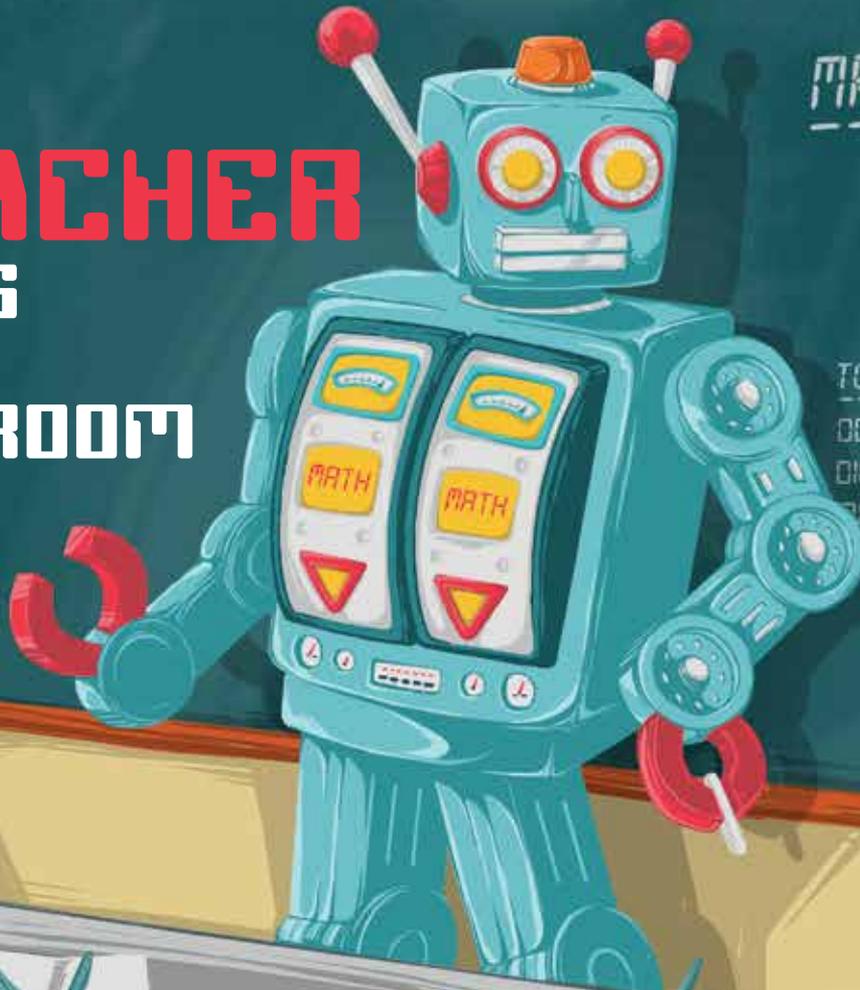


THE MANITOBA

Teacher

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2017 VOLUME 96 NUMBER 2 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

I, TEACHER ROBOTS IN THE CLASSROOM



MR. ROBOTO

TODAY'S MATH LESSON

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Teacher

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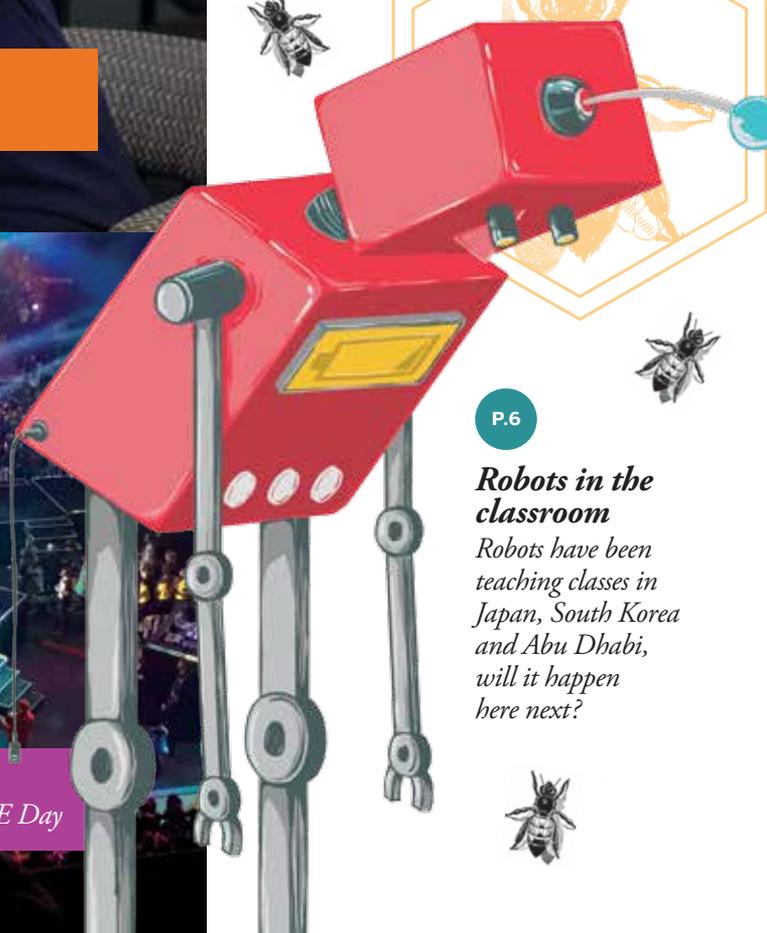


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FROM THE PRESIDENT

NORM GOULD

Back in May, 2016, the Manitoba government began its sky-is-falling campaign with the dark announcement that the province was facing a \$1 billion deficit.

The narrative caught on with the media repeating the claim dozens and dozens of times over the next year.

It created the foundation on which the government introduced draconian legislation to freeze and limit public service salary increases over four years. It was the justification for other measures such as cutting grants and laying off public servants.

It was, in the premier's words, time to get "all hands on deck" lest we all go down with the ship of state.

Now, however, it appears there was no billion dollar typhoon. There was just a big, scary number that existed only in the government's mind. The Freddy Krueger of public finance. Something to frighten young children and terrify voters.

The province's recent release of the 2016-17 public accounts pegged the deficit at \$764 million, \$147 million less than this government forecast last spring. Certainly it's still a big number, but doesn't carry the shock value of a billion.

The numbers show that this was not the result of the flurry of spending cuts, but of increased revenues. That result raises even more questions about the cuts being imposed on Manitobans in general and on public employees, such as teachers, specifically.

Legislation, yet to be enacted, to bypass collective bargaining by imposing a freeze and cap on wages is now a solution in search of a problem. Unless, of course, the problem is not the deficit, but the need to find some \$300 million to fulfill Premier Brian Pallister's promise to reduce the provincial sales tax by a percentage point.

Looking ahead, the government has projected a deficit of \$840 million, but there is little reason to think that number is any more accurate than the last one.

There are a number of economic factors at play that would suggest the deficit will not be as high as the most recent projection. Despite what the politicians say, the province's own publications underscore the fact the financial situation is not as dire as advertised.

Wages are rising in Manitoba, unemployment is down, manufacturing, wholesale and retail industries are strengthening, suggesting revenue forecasts could again be wrong.

The wild card is still the revenue that would be lost if the government cuts the PST, something the premier no doubt wants to do before the next election.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society, and its partners in labour have tried to persuade the government that it needn't undertake extreme austerity measures to balance the books. It can be achievable over a number of years, as the premier himself once said.

We will continue to press that point even though the government so far has been reluctant to listen. On the other hand, the recent numbers speak for themselves. The sky is not falling, but the deficit is.

