark thought it would be a great idea to start a 4-H club at East Selkirk—the only school-based club in the province.

After getting her principal’s support, she surveyed students, found a lot of interest and now the school club is four years old. It runs during a typical school year, usually holding meetings over lunch or after class.

“We’ve had a great response from kids and parents,” says Stark-Perreault, who enlists the help of fellow teachers to

build confidence that transfers to all aspects of life.” Several kids have also gone on to attend and win public speaking competitions, one of the popular projects at East Selkirk.

Stark holds an achievement night in June to showcase student projects to parents and friends. The club also tries to get involved in community events, recently holding a pancake breakfast at Selkirk’s Waterfront Market.

“The skills they learn in 4-H really translate to the classroom,” says Stark-Perreault. “There are a lot of projects that can easily be incorporated into the curriculum. I know from personal experience how much 4-H has done for me. I think if teachers are interested and get support from admin, it can be a great experience.”

For more information on 4-H Manitoba visit www.4h.mb.ca. View a slideshow of pictures from a Manitoba 4-H show on our free Manitoba Teacher Magazine app. Visit iTunes or Google Play Store and search for “Manitoba Teacher Magazine”.



When they’re not focusing on the three R’s in school, over 3,000 young people in Manitoba are working on their 4-H’s—

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TRAF'S unknown option

BY MATEA TUHTAR

While public school teachers keep track of contributions to their pension plan, there is another savings option offered by the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund that few teachers even know about.

Indeed, fewer than 10 teachers have used the pension plan to create a separate account through use of what is called Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs).

But it's an option TRAF wants teachers to know about.

"AVCs are over and above your TRAF pension," says Brenda Venuto, Vice-President of Member Services at TRAF. "They get the same rate of return as TRAF but it's a separate retirement savings account. The money is withdrawn from your payroll, just like your TRAF pension contribution."

AVCs are tax deductible and making an AVC this year will reduce your allowable RRSP contribution room next year by the same amount. The balance in your AVC account can be:

- Converted to an annuity at retirement (not eligible for COLA) which supplements your TRAF pension;
- Used to purchase eligible service such as buying back your pension during educational leaves, or substitute service;
- Withdrawn as cash or transferred to your RRSP any time before you retire.

Once a teacher retires, AVCs can be converted to an additional monthly benefit or taken out as a lump sum.

Some of the advantages of AVCs include the convenience of a payroll deduction through your school division, taking advantage of TRAF's comprehensive investment program and low admin costs, and increasing your retirement income on a tax-effective basis.

The disadvantages of AVCs as compared to RRSPs are that ACVs follow TRAF's investment strategy which focuses on



Brenda Venuto, Vice-President of Member Services at TRAF

long-term funding objectives, and may not match your investment objectives or risk-tolerance.

As well RRSP investments can be tailored to meet your personal financial goals, and the contributions can be used for such programs as the Home Buyers Plan, and Lifelong Learning Plan.

"Investing is really a personal choice and AVCs are an option we'd like teachers to know about. We recommend that everyone seeks advice from a financial planner when making investment decisions," says Venuto.

To find out more about AVCs and apply online visit www.traf.mb.ca.

project overseas

A Gift to the Globe

Project Overseas is accepting applications from Manitoba educators wanting to assist colleagues in developing countries in the summer of 2015.

Application deadline: Thursday, October 30, 2014.

This year, MTS, in conjunction with The Canadian Teachers' Federation, will be sponsoring five teachers.

Criteria include membership in MTS, an appropriate teacher's certificate, five years' teaching experience in Canada, Canadian citizenship and excellent health.

For more information and application forms, contact Nancy Kerr at:

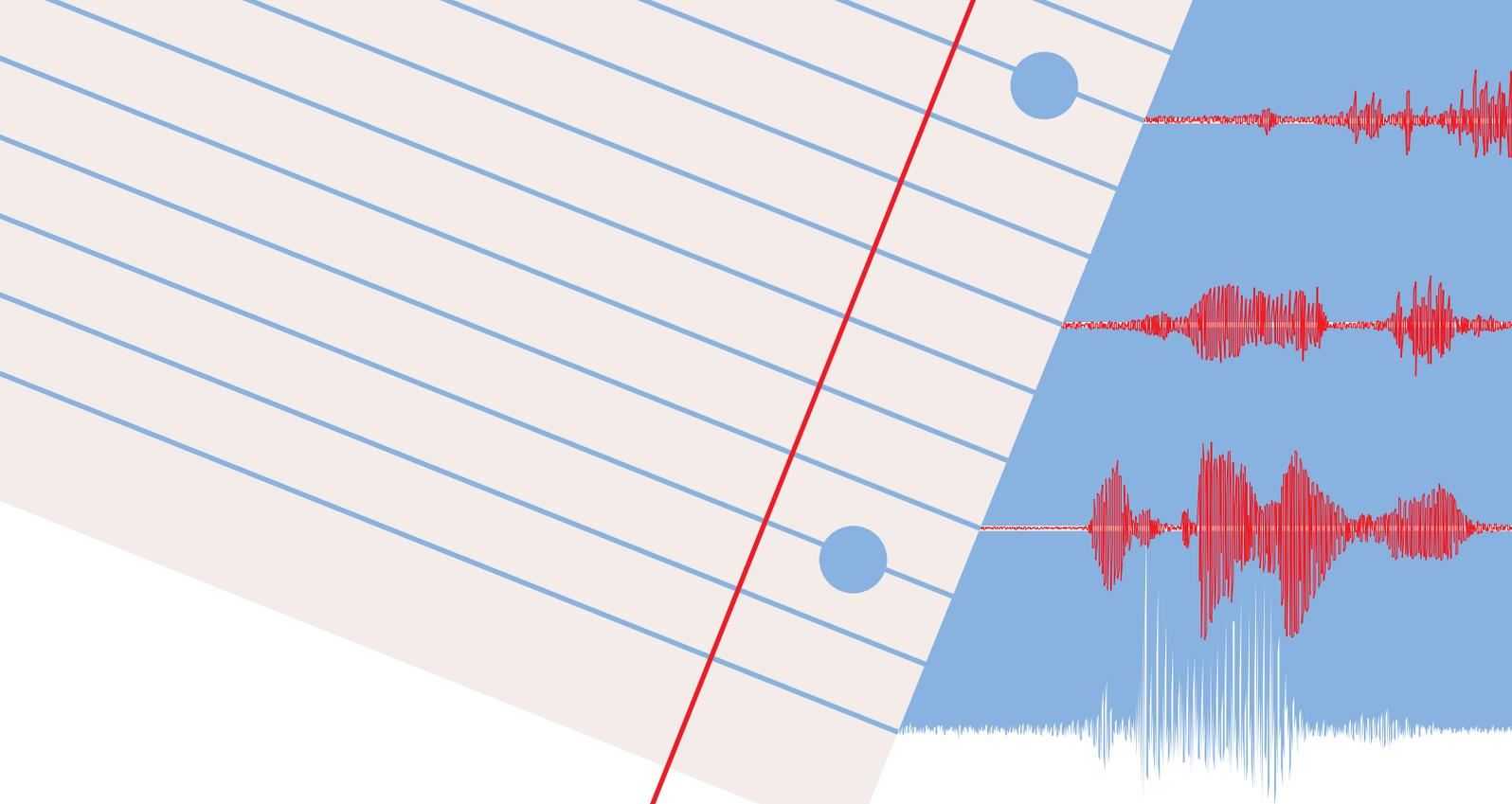
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ACCENT

THERE ARE UNFORTUNATELY ACCENTS THAT ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ACCEPTABLE AND EVEN PRIVILEGED, AND THERE ARE ACCENTS THAT ARE CONSIDERED TO BE UNDERPRIVILEGED.

Children often acquire attitudes towards accents long before they don their backpacks for the first day of school.

But teachers can ensure language diversity is incorporated into education to help steer students away from discrimination and prejudice.

Sandie Kouritzin, a University of Manitoba professor who specializes in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), has pondered the issue at length from both a personal and professional perspective.