For a deeper look at the provincial numbers see our handy guide on page 15.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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INSIDE MTS

MTS SHOWING COLLECTIVE SUPPORT DURING STRIKE

BOBBI TAILLEFER, GENERAL SECRETARY

Happy fall to all! Yes, fall – and I do ask myself how can it be fall has arrived so quickly? I wonder if you have the same experience I do – it's almost like a shot goes off at the end of August and we are in the race! School is busy, weekends are busy, yardwork needs to be done to prepare for winter and there are endless chores to do. Phew! But somehow, we manage to get back into the groove and magically it all becomes manageable again.

It has been a similar experience here at McMaster House. Since well before the start of school our building has been filled with members. Your colleagues have been attending professional development meetings and seminars. In some of these events, MTS has hosted colleagues from NLTA (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association) and the CTF (the Canadian Teachers' Federation). One of the most well attended events was our Collective Bargaining seminar as members are eager to start bargaining in the spring and are preparing to do so with vigor.

Speaking of the state of bargaining you may have noticed that The Manitoba Teachers' Society has been quite active in the support of workers who had been on strike at Richardson Airport. In September, President Norm Gould wrote a letter to the CEO of the Winnipeg Airports Authority asking that the two parties get back to the bargaining table and work out a fair deal for all. On Sept 16th the Provincial Executive and management staff joined the PSAC strikers in an information picket – spending a rainy afternoon with these fine folks. During the more than two hours spent in the cold and in the rain we got to know the personal stories and the work histories of these employees. Some of these people have spent over 30 years working for this employer and at no time did they anticipate that they would be treated this way.

In these times when employers – and governments – are seeking to correct fiscal imbalances on the backs of workers, it is important that we stand united as we will all have our turn to be asked, or told, to make concessions. Our collective support is needed to stem this tide of austerity which



has begun sweeping across the Manitoba landscape. That is why we stand with PSAC and why we offered them additional support by declaring that until negotiations resumed, we would not be using the Winnipeg airport for MTS business travel by staff or Provincial Executive. That meant we took extraordinary measures, flying from Regina, Saskatoon, Grand Forks and Fargo. It was not our preferred way – we are proud of our new and beautiful airport and we love to spend our money at local businesses – but we could not do this while the strike continued.

Fortunately, airport management heard the pleas of its workers and their supporters and returned to the bargaining table and worked out an agreement. For that we do thank the CEO, Barry Rempel.

It's unlikely this will be the last time MTS shows its support for those in other unions caught in such circumstances.

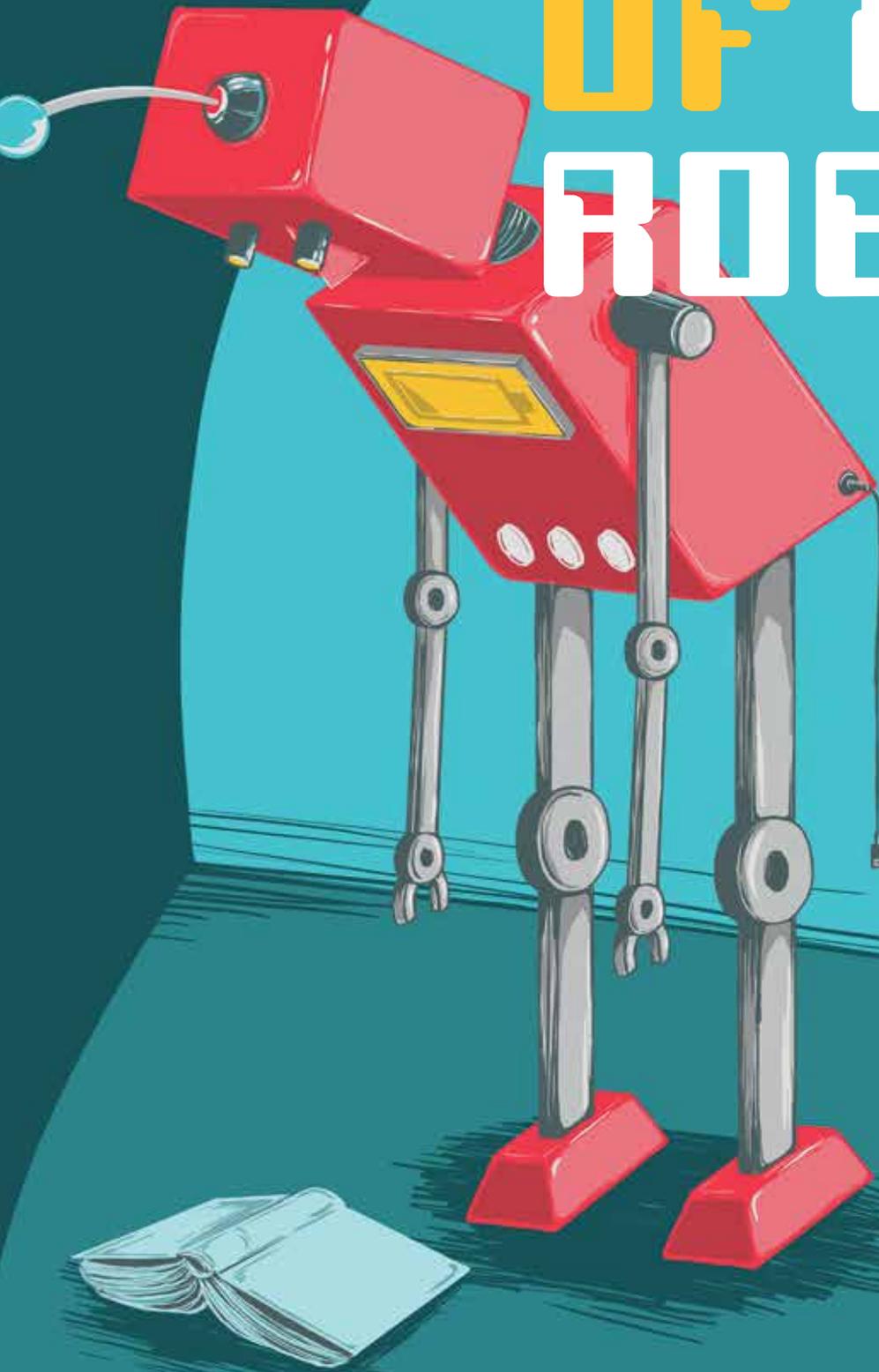
Remember, solidarity is like friendship – you need to be a friend before you need a friend.

Wishing you a wonderful fall and continued strong solidarity.

THE STEPFORD TEACHERS

RISE OF THE ROBOTS

STORY BY GEORGE STEPHENSON
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT KEHLER



Over the past five years students in some parts of the world have been greeted in their classrooms by teachers who appear to have come off the set of a George Lucas movie.

Robots have been teaching classes in Japan, South Korea and Abu Dhabi.

Throughout the world humans in various jobs are being replaced by robots at an ever-accelerating pace. The question for many people is whether their work will disappear with the rise of the machines.

Most think not.

Pollsters have found that while a vast majority of people think robots will take over many jobs, a vast majority also believe that their jobs will not be among them.

That would hold true for teaching where few educators believe that a robot, no matter how sophisticated or artificially intelligent, could replace a teacher.

South Korea, though, literally rolled out robots the size of young teens in 21 classrooms back in 2011 to teach English, a specialty for which it was having trouble recruiting human teachers.

A private school in Abu Dhabi announced in 2014 it was buying 30 robots to replace humans to teach basic math and special needs students.

"I have sourced out some of the best and most advanced robots including humanoids, quadrupeds, hexapods, flying robots and pet robots from all over the world," said the school's founder. "Our aim is to mould future scientists, designers, engineers and leaders."

Certainly a lofty goal for a battery-based learning system.

Whether that goal turns out to be fact or fantasy, the robot revolution is making inroads into numerous workplaces.

Last January a study by McKinsey & Company, a worldwide management consulting firm, concluded 30 per cent of tasks performed by 60 per cent of occupations could be done by computers and their more mobile form, robots.

A Merrill Lynch study predicted that 47 per cent of all jobs are at risk of replacement in the next 20 years. It mainly cited jobs in manufacturing and service industries.

In Canada, a report by the Brookfield Institute for Innovation and

Entrepreneurship at Toronto's Ryerson University, said 42 per cent of Canadian jobs are at high risk of being replaced by technology.

More jobs are at risk than others. Everyone knows that some telemarketing functions are now done by computers and others, at most risk, are those that are routine and repetitive. Teaching would not fall into that category.

The Merrill Lynch report concluded that robots would not be able to replicate jobs that involve creative thinking.

"As machines begin to eliminate the most menial tasks, people are left with

artificial intelligence software that allows robots to track motion and recognize speech.

Brian David Johnston, author of *21st Century Robot*, gave his assessment to IQ.intel.com of the potential of robots to replace teachers: "No. Never. Ever. Ever."

"Inherently, education is about people, but robots can be excellent extensions of parents and teachers at home and in the classroom."

He says robots can help human teachers in a number of ways. For example giving certain students more

SOUTH KOREA, THOUGH, LITERALLY ROLLED OUT ROBOTS THE SIZE OF YOUNG TEENS IN 21 CLASSROOMS BACK IN 2011 TO TEACH ENGLISH, A SPECIALTY FOR WHICH IT WAS HAVING TROUBLE RECRUITING HUMAN TEACHERS.

more time to deploy creative abilities, blurring the line between mind and machine," it says. "A major question is whether this will empower humans to go further than before or if people will just be pushed out."

Business Insider magazine quotes Ian Pearson, a fellow at the World Academy for Arts and Sciences, as believing certain human skills will protect some jobs from the robot overlords.

Teachers are among those few positions.

"You can't really say, 'because you have Google you don't need a teacher anymore because you can find everything you want on Google' – that teacher could be replaced notionally by a robot, but the robot couldn't really quite understand where the kid is coming from because they don't share the same human experience," Pearson says.

Still, computer scientists in labs across the globe are working to perfect robots that can interact with humans and teach at least basic skills.

They have so far developed complex

attention than the human is capable. And they can be better than other classroom technologies.

"Unlike computers or tablets, robots are social and can connect with children."

He says robots can function the same way other devices have been used in schools.

"All technology is a tool – just different types of hammers. Technology frees humans up to do what they are really good at."

Back in South Korea, even though there are robots in some classrooms, there are still human teachers behind the scenes.

The robots are connected through teleconferencing with human instructors, who are also needed to develop lessons that are pre-loaded into the robots.

At the moment most predictions suggest that robots will take on certain tasks of most jobs and that the roles of workers will be redefined.

Indeed, in a report on the rise of robotics, the Guardian newspaper

points out that in the past 60 years only one occupation has actually been eliminated by automation: elevator operator.

“In the past, reports of the death of human jobs have often been greatly exaggerated, and technology has created more jobs than it has wiped out,” it said. “It’s called the Luddite Fallacy, in reference to the 19th Century group of textile workers who smashed the new weaving machinery that made their skills redundant.”

It doesn’t mean, however, that many occupations will not face upheaval by the introduction of robots in the workplace both outside and within schools.

Gavin Newsome, former mayor of San Francisco and California lieutenant governor, has put the rise of robotics in one of the major planks in his campaign for governor.

“This is code red, a firehouse, a tsunami that’s coming our way,” he told *The Guardian*. “We’re going to get rolled over unless we get ahead of this.”

Newsome has seen the wave first hand with San Francisco being ground zero in the rise of the machines. Delivery robots can be seen tested on city sidewalks and there are coffee shops that have no human servers or cashiers. It is the test tube for tech and no idea seems too

outlandish. Just 10 years ago the idea of driverless cars was considered beyond the scope of androids and algorithms.

In teaching, as with other occupations, the financial aspects will play a role as some governments try to replace workers with full robots or computer software,

said in an interview with Quartz that there should be a robot tax.

“Right now if a human worker does \$50,000 worth of work in a factory that income is taxed. If a robot comes in to do the same thing, you’d think we’d tax the robot at a similar level.”

A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN ABU DHABI ANNOUNCED IN 2014 IT WAS BUYING 30 ROBOTS TO REPLACE HUMANS TO TEACH BASIC MATH AND SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS.

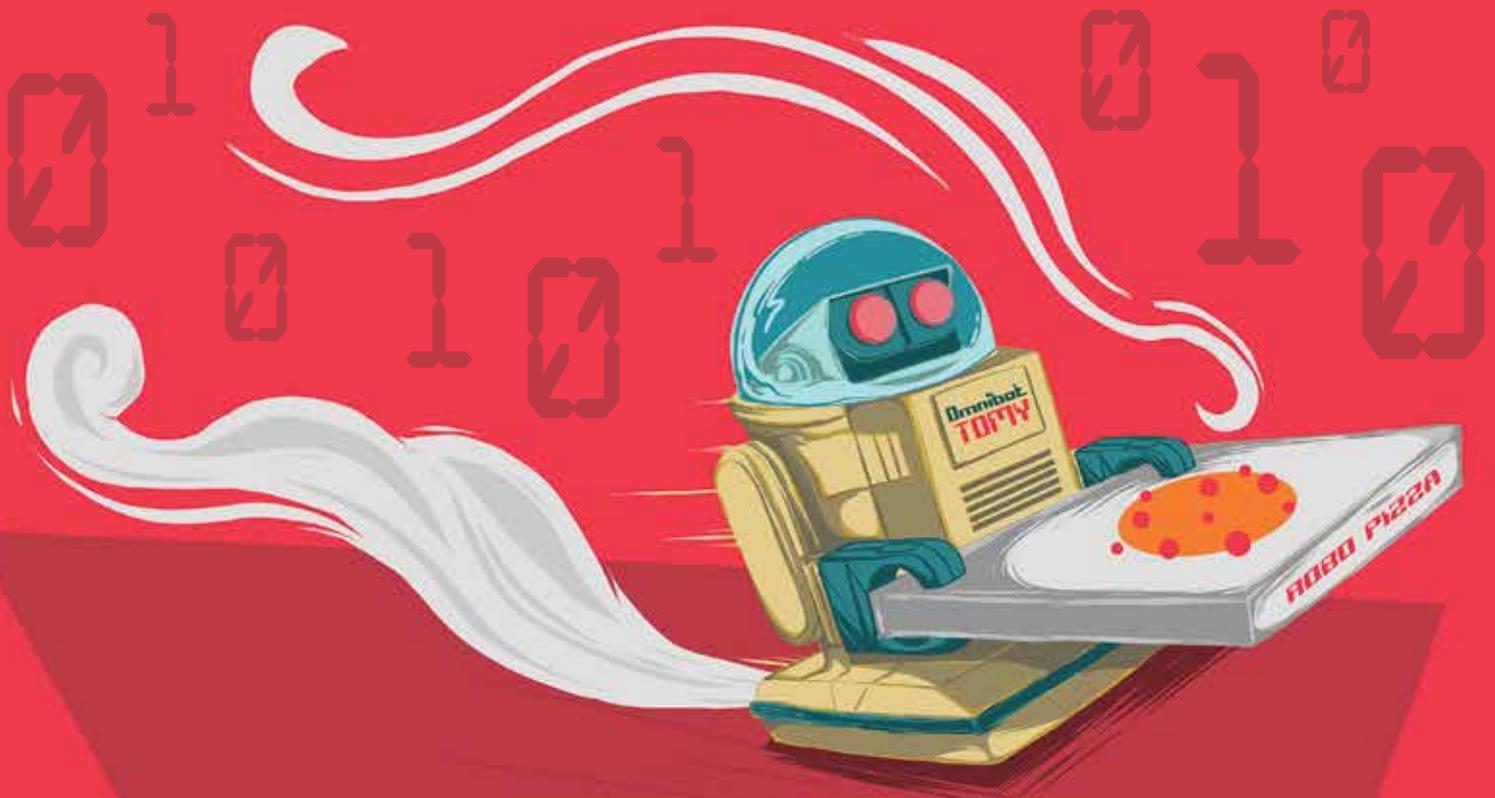
with private suppliers seeing a profit in the idea. McGraw-Hill has already designed software to allow college professors to manage coursework for hundreds of students at a time.