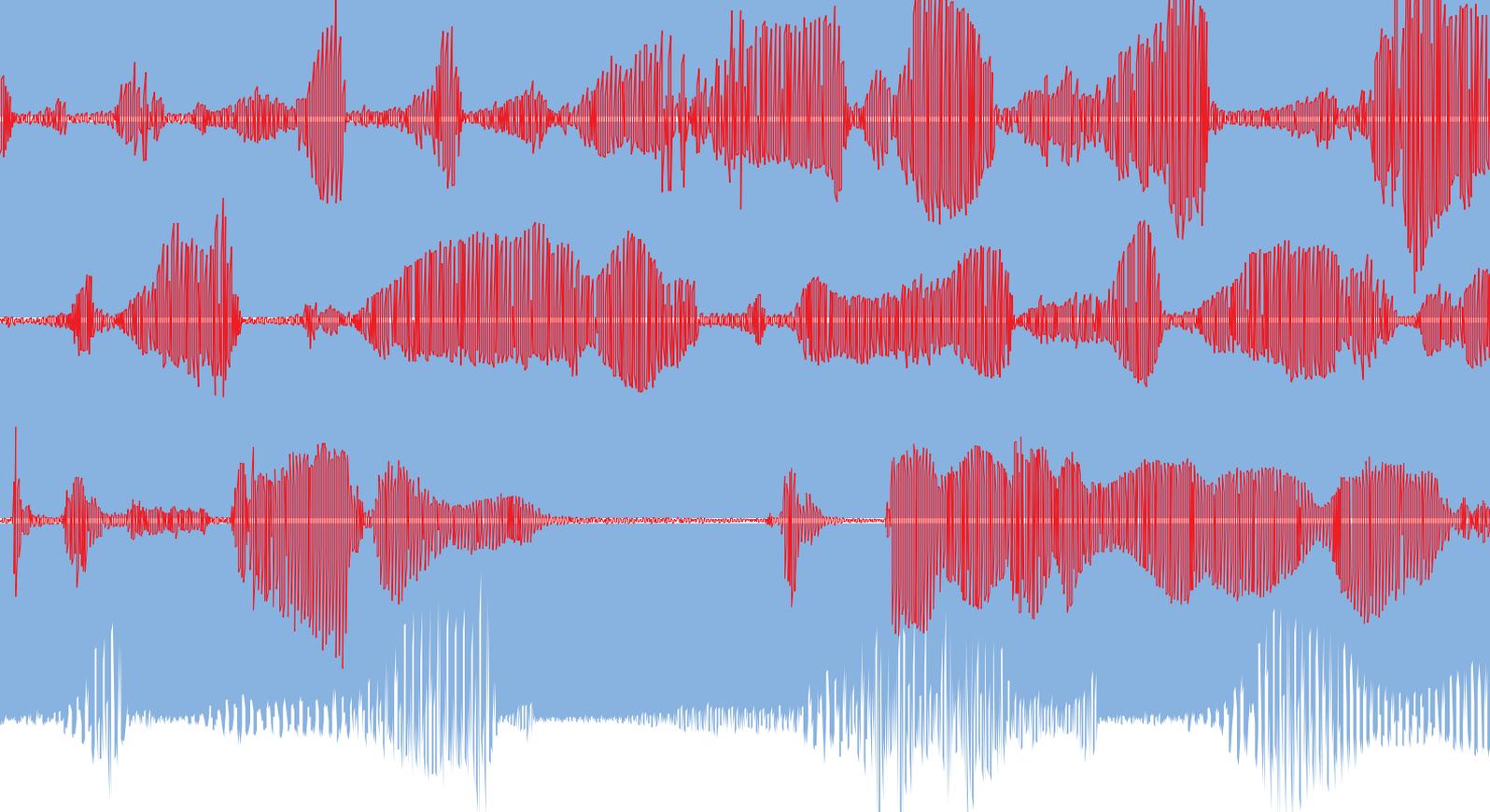
“I am a mother as well as a TESL instructor, and my entire family apart from me speaks English as a second language. My husband is an indigenous person from

Japan, and my children started school speaking Japanese and only Japanese,” says Kouritzin, who is also the president of TESL Canada.

“What I found is that children have internalized the attitudes that they see in society at large. If their parents are intolerant of certain accents or certain languages, then they will develop that intolerance as well. And if teachers accidentally show an intolerance, children will also pick that up.”

Along with Professor Nathalie Piquemal, Kouritzin has researched the subject extensively.

“We found that there isn’t a very healthy attitude towards second language acquisition



ACCEPTANCE

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

in the general public in Manitoba. Although people might admire bilinguals, they tend to define bilingual as meaning French-English as opposed to speaking another language. There are unfortunately accents that are considered to be acceptable and even privileged, and there are accents that are considered to be underprivileged,” she says.

“To my very greatest distress, often those kinds of beliefs are then visited on people in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which does not guarantee no discrimination on the basis of language. Consequently, in my opinion, a lot of racism is enacted in the guise of discrimination against people for their language differences.”

Children pick up on what they see in their environment, she adds, which can lead to internalization of language prejudice.

“It’s shaky ground. I’m basing this on research that Dr. Piquemal and I engaged

in, as well as in student perceptions. It’s no mystery that if somebody has an accent that indicates they are from several European nations, like a French accent or a British accent, those individuals are seen to have an educated standard. We have this kind of innate gravitation towards them,” she says.

“Then at the other end of the spectrum, you have accents from China or from Japan or perhaps India. It is completely acceptable to mock those accents in comedy routines and then to make light of people’s credentials when they come from those backgrounds.”

While some attitudes are learned, other reactions might be innate, she notes.

“We fear difference. For example, at the age of about eight months, my son met one of my colleagues for the first time. She’s from Sierra Leone. Every time he saw her, he burst into tears and he’d hide his face in my collarbone. We laughed about it, but he was fearful. It was clear it wasn’t familiar

to him,” she says.