The idea of replacing teachers with robots no doubt brings a glint in the eye of some of the more conservative governments, but the savings may not be all that solid. Some politicians and tech entrepreneurs are already calling for robots to be assessed the same income taxes as the humans they replace.

Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft,

Then there is the cost of maintenance of robots, which one can assume will have more glitches than an overhead projector. And what happens when it runs out of power in the middle of the day and nobody can find the right cord to recharge it?

Educators might be pining for those days when the biggest technological challenge was getting their PowerPoint to work.





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HIRED TODAY, GONE TOMORROW



BY
MARYJANE
MACLENNAN

Canadian teachers tell ourselves we are an egalitarian group who welcome diversity and are consciously non-hierarchical. But I belong to a large body of teachers who come up against a well-defined class system every day we visit a new school to offer our help.

We are substitutes; a type of teaching catfish who swim close to the system's murky clay bottom.

The class structure is most visible in the staff room. Like the lowly, but earnest student teacher, we are really not welcome in the inner sanctum of the old guard.

I never make a cup of tea or coffee in a new staff room. Reaching for a chipped blue mug that reads, "World's Best Teacher," or "Cynthia's Mug" or "Esposito Auto Body & Glass," could cost you an arm. It's not your mug. Put it back. It belongs to a real teacher.

And beware of the reserved spaces around the lunch table. It's a mine field because the boundaries that determine where subs and students may or may not sit are usually invisible. I'm sure they are lovely people individually, but why would a table of teachers let a school visitor sit alone in the corner of the staff room, unless of course, she'd been very, very bad.

I avoid staff rooms and take a book and my cell phone to the car, as a wise education professor advised.

On my first foray into a middle-years staff room, I foolishly pulled out a chair and asked the 30-something group of male and

female teachers if I could join them.

"Sure," one energetic young woman said. "But you can't sit there. That's Cassandra's place. Cassandra always sits there. She hits the roof if she catches anyone in her chair. Isn't that right, Jean?"

The other woman nodded, unsmiling. The rest of the teachers ignored me. I sank into the over-stuffed couch and ate my sad sandwich alone.

A substitute is not properly defined as a school "visitor," although we are often forced to wear a card that reads, "School Visitor" around our necks. Like dogs.

Truly, substitutes are there to be of service. We have no other social capital.

As the Bob Dylan song says, "You're gonna have to serve somebody."

Life isn't all bad. Substitutes take home no homework, have no need to stay beyond the bell to coach or organize or mentor. They form no more than superficial relationships with the school principal and have the freedom to turn down a follow-up engagement with a particularly out-of-control classroom of students. There's no one to compel you to go back to any school. But we are still essentially at the mercy of the teacher who beckons us to show up.

Most teachers are very grateful to have another adult with a teaching certificate take responsibility for their class. The note for the sub often includes a schedule for the day, prepared lesson plans, several copied assignments and information about

students who need extra help or supervision. Subs love that teacher and leave them equally detailed and grateful notes after the bell rings.

Occasionally the teacher leaves next to nothing. A family emergency or sudden illness may have left little time, or they just don't bother. One veteran said, you've got to be ready for that. Carry games, exercises and a couple of good books in your Mary Poppins' carpet bag. Some teachers leave a pile of copying to be done, which is pretty tough when you're supposed to be on duty in the classroom. My worst nightmare was a teacher who left me with notes on five or six uncooperative students, and then wrote, "Have them all lined up at 9:30 a.m. at gym doors. You're taking them on a field trip."

We read the instructions the teacher leaves for us. And we must comply.

"You may be an ambassador to England or France," says Dylan. "You may like to gamble, you might like to dance. You may be the heavyweight champion of the world. You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls, but you're gonna have to serve somebody."

And if you are a "sub", there are many somebodies expecting your service.

The first person who must be obeyed at all costs is the person who guards the school office. And in my experience, the Gate Keeper is frequently a woman prepared to cut off your head and kick it down the corridor to indicate the direction of the class

where you'll be spending the day.

If you don't sign the Substitute Schedule sheet in the right place, you'll hear about it. And if you fail to follow school and division policies to the letter, you may set yourself up for public humiliation.

I learned this lesson from a stern, middle-aged Gate Keeper at one Winnipeg school on my fourth visit as a sub.

"Excuse me, but what are you wearing?" she asked when I tried to sign in at 7:18 a.m.

"I'm sorry?" I said.

"You have a very strange smell to you. It's either something you are wearing as perfume, or something you are putting in your hair," she said. Then she crinkled up her nose as though she'd stepped barefooted in a wet clot the cat coughed up.

I looked over at her brunette friend for help. She was suddenly very focused on the copying machine.

"Not a problem," I said to the Gate Keeper, trying to sound like an easy-going millennial. I did not apologize or offer any promise regarding the alleged eau de cologne, sun block, hair gel, face cream, or dishwashing liquid that had so offended her.

As I headed out the door with my sub folder under my arm, she was still chirping at me; outlining the division's "no scent policy," which was clearly posted beside the copier, for any teacher who could read.

I certainly felt a social pariah on that particular visit.

In the digital age, a substitute teacher is also at the mercy of the cell phone for every job we might be lucky enough to capture. While most school divisions offer fair, but modest compensation for subbing, you may have to keep a surgeon's hours to actually get a teaching job.

Of course, there's an app for substitute teachers. I found out quickly, if you didn't pay the monthly fee for the app, you weren't likely to get a teaching job at all. Ever.

My cell phone beeps and a sexy male voice sings, "Tall and tan and young and lovely, the girl from Ipanema goes walking..."

I open the phone. I search for the app. I find the app. I open the app. I read the message.

"Red Rose School Division. UKind. Monday, Sept. 7. Eleanor Rattringer. ACCEPT? REJECT?"

I say out loud, "What the heck is, "UKind?" Is that some high school thing? Isn't "K" kindergarten? Am I free on Monday? Didn't I book a teeth cleaning Monday? Okay. Just hit ACCEPT. Hit ACCEPT!"

"Sorry. That job is already taken," the text message informs me.

I NO LONGER HAVE A CLASSROOM OF MY OWN, BUT I HAD MANY SHORT, BUT IMPORTANT, MEETINGS WITH WONDERFUL STUDENTS. WE MAY ONLY SEE ONE ANOTHER FOR SEVERAL DAYS IN THE SAME MONTH, OR JUST FOR ONE SIGNIFICANT MORNING, BUT TRUST AND FRIENDSHIP AND FUN FIND THEIR WAY REGARDLESS.

I discovered, by Week 2, I was simply not getting any teaching jobs. I needed to hit ACCEPT as soon as it appeared and live with it. My Manitoba Teaching Certificate had qualified me for anything. Hadn't it?

Cell phone beeps once. "Tall and tan and young and lovely, the girl from Ip..."

I open the phone. I find the app right away. I open the app, smiling, triumphant. I read the message.

"Bishop Bodner School Division. UKind. Thursday, Sept 15. Trey Karpov. ACCEPT? REJECT?"

ACCEPT. ACCEPT!

The text message tells me, "Congratulations. You have been chosen for the assignment."

Fastforward to the Thursday of the assignment. UKind, I discover when I pick up my sub folder, is Ukrainian kindergarten, an assignment for which I am almost completely unqualified. (I did take Russian history and can pick my way through Cyrillic) Happily, the kids taught me numbers to 20 in Ukrainian, sang a song about a farmer and his chickens, and had snacks. A completely successful and lovely day.

A substitute's best friend is the often under-appreciated, all-knowing,

unfailing energetic education assistant. Without the presence of an EA, or some other sympathetic, clear-thinking adult, many classrooms would be almost impossible to manage for a substitute. That's not to say teachers aren't capable, but what's really needed is a connection with the students, and that's not something you can always pull off successfully at a moment's notice.

It takes time to get to know students, and the EA is already there.

I'm not a person who hugs, but I've ended my day feeling an overwhelming sense of gratitude and respect for my one-day teaching partner, and just had to embrace them. There was a young man who took a particularly chaotic group out to play basketball for the last bit of the day. There was a woman who helped half the class make cards for their teacher's new baby while I helped the other half. Divide and conquer.

But some days you have to go it alone, and that works too because the world is, fortunately, full of great kids.

I no longer have a classroom of my own, but I had many short, but important, meetings with wonderful students. We may only see one another for several days in the same month, or just for one significant morning, but trust and friendship and fun find their way regardless. And unlike other teachers, substitutes often teach the full spectrum of students from kindergarten through Gr.12.

As we know, school can be an isolating, unhappy place for children, so seeing an adult struggle through a day causes some of them to empathize, which is ironically one of our goals.

Claudia, a bright Gr.6 girl led her class in a kind of classic Maoist revolt against me for an entire day. No blood was spilled, but several girls had a fight, a soccer game broke out in the hallway, and a chubby boy climbed and smashed the teacher's bookcase. Before the final bell, I had everyone sit in a circle to discuss how we might have been a bit more respectful of one another. I guess Claudia felt some sense of guilt.

"You look kinda tired," she said when the other students had gone to get their jackets.

"Yes. I guess I am a bit tired," I said.

"You'll just have to go home and have a big glass of whiskey."

It was the most sincere apology I've ever received from a student. And it was the very last time Claudia and her Grade 6 class ever treated me like a substitute for a real teacher.



Learning the

A, Bee, C

BY MATEA TUHTAR

To bee or not to bee. The question was easy to answer for École Leila North, the first school in Winnipeg to partner up with Beeproject Apiaries and find out what all the buzz was about.

Two bee hives were installed on the school's rooftop this past spring, making it the first educational site for the Urban Pollination Project.

Beeproject Apiaries was started by Chris Kirouac and Lindsay Nikkel, who began bee keeping 10 years ago with the goal of introducing honeybees into an urban setting. In 2012 the couple approached the city about changing prohibitions to urban bee keeping, and through their workshops and public engagement, some of the restrictions were removed in 2015.

2016 was the first year where the organization could talk publicly about their Urban Pollination Project which is intended to be a turn-key operation in which Beeproject installs and maintain the hive(s) and then delivers the ultra-local honey to the host at the end of the season.

"The doors finally opened a little bit so that organizations in the downtown area

and educational facilities were able to have bees on their property," says Kirouac.

This did not mean that educational facilities were rushing to participate.

"We've had many schools talk to us through the city, and even when educators were interested, the administration had always come back with a stern 'no.'"

All but Seven Oaks School Division and Leila North, that is.

"Our foods and nutrition teacher Ashley Taylor actually reached out to Beeproject and brought the idea to us," says Leila North principal Scott Shier. "We just loved it, and brought it to our superintendent and school board."

One of the conditions with the school moving forward with the project was to hold a community consultation, as well as having Beeproject share their information with the superintendents, school division and parents. The whole process took about a year to get the final go ahead, and Vice-principal Jennifer Hughes says the school got a lot of positive feedback from people in the community. "They were saying they were excited to have bees in the neighborhood and to taste the honey from where we live."

Beeproject helped educate the community inside and outside the school, says Shier.

"Right away you're thinking bees on the roof and there's all these kids around. So, we learned a lot of stuff including the difference between wasps and bees – wasps are the ones you see around the garbage cans in the summer and fall. People confuse the two but bees are vegan, and wasps... are just terrible," he laughs.

According to a fact sheet provided by Beeproject, honeybees are much more docile than people generally imagine. The bees only sting when their hive is threatened, or when protecting their queen. Beeproject takes extra steps to minimize the small risk that a student, staff, or community member will get stung, through placement of the hives on rooftops away from traffic, orientation of flight paths, the use of a smoke tool when checking the hives, and the use of docile bee stock/genetics.

"We really haven't noticed an increase of bees around the school," says Hughes. "I had my six-year-old son up on the roof, and we all had bees on us and if you remain calm, they're not at all bothersome."



CS

Two bee hives were installed on École Leila North's rooftop this past spring, making it the first educational site for the Urban Pollination Project.



The students are not allowed on the roof near the hives. In fact, the school has little responsibility around the bees as Beeproject takes care of the installation and maintenance of the hives, and handles honey harvesting at the end of the season.

And the bees seem to be quite happy at Leila North.

"The bees had a great season," says Kirouac. "They were really healthy and produced good amounts of honey." He explains that what they would typically do is reserve an opportunity to harvest a small amount of the honey with the students as a learning opportunity. "So we'll come into the class with our equipment and we'll demonstrate how it's done and have people participate."

The rest of the honey is harvested and bottled in their facility in Osborne Village, and then delivered to the school.

"We call it Neighborhood Honey because we find that the honey from different neighborhoods has slight differences in flavor and colour. So it's really fun because it lets people taste the essence of the space they're in, and really taste their neighborhood."

Leila North is surrounded by fields and

ponds, but any school in the city could support hives as the bees will fly up to two miles in order to find the most desirable nectar sources.

"The bees are quite adept at finding green spaces, river banks, wild flowers, or anything that's blooming really," says Kirouac, adding that as long as the environment isn't being sprayed with pesticides, the bees usually do quite well.

Leila North is looking to bring the bees even more food sources nearby.

"We will be planting bee-friendly flowers around the school, and we've written a few grants for fruit trees," says Hughes. "And our hope with the honey that's harvested is to create a business model, designing a top label for the jar and selling it as a fundraiser to raise money to plant more trees. And eventually maybe growing the number of hives on our roof."

And the more bees there are in the city, the better. Beeproject says that the dying off of honeybee populations could be of dire significance to global food production. Their hope with urban beekeeping is that people will become more invested in protecting pollinators and understanding Canada's food systems

through these projects.

"Sustainability is something we do and live in the school, so the bees really fit in with that," says Shier, adding that the bees can easily make their way into every curriculum, including foods and nutrition, science, math and graphics. "It's endless. You can do work around the geometry of the hives. When writing some grants, Ashley tied it into every curriculum we had, along with the aboriginal education we have going."

This season Beeproject had 76 hives around the city, with two more schools: Marymount School and École Lacerte also installing hives later in the season.

"We think this kind of education enriches understanding of the environment and how what we do can affect the environment," says Kirouac. "There's a lot of neat possibilities and we're hoping now that Leila North has done the pioneering that other schools will come on board and other people will have that enthusiasm for adding components that fit in their schools' vision."

For more information on Beeproject visit: Beeproject.ca

We're OUT

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

This year The Manitoba Teachers' Society has not been involved in supporting or promoting WE Day in the province.

In previous years, the Society has publicized the day and encouraged attendance. Provincial executive members have gone or dispersed tickets to students.

That changed at the annual meeting of the provincial council last May after delegates supported a motion that MTS not "promote or support WE Day events."