“I had the same experience in Japan and in China. I would go places and people would stare or they would be fearful because they didn’t know who I was. I think that there might be part of us that is biologically programmed to be scared of difference, and we have to learn otherwise.”

So how can teachers educate their students to become accepting rather than fearful?

“That is the question for the ages. That’s every teacher’s dream. We all become teachers because we think we can change the world, and we really believe that we can by creating inclusive environments in our classrooms and by being open, by challenging stereotypes,” Kouritzin says.

“But it’s a scary thing to do because, first of all, you have to step outside of that comfort zone yourself. You can’t expect kids to challenge cultural stereotypes if you’re not willing to be open and honest with yourself.”

WE HAVE TO HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF POSITIVITY TOWARDS LANGUAGES AND CULTURES OURSELVES, AND WE HAVE TO MODEL THAT IN OUR FACULTIES OF EDUCATION, IN OUR UNIVERSITIES—EVERYWHERE

In order to teach tolerance to others, teachers must first reflect on their own assumptions.

“If you can’t recognize that some of the things that you believe are possibly invalid and if you can’t try to see other people’s world views, then you don’t really stand a chance of being able to teach that to kids,” Kouritzin says.

“So you have to start with yourself and you have to question your own tolerances. You have to understand where your assumptions come from. You have to question everything, like the photographs in the books that you read with kids, the words that they use, the connotations of the language you’re using.”

When students come from different cultural backgrounds, communication differences might extend beyond words, she adds.

“In my husband’s culture, you’re supposed to look at the ground when you’re ashamed and not answer questions. In my culture, you’re supposed to look them in the eye and explain your actions and apologize,” Kouritzin says.

“So I think it’s not only incumbent upon teachers to step out of their comfort zone but also to learn as much as they can about the backgrounds of every single kid in their classroom.”

For Anna Kelly, head assessor at Winnipeg English Language and Referral Centre, different accents are something she encounters every day as she assesses the languages skills of newcomers.

“I think it would be wonderful if teachers addressed accent differences to counteract stereotypes. I think language differences should be promoted because there is no right way of pronouncing things. Yes, you could study the dictionary and study pronunciation, but there aren’t two people who will pronounce every word in the exact same way. When those differences

are more striking, I think that leads to some trouble,” Kelly says.

“I am not a native speaker of English. My first language is Polish, and my son does not want to speak my language. The thing is, accents will always exist. I have an accent. You have an accent. Everybody has an accent. It’s just what the ears are used to hearing.”

The issue of language prejudice can include dialects as well, she notes.

“Dialects are another thing that can cause a lot of prejudice and judgment of people on how they speak,” Kelly says.

“I think pronunciation is noticed immediately, but then the vocabulary they use differentiates between people with a lot of education and people with not a lot of education. That might be potentially damaging to some people.”

To combat this type of prejudice, it’s important to expose kids to different types of accents and dialects, she adds.

“If kids listen to different accents, I think that would make them used to hearing different things. If you grow up in a completely white neighbourhood, you notice any deviation from that. But if you grow up with Chinese kids and African kids and any other races, you get used to it and you don’t even pay attention to it,” she says.

“In my son’s school, they have children who are from other countries. My son’s friend was asked by another boy for a play date. He begged his mom, ‘Please don’t make me go for a play date. I like him but I just don’t understand what he’s saying to me.’ I think teachers need to make a lot of effort to get used to the accent and learn the accent and show the other kids that they understand it.”

Like Kelly, Kouritzin offers some suggestions on how to foster tolerance in the classroom.

“There are so many tools. There are

excellent things that teachers are doing now. For example, when you walk through the doorway of King Edward Community School, you see the greetings in many, many languages. People know that this is a safe and inclusive place. Teachers are so imaginative. There are so many things they can do. They can have open and frank conversations about racism,” she says.

“There are also other practices that I think are linguistically prejudicial, such as home reading. What are you doing to kids who don’t speak English when you send home reading in English? They become further and further disadvantaged because their parents are trying to protect the language at home and they don’t have anybody to read with. It can also reinforce poor pronunciation.”

In addition, Kouritzin stresses the importance of hiring teachers who are non-native English speakers.

“We need to have the infrastructure in place to make sure that a high percentage of immigrants end up becoming part of our teaching force. Then it just becomes part of the culture,” she says.

“But when it comes down to it, we need to put supports in place for teachers. Teachers have a lot to do. They’re overwhelmed. There’s a limit to what you can do within one classroom, in my opinion, because it’s a systemic problem as opposed to any particular teacher’s problem.”

To facilitate a systemic shift, changes must first be made to underlying attitudes.

“The social suggestive norms have to be changed,” Kouritzin says.

“We have to have an attitude of positivity towards languages and cultures ourselves, and we have to model that in our faculties of education, in our universities—everywhere.”