"There were a number of different reasons delegates had when making that decision," says Norm Gould, MTS president. "Chief among them was questions about whether the charity-model that it promotes results in the change needed to eliminate the need for charity.

"We understand and respect that some teachers will disagree, but an overwhelming majority at our annual general meeting felt the organization shouldn't be involved, so we won't be."

Questions about WE Day have been growing over the past few years along with the growth in the events themselves.

Some teachers have been especially critical of the deluge of corporate sponsors for events as well as the public money that is being spent.

An overview prepared for MTS management by staff last January pointed out that while 500 teachers and 14,000 students attend WE Day in Manitoba, attendance is heavily subsidized by school divisions and Manitoba Education. More than \$250,000 in public funds is spent supporting WE Day here.

"While WE Day is a very high profile event and may have some inspirational value for youth, it is a very expensive event when travel costs and teacher time is factored into the equation," the paper said. "Additionally, the model promotes charity, not social justice and is, in fact, the opposite of change. The status quo is not affected in any way."

And the event itself has been criticized for giving preferential seating to students based on fundraising. What it has meant in practice is students from schools in lower-income areas often being stuck in the back. Inequality brought to life.

Teachers elsewhere have also written about the messages being received by young students.

Alison Atkinson, a B.C. teacher, who has attended and written about WE Day, has questioned the highlighting of large corporate sponsors.

"I felt that for such a young audience, it could be confusing, because it was at times challenging to tell where WE Day started and where the corporate messaging began," she told CBC radio.

Some students have had the same unease. A student social justice group in Winnipeg criticized the event some years ago because they said the questionable practices in the developing world of some corporate WE Day sponsors was opposite to their WE Day messages.

Others have said that the event has become more to do with entertainment, celebrity and corporate advertising than solving problems in the world.



Numbers look better than claimed

Before the provincial government embarked on its recent austerity measures, it claimed Manitoba's finances were in dire straits.

It said the province was looking at a \$1 billion deficit that needed to be reduced. The deficit projection became a continual mantra despite a number of respected economists complaining the threat was being exaggerated.

Recent financial data compiled by the government itself shows that the province's financial picture is much better than that painted by the premier.

MTS Policy Analyst Joseph Warbanski compiled the following highlights from the government's figures.

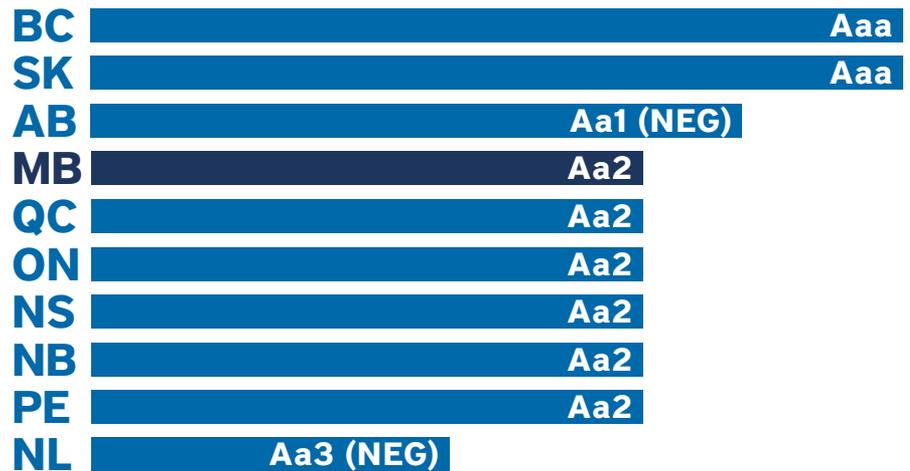
The billion dollar deficit that never was

- The release of the Provincial public accounts for the 2016-17 fiscal year show a summary deficit of \$764 million
- This is a \$147 million improvement over \$911 million deficit projected in the government's 2016-17 budget
- It is however, a nearly quarter of a billion dollar improvement (\$238 million) over the "Billion Dollar deficit" (\$1.004 Billion) that the government projected as recently as this past Christmas
- That was the Premier's "all hands on deck" moment, stated repeatedly and publicly province-wide. It also came with only a dozen weeks or so left in the 2016-17 fiscal year and in advance of the Pallister government's 2017-18 budget.
- Increased provincial revenues (\$233 million), not spending cuts was cited as the primary reason for the decline in the deficit.

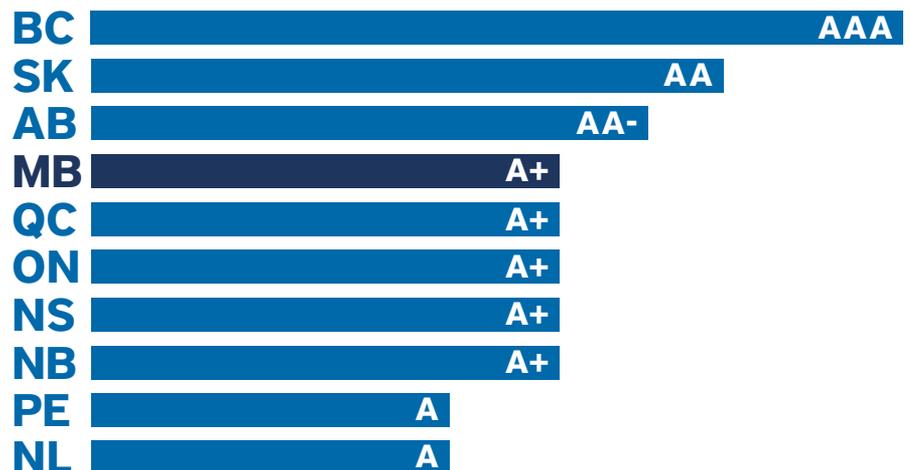
How could the government be that wrong on its revenue projections and just how is Manitoba's economy performing?

- According to Statistics Canada Manitoba saw record population growth last year
- The Manitoba and Canadian economies are strengthening. The most recent OECD forecast says it expects Canada to lead the G7 in growth this year.
- Manitoba, almost uniquely, exports as much to the rest of the country as it does

Moody's Credit Ratings



S&P Credit Ratings



Source: Moody's Investor Services and Standard and Poor's Rating Services

internationally. So when Canada does well, Manitoba benefits.

- Manitoba is highly diversified showing the steadiest growth among the provinces
- Manitoba presently boasts, at 4.9 per cent, the lowest unemployment rate in the country
- On the home front, Manitoba's household debt per capita is the lowest in the country
- When you then add in what is by all accounts a bumper crop this year, rising wages, a growing manufacturing sector, and strengthening wholesale and retail

trade, to highlight just few areas, odds are the government's budget revenue projections for 2017-18 will again be low and the deficit significantly smaller than the \$840 million stated.

The sky is not, and never has been, falling. The Manitoba Teachers' Society, like its labour partners, has always been willing to work with government to address fiscal challenges. Bringing the accounts to balance in a reasoned manner over time we would argue was always doable. The premier, at one point, suggested eight years. Funny how things change.



BY MIREILLE THERIAULT

Who's in a Name?



DESIGN BY MATT KEHLER

Recently, there was some controversy over the naming of schools in honour of Canada's first prime minister because of his support of the residential school system. It got us wondering if many people are aware of the people behind the names of many Manitoba schools. See if you can match the school name with the person. Answers below.

A In 1885 was appointed Inspector of Protestant Public Schools and, under the Public School Act of 1890, became Superintendent of Public Schools. For many years, was identified with the work of the Children's Aid Society of which this person was the first President, and later with the activities of the Institute for the Blind.