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Left to right: Philippe Halsman. *Yes, but don't try to uncover my secret (Dali's Mustache)* (detail), 1954. © Philippe Halsman Archive.
Head in the style of the 'Dresden Zeus', 2nd century AD. © Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, photographer Johannes Laurentius

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Aboriginal studies in a box

BY LORETTE GEORGE

Students in northern Manitoba are getting hands-on experience in Aboriginal studies with the creation of special kits that can be moved from school to school.

The kits are designed to assist educators who may be teaching outside of their area of expertise and allow for more consistency of content.

The kits, which have replicas and resource materials that allow for hands-on learning, allow all students the opportunity to explore Aboriginal culture and identity in a positive light.

For example, among the artifacts are authentic scale models of birch bark canoes that would have been used by the Rocky Lake and Swampy Cree people. An accompanying video shows how birch bark canoes were traditionally made.

The creation of the kits has been more than three years in the making. In January, 2009, officials from the department of education met with staff of the Manitoba Museum to specifically discuss ideas for museum outreach to address the needs of students in the North.

From that, the number of participants expanded to include educators from Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN), Kelsey School Division (KSD), University College of the North (UCN), Flin Flon School Division (FFSD) and School District of Mystery Lake (SDML).

It was agreed that kits would be designed from authentic artifacts from northern Manitoba's indigenous population. The initial project, Braiding

Histories and a subsequent Phase II project called Bridging Generations were both funded by the Museums Assistance Program (MAP).

In a rare collaboration of artists, authors, students, teachers, Manitoba Museum staff, and representatives from KSD, UCN, FFSD, MLSD, OCN (Joe A. Ross School and Council of Elders) and most recently, Frontier School Division, Aboriginal kits, using Swampy Cree and Rocky Lake Cree artifact re-creations, were developed for use.

Bridging Generations, themed around water, was recently completed.

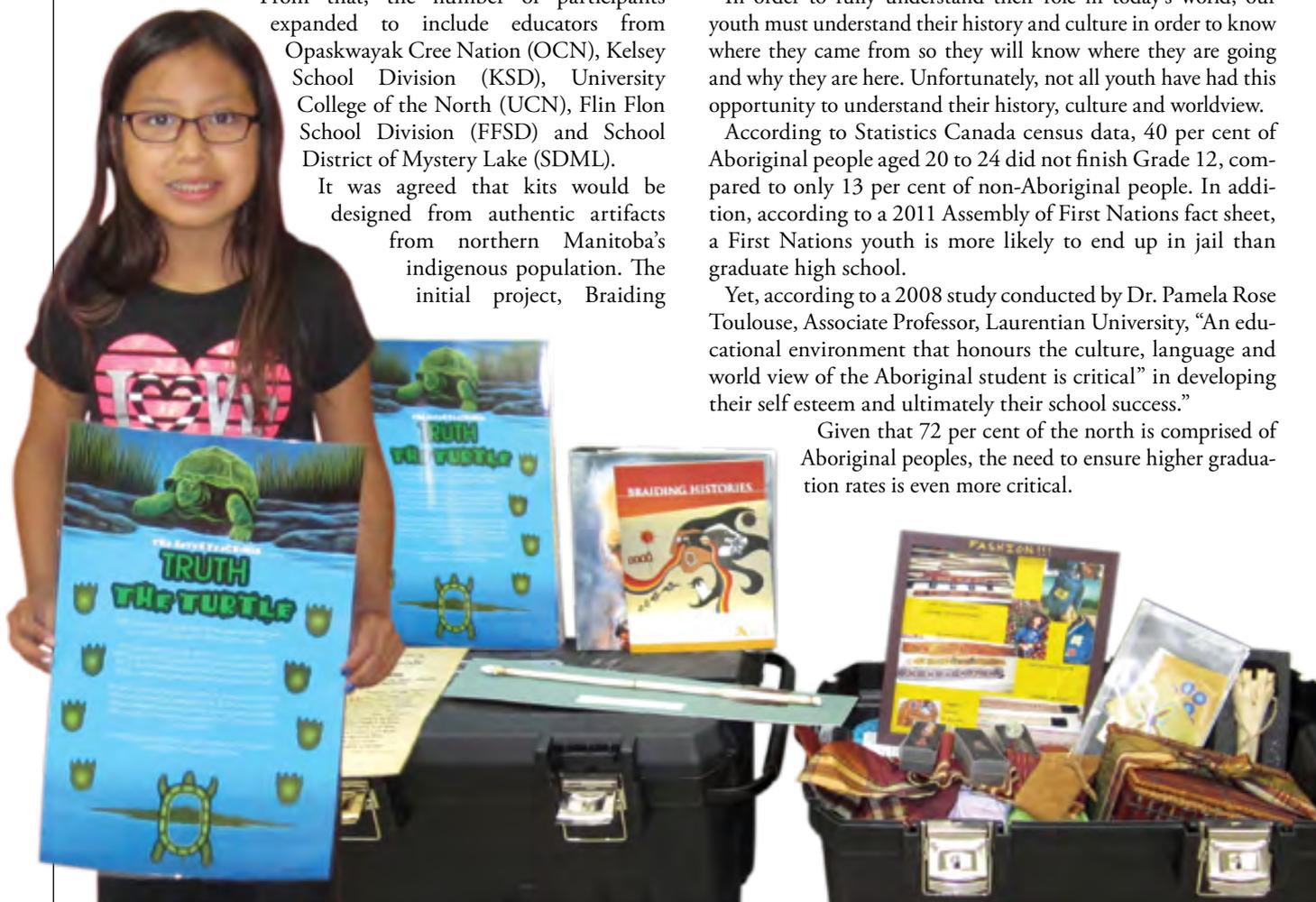
The belief is that these replicas of traditional artifacts will allow for hands on learning and will allow all students and in particular, Aboriginal students, the opportunity to explore their identities and cultures in a positive manner. Young Aboriginal students will have the opportunity to build on their strengths, maximize their individual potential and support their academic success.

In order to fully understand their role in today's world, our youth must understand their history and culture in order to know where they came from so they will know where they are going and why they are here. Unfortunately, not all youth have had this opportunity to understand their history, culture and worldview.

According to Statistics Canada census data, 40 per cent of Aboriginal people aged 20 to 24 did not finish Grade 12, compared to only 13 per cent of non-Aboriginal people. In addition, according to a 2011 Assembly of First Nations fact sheet, a First Nations youth is more likely to end up in jail than graduate high school.

Yet, according to a 2008 study conducted by Dr. Pamela Rose Toulouse, Associate Professor, Laurentian University, "An educational environment that honours the culture, language and world view of the Aboriginal student is critical" in developing their self esteem and ultimately their school success."

Given that 72 per cent of the north is comprised of Aboriginal peoples, the need to ensure higher graduation rates is even more critical.





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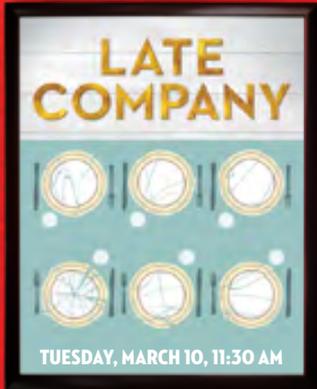
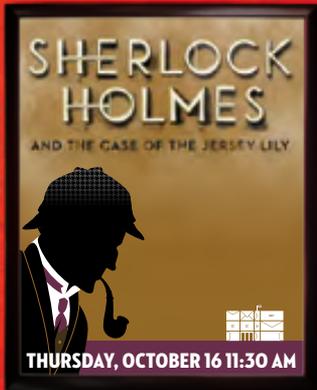
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Manitobans honoured by Federation

Two Manitoba educators have been recognized by the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Peter Wohlgemut, a former member of the MTS provincial executive and teacher in Altona, was given the Special Recognition Award at the July CTF annual meeting in Winnipeg.

Wohlgemut was at the centre of a controversy after posting a sign in his classroom that it was a safe space for LGBTTT students.

"Wohlgemut's dedication to his students and refusal to back away from controversial issues is deservedly recognized with this award," the CTF said.

Receiving the award for Outstanding Aboriginal Educator was Manitoban Mary Courchene, well known in the education community as a teacher, principal, counselor, dean of Aboriginal education and elder-in-residence.

Also at the CTF meeting, Norm Gould, vice-president of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, was elected as a vice-president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.



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PORTFOLIO

Inside sources, indeed

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd must have amazing sources—some animated.

In a column comparing Hillary Clinton to the Snow Queen in the cartoon movie *Frozen*, Dowd wrote:

"Those close to them think that the queen of Hillaryland and the Snow

Queen from Disney's *Frozen* have special magical powers, but worry about whether they can control those powers, show their humanity and stir real warmth in the public heart."

In other news, sources close to Buzz Lightyear claim that he can't actually fly.

Do people really talk like this?

The FBI's directorate of intelligence has developed a handbook for agents—obtained by the open records website MuckRock, translating 2,800 shorthand terms it says are being used on Twitter.

For example, it says EOTWAWKI means "end of the world as we know it." And TTIWWP, "this thread is worthless without pictures." And, for those going beyond LOL, there is TRDMC: "tears running down my cheeks."

While there are probably very few people who, despite their claims, laugh out loud while reading texts, seeing this list might come close.