F From 1926 to 1937 toured the western Arctic where this person rose quickly to the position of chief fur trader for the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1945 left to become managing director for Advocate Printers and during the next 10 years, put together the beginnings of what is now Harlequin Enterprises Limited.

B By 1898, had begun a life's work as an urban missionary, visiting female prisoners, supervising the Winnipeg Lodging and Coffee House, which gave support to indigent and unemployed men, and visiting the poor in their homes. Came to believe that a permanent mission to provide medical care for poor women and children was a pressing need.

G Started teaching at Winkler, Manitoba at the age of 17. Was principal of the Winkler school from 1917 to 1941. During this time established the High School program, arranged summer courses enabling teachers to raise their academic standing.

C A philanthropist who helped establish the public libraries in Arborg, Riverton and Gimli. This person's support for education and literacy was recognized by many honorary life memberships including The Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Manitoba Women's Institute and Manitoba Library Trustees Association.

H Lost a leg as a result of a severe bout with typhoid in 1889. Served as superintendent of the Brandon Asylum for the Insane from 1891 to 1894 before becoming Manitoba's first ophthalmologist. In 1896 was appointed provincial bacteriologist, and in 1897 set up a laboratory which became the diagnostic and epidemiological centre for the province.

D In 1946 was one of the first radio announcers to open the new French radio station CKSB, in St. Boniface. Retired as Director of CBC Radio Canada for the Prairie Provinces in 1983.

I Worked in several gold mines before joining Defence Industries Limited during the Second World War. From there, joined the Chalk River nuclear reactor construction project, Canada's first major nuclear reactor. Prominent amongst Canadian nuclear engineers, played a large role in the formation of hazard review regulations which now govern all atomic activity in Canada.

E Was heavily involved with the Indigenous teacher programs as well as the Children's Aid Society. Co-created and appeared in a television series for CBC, called Common Sense About Reading. Retired after 47 years of teaching in 1975.

J A Member of the Canadian, Ontario, and Manitoba Medical Associations, and a coroner for the Province of Manitoba. Served in the Manitoba Legislature for one session, from 1920 to 1922. Also served on the Carberry School Board for 35 years, and was mayor of Carberry from 1938 to 1945.



SCHOOL NAME

- 1 R. J. Waugh Elementary
- 2 Centre Scolaire Léo-Rémillard
- 3 Betty Gibson School
- 4 F. W. Gilbert School
- 5 J. R. Walkof Elementary
- 6 Sigurbjorg Stefansson Early School
- 7 Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
- 8 R. H. G. Bonnycastle School
- 9 Gordon Bell High School
- 10 Margaret Scott School

Answers:

1-J, 2-D, 3-E, 4-I, 5-G, 6-C, 7-A, 8-F, 9-H, 10-B

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Art & Ice

BY SHERRY KANIUGA

Students and teachers in the Lord Selkirk School Division are working through math, history, culture, art, carpentry and geography lessons to learn a whole lot about community giving.

Two schools that border the Red River North, and their students, have found a way to apply the lessons of the classroom to a public art project that connects them to their roots and gives back to the community on several fronts.

It started when Selkirk Education Centre Director Steven Grahame heard about the Art on Ice project – a fundraiser that would build on the hugely popular winter activity of ice fishing in the Red River North area of St. Andrews, St. Clements and Selkirk.

The inventors of Art on Ice had a great idea to design and “artify” shacks as part of a new community winter festival – Holiday Alley. The concept was the shacks would be auctioned off and proceeds donated to support social housing in the area. But that was as far as it had got last spring – just an idea.

That’s when Grahame stepped up and spent hours with his students researching and then designing a unique ice shack model that can be easily built, stored and moved. His students then volunteered to build six shacks and delivered them to local artists – ages 14 to 64 – who then created masterpieces. Local businesses joined in and helped pay for the materials.

Grahame’s students started building in June 2017, working hard outside in the hot sun while most other students were

dreaming of summer holidays. Grahame says the project has been powerful for all of them.

“In a small city, what goes around comes around, and that’s really exemplified in Holiday Alley and Art on Ice. We get to participate, we get to give and we’re also getting a huge opportunity from Holiday Alley to do this,” Graham says.

“This really gives the students a sense of purpose and they know ‘Hey, what I’m doing

The inventors of Art on Ice had a great idea to design and “artify” shacks as part of a new community winter festival – Holiday Alley. The concept was the shacks would be auctioned off and proceeds donated to support social housing in the area. But that was as far as it had got last spring – just an idea.

matters,” Grahame says, adding that the project offers hands-on learning in several different subjects, such as the measurement unit in Grade 12 math.

“It’s part of my math credit, and it’s better than sitting in a classroom and doing paperwork,” says Brenden Benne, one of the student builders who helped construct the four-by-eight-foot shacks with sloped walls and a clear, corrugated roof designed to let in

light and warmth. “I like woodworking and building things, and I like helping people out. Every night when you put your head to rest you can know you did good.”

“It’s important to get yourself out there, help others and help this community,” adds Quinn Blackburde-Moore, another student builder.

The high school students have just finished building and delivering their final shack to their sister school, East Selkirk Middle School, in October. Art teacher Rita Procyshyn is using the project in her class where students are taking their inspiration from local culture, architecture and their favourite foodie hangouts.

Grade 9 student Kendra Boychuk’s concept for the shack reflects her heritage, showing Ukrainian symbols and scenes of early settlers to Manitoba.

“It’s pretty amazing that we’ll be helping the charity and also representing our school,” Boychuk says. She’s one of two dozen students in Procyshyn’s art classes that have been working on their own ideas for designs for the shacks. The students will collaborate to decide which designs to use, then groups from each class will use house paint to bring the designs to life on their shack.

Fellow classmate Brady Porayko worked on drawing the historic buildings of Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site, which sit along the Red River. And Janel Lafrenier has been inspired by the iconic “foodie” spots in the area, including Lockport’s popular hot dog and ice cream places and the Riverside Grill, Selkirk’s 50s-style diner



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– all spots that look out onto the ice shacks on the Red River each winter.

“It’s pretty cool knowing we get to design our own artwork to put on a shack that will be out on the ice for everyone to see. To see it out there and be able to say, ‘I painted that,’ will be great,” adds Boychuk, who often goes ice fishing with her family on the Red River.

For Shirley Muir, one of the lead volunteers of Holiday Alley, Art on Ice would not have been possible without the collaboration of teachers and educators.

“It’s one thing to have an idea, it’s another thing to bring it to life. And the teachers and students in this division have been the life blood of Art on Ice. It’s been an amazing partnership,” Muir says.

Each shack can double as a garden shed in the off-season, so the lucky anglers or homeowners who win them at the auction will get year-round use out of them. Proceeds from the auction are shared with an endowment fund at the Selkirk and District Community Foundation called Homes for All, which supports community housing projects like group homes, homeless shelters and nursing homes.

Because the Holiday Alley street festival is free to the public, all of the students who worked on building and painting the shacks, as well as the other local artists, will be able to come out and watch their creations be auctioned off. The Art on Ice Auction will be held Saturday, Dec. 2 at 3 p.m. on Manitoba Avenue East in Selkirk. For more about the event, visit holidayalley.ca.

The Box and The Circle Training

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PORTFOLIO



IRON, NOT ATTIRE

U.S. President Donald Trump had a heart-felt message for workers on Labour Day. Sending out a picture of him and his wife, he said: "We are building our future with American hands, American labor, American iron, aluminum and steel." In the picture, Melania is wearing a \$2,255 dress made in Italy, created by a Greek designer based in England.

Election 2020: Rock, Paper, Scissors

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



Well, if the political winds in Manitoba don't change direction in the next couple of years, the expected 2020 election should be quite the dismal votapalooza.

The two top contenders will pit the incumbent Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight against a threadbare dynasty led by a man carrying more baggage than Via Rail's transcontinental.