Just the stupid vote

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

It's definitely not a message that has come from any union or labour group, but, hey, we should be thanking former Ontario Conservative Leader Tim Hudak.

Back at the beginning of the summer Hudak took a supreme butt-kicking from the voters of Ontario who returned the Liberals to power with a surprisingly-strong majority.

They left the Conservatives hanging onto a few crossroads and general stores in rural areas of the province.

Since then, Hudak has become the favoured piñata of every right-leaning, stick-swinging pundit and politician, as if he had tanked the election on purpose.

Those same pundits and politicians, however, said nary a discouraging word during the campaign when Hudak was proposing to cut 100,000 jobs from the Ontario public service, while somehow creating a million new jobs in the province overall. They didn't question a platform that reflected the strident right-wing views of the U.S. Tea Party. Hudak had even consulted people who work with the Tea Party.

The negative voices before and during the campaign were those of unions

and other labour-oriented groups who pointed out Hudak's extreme positions, including those he had put on hold, like eliminating mandatory union dues.

On Election Day, voters showed they had no intention of attending Hudak's Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

Even as the conservative geniuses at *The National Post* and *The Sun* chain cry a river, unions should thank Hudak for putting up a clear, alternative choice in the election.

It showed, without ambiguity, that Canadians (and that would probably even include Albertans) are not prepared to adopt the far-right policies that have enthralled a wide swath of moneyed politicians in the United States.

If Ontarians wanted extreme austerity, the destruction of unions and collective bargaining rights, well, they had their chance. They didn't take it.

It would be too much to expect that the long knives that have been out for unions, environmentalists and social activists be sheathed and we return to a more centrist discourse in this country. No, the rightist columnists are still defending the policies Hudak professed. In fact, their pearl-clutching meltdowns can be summed up with: voters are dolts. Stupid, dumbly, dumb-headed democracy, anyway.

- *The National Post* columnist Kelly McParland: "The last thing anyone is going to do is trust Ontario voters with the truth again."
- *The Sun* columnist Christina Blizzard: "Voters in this province not only gave the nod to bad behaviour—they rewarded it."

On Election Day, voters showed they had no intention of attending Hudak's Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

A study published this summer in *Child Development* says kids who act cool in school pretty much fall apart after they leave.

Researchers at the University of Virginia followed 184 students from age 13 to 23. They discovered that the kids who acted cool were more likely than the nerds to have problems with drugs and alcohol as they grew older. As well, they had more trouble managing friendships later on. They viewed cools as kids who exhibited "pseudo-mature

behaviours" that seem to boost popularity such as "displays of romantic behavior (like kissing or touching), deviant acts (like damaging their parent's property or sneaking into a movie theater without a ticket), or by associating themselves with more physically attractive friends."

The researchers said kids who had behaviours that impressed their friends in their teens continued the extreme behaviours later on. Their friends weren't as impressed as they matured.

Best Headline:

Climate Disdainers Canada and Australia Form 'Axis of Weasels'

theyee.ca about an article by Ian Gill on Canada and Australia's close relationship on avoiding action on climate change.

ers to blame

• *The Sun's* Sue-Ann Levy: "We're closer to Greece or Detroit than the witless in this city ever want to think."

• *The National Post's* Robyn Urbach: "Liberals shouldn't mistake their majority with voter support for their mandate."

Yes, those stupid, witless ignoramuses. Who let them have the vote?

Breathtaking analysis. Similar to that from Montgomery Burns after losing an election on *The Simpsons*: "Ironic, isn't it, Smithers? This anonymous clan of slack-jawed troglodytes has cost me the election, and yet if I were to have them killed, I would be the one to go to jail. That's democracy for you."

Yes, it would be too much to ask that any of these cartoon characters actually ponder whether Canadian voters simply do not want, nor trust, public policy imported from Arkansas.

After the last presidential election in the U.S., many supporters of Mitt Romney complained that he wasn't conservative enough, that he didn't promote far-right policies and give voters a clear choice. Well, that can't be said here. There was a choice, voters made it.

The only downside, of course, is that the conservative politicians who are out where the buses don't run will now probably try to hide their true intentions. We'll have to leave it up to the reporters and pundits to ask the tough questions and discern exactly what candidates intend to do when they get into office.

We can only hope they uncover a few more brain cells than were shown in the wake of the Ontario election.



Pop Quiz:
WHO SAID IT?



2014'S PRIME MINISTER
STEPHEN HARPER?

or

1950'S U.S. SENATOR
JOE MCCARTHY?

- 1 Communism's poisonous ideology and ruthless practice slowly bled into countries all around the world.
- 2 Evil comes in many forms and seems to reinvent itself time and again. But whatever it calls itself—Nazism, Marxist-Leninism—they all have one thing in common: the destruction, the end, of human liberty.
- 3 Karl Marx, for example, expelled people from his Communist Party for mentioning such things as love, justice, humanity or morality. He called this 'soulful ravings' and 'sloppy sentimentality'.
- 4 We allowed Communism to spread its dark shadow over half of Europe, and almost all of Asia.
- 5 It threatens the stability and security of the world.
- 6 We know that the major aim of communism is to enslave America.
- 7 A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men.
- 8 More than one hundred million souls were lost (to communists), an almost incomprehensible number.
- 9 Its great evils snuffed out the lights and the lives of freedom, democracy and justice.
- 10 To the end that we shall be contained, frustrated and finally fall victim from within and Russian military might from without.

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

Smart YouTubing

Most of us have sat through marathon sessions of inspiring TED talks hoping to glean useful facts to feed our appetites for learning and novelty. But there's so much more smart stuff on YouTube to recommend. Among the truly engaging channels for you and your students, I would start with these.

- Vsauce, "What if the Earth Stopped Spinning?" and "Why Don't We All Have Cancer?"
- Vi Hart, "Math Improv: Fruit by the Foot" and "Doodling in Math: Sick Number Games"
- CGP Grey, "Canada and the United States: Bizarre Borders Part 2" and "The Difference Between the United Kingdom, Great Britain and England Explained"
- Vlogbrothers, "Why are American Health Care Costs So High?" and "Stop Embarrassing Yourself"
- Thebrainscoop, "What the Function?" and "Domestication"
- Mental Floss, "38 Common Spelling and Grammar Errors" and "48 Names for Things You didn't Know Had Names"

Go green for poco dinero

Green Screen—For this geek, the most jaw-dropping session at Ed Camp Winnipeg this summer was Reg Reimer's presentation on using green screens for video production. Reimer, an IT in Learning consultant for Brandon School Division, set up a green screen studio with two lights and umbrellas, background stands, and copious amounts of green fabric. After explaining he bought all the equipment in one kit for \$150 on Amazon, we were totally invested (the lights alone are worth more). Reimer invited anyone with an iPad to snap it onto the tripod so he could shoot a short video of us that we could import into an app called Green Screen. When I got home, I fired up that app and swapped the green background for a picture of a sunset I shot from a train bridge in Headingley. The effect worked flawlessly, and it's the kind of thing any classroom from early years up could manage. Imagine setting your student-read school announcements in exotic geographic locales, or creating instructional videos with still or video images playing behind you. Thank you, Reg!

Trick yourself into fitness

Fitbit Flex—The Flex is a coloured wristband pedometer that records information and sends it via bluetooth to your smartphone. I bought a black one for \$100 in July and I'm surprised at how well it keeps track of my steps, kilometres walked, active minutes—even my sleep patterns. I've always found walking rather boring, but keeping track of the numbers in real time and feeling the wrist band vibrate when I reach my goal is enough to trick me into caring about walking my

40 minutes a day. Tips: Don't get the green flex band—reviews say it gets dirty too easily and is hard to clean. Also check out the Nike Fuel, similar idea but with a digital display.

Get your Moju working

Moju—I learned about Moju from an American teacher demonstrating Google Glass at Ed Camp Winnipeg. This cool iPhone app turns a burst of 22 pictures into a sort of moving holograph or 3D image you view by rotating your phone left to right and back again. The app looks and operates very much like Instagram and is equally simple to operate. Just hit the in-app camera icon, hold for burst mode or take individual stop-motion pics, apply a filter, and upload to your profile. My first two Mojus were of a walk along Sturgeon Creek at Woodhaven Park and a foot-high, fly-over of apples, plums and pears at Paul's Fresh Fruit—which Moju's editors tagged with "beautiful" and "delish". There's a lot of creativity in this fledgling community and with the recent addition of searchable hashtags, I can see that base growing.

Sift your unruly Twitter feed

Wouldn't you love to click one button and see only the tweets from colleagues you follow in your school, or what the media are tweeting about right now, or the latest advice from your fitness gurus? What if you were just one click away from seeing the freshest tweets from your softball, interior decorating or curling tweeps? You can sift your tweets by using Twitter lists, one of the platform's most underappreciated features. Set up a list for any group of individuals you follow—educators, musicians, labour groups, sports teams, researchers, motivational speakers. I have lists for technology, U.S. Politics, two artists I follow, and participants at the crazy good MBlog conference I attended. I also follow the Society's great big list of almost 900 Manitoba Educators. Just Google "Using Twitter Lists" for a detailed explanation.

Questions, comments? rjob@mbteach.org





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For dates, times and information on how to register to attend an Educators' Open House, visit humanrights.ca

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