At this writing, the third-place Liberals had yet to choose a new leader. Their members were to pick a new chief in late October. That race has included two relative unknowns and the return of a former leader who, during his three-election reign, managed to take the party from 23 per cent support to 12. As they say, third fourth time's the charm.

But, at least the Liberals managed to have three leadership hopefuls. The NDP only managed to scrape up two candidates: three-time loser Steve Ashton and Wab Kinew, the hip hop artist formerly known as Misogyny Personified.

Perhaps other potential candidates had already conceded the next election to the governing Tories. If so, their psychic abilities don't seem to have improved much since those days when they set the NDP house afire, expecting some phoenix to arise from the ashes.

At the moment the Conservatives appear to be doing all they can to show they are up to the task of losing the next election. The government has been buzzing and clanking like a runaway pinball, bouncing from one bumper to another.

FABIO:

HAIR CARE EXPERT MAYBE,
HEALTH CARE NOT SO MUCH

When U.S. talk show host and comedian Jimmy Kimmel criticized Republicans for their legislation to replace Obamacare, right wing news outlets attacked him. Fox News said he wasn't qualified to talk about politics. Media Matters for America compiled a list of celebrities Fox has interviewed about politics. Here's just some of them:

- Kiss band leader Gene Simmons
- Former pitcher Curt Schilling
- Guitarist Ted Nugent
- Singer Kid Rock
- Actor Chuck Norris
- Actor John Voight
- Model Fabio
- Actor Tim Allen



DUNCE of the MONTH

In arguing against gun controls in the wake of the Las Vegas massacre, right wing pundit Bill O'Reilly wrote that such attacks are "the price of freedom."

On average, in every nine days out of 10 there is a mass shooting in the United States. That's 1,516 mass shootings in 1,735 days, since Jan. 1, 2013. In 2016 more than 15,000 Americans were killed by guns, 679 of them children.

Some freedom. Some price.



Back in April, 2016, we were entering Shangri-La. No front line services or jobs would be cut, there would be no new taxes. In fact, the provincial sales tax would be cut by a percentage point. A few managers' heads would roll and that would be that. Strike up the band.

Some 18 months later, the dancing unicorns and bright balloons are gone. Now we have thousands of people wondering if their jobs are safe, with everyone facing the spectre of a tax on health care. One day we have a spending problem, the next a revenue problem. Sad trumpet sound here.

The Pinball Wizard, Premier Brian Pallister, grabbed the live wire of health care premiums and was apparently shocked by the negative reaction. He immediately tried to douse his smoking hand and reassure everyone it was just one of a number of ideas to solve the province's supposed financial problems that he had said he had solutions for last year.

He told reporters it was only an idea and that they should give him "a break". Well, jumping off a cliff is also an idea, but that wasn't part of the Tory's election platform either. As for the break, that's what Costa Rican hideaways are for.

And, most recently, he said the goal of this government will be to cut the public service by eight per cent. More than a thousand taxpayers out the door. Frontline? Oops, meant to say firing line.

As bedazzling as the government's

performance has been, the NDP's answer may equal it on the head-shaking scale.

Wab Kinew may be that one person who has, over a few years, transformed himself into provincial leader from insufferable jackass. But, his anvil-weight background of misogynist writings and song lyrics, charges and convictions aren't normally part of the resume politicians use to sell themselves to voters. But then, who among us hasn't been charged and/or convicted of assault or robbery? Who among us can say they ignored more than \$600 in parking tickets, until the province threatened to garnishee your salary? Who hasn't written stomach-turning lyrics about women?

Indeed, it will be a laborious task hauling those steamer trunks up the provincial ladder. It might depend on whether or not voters agree with poet Maya Angelou who once said: "When someone shows you who they are believe them; the first time."

He'll have to show rather than say how he has gone from Mike Tyson to Mother Theresa. It hasn't been a great beginning. In an interview with CBC at the time of his recent ascension, he mentioned that he is humble at least three times. Really, bragging about being humble is like being concerned that you're apathetic.

Well, we'll see whether voters will care about the past with Kinew or the present with Pallister or some other choice on the timeline. Maybe they'll all be able to cut the crusts off the sandwiches before the next picnic.

Hope springs eternal.



amazon

A QUARTER MILLION PER JOB; WHAT A DEAL

Much ado was made of the province and city tossing together a committee to toss together a pitch to bring Amazon's second headquarters – that will supposedly employ up to 50,000 people – to Winnipeg. Good luck, with that. Numerous U.S. cities and states are also making pitches, no doubt offering half their treasuries and all newborns. Consider: to land a Foxconn TV plant in Wisconsin – that supposedly could employ up to 13,000 people – the state gave the company a \$3-billion incentive package. It will take at least 25 years for the state to see a return on its investment, if ever.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
I'D LOVE TO HELP.
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REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

VLOGGERS TO YOUR TECH RESCUE

Need entertaining and detailed tech help on vlogs, lights, phones and drones? There are hundreds of superb vloggers on the Tubes who share their info for free. Here are four of the most genuinely helpful.



Erica Griffin

Cell contract almost up? Need a new phone, like yesterday? Erica Griffin, "the technology nerd who likes to film stuff", can help. Erica is one of the most valuable voices in cell reviews on YouTube. Look up any model of smartphone and Erica has not only handled it, but lived with it long enough to tell you what rocks and what sucks. She always carries one as her daily driver, and at least one other to test and review. Erica is deep into detail: so her vids are not just about pretty screens and storage. I bought my Samsung Galaxy S8 and Rhinoshield buffer based on Erica's thorough reviews. Always up to date, Erica has posted new videos on the Galaxy Note 8 and S8, iPhone 8, 8+ and 10 and the Apple Watch Series 3. Oh, and she reviews drones, tech backpacks and Nintendo, too.



Casey Neistat

Watching Casey Neistat is an absolute joy, but not a universal one. His channel is pretty much a love or hate thing. Neistat started developing his video chops before YouTube made its debut in 2005 and has been serving up some of the most engaging, colourful and surprising video ever since. Check out his "She's a Blind Vlogger", "The \$21,000 Airplane Seat" and "Casey Neistat's Guide to Filmmaking" to get a flavour for his craft. On the street, Neistat is a madman weaving between lanes of New York City traffic on an electric skateboard with his DSLR in one hand and a coffee in the other. Neistat's a pro. He's worked with some of the biggest brands in business, but somehow manages to make his vlogs feel authentic and personal. What's in it for you? A mother lode of inspiration and new ideas.



Amy Schmittauer

Amy Schmittauer, author of *Vlog Like a Boss*, will give you the confidence to plan and shoot vlogs regularly. Amy's chatty videos encourage and inspire folks to simply start shooting using whatever equipment they have—most often a smartphone. Amy's a prolific vlogger, cranking out new content three times a week, so there's plenty to choose from. She recently married fellow vlogger and cameraman Vincenzo Landino. Last month, the couple started a joint channel called Schmenzo: In Love and Business. Check out her "I Am not Casey Neistat", "Should You Start Vlogging?" and "20 Tweets You Should Post Every Day." And if you've ever asked yourself, "why would anyone watch me?" and "what are the best videos to make when just starting out?", you owe it to yourself to get familiar with her channel.



Justin Brown - Primal Video

Can you seriously edit video on a Chromebook? How do you shoot video in 360? How can you get cheap studio lights without breaking the bank? Aussie Justin Brown offers a fun and head-spinning variety of practical primers on everything from the most powerful free editing software for Windows, Mac, Android and iPhone to ways you can film overhead video for cooking, crafts, drawings and desk work. These are some of the most useful guides you can imagine. Brown is clear, down to earth and will answer back if you leave a good question on one of his vids.



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