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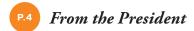
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The Quest for Status

Few topics in the history of The MTS are as vital to understanding the evolution of the organization as the quest for recognition of professional status for teachers.



P.16

MTS president tours the province

Norm Gould addresses issues facing public education in a series of regional meetings



FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

NORM GOULD

t's safe to say spring hasn't exactly sprung in Manitoba, but it has at least arrived. Brief bursts of mild weather remind us that while things may be changing slowly, they are changing nonetheless.

Watching for signs of change is important, and Manitobans have seen plenty of it lately. The provincial government has begun the process of cutting deeply into valued services like healthcare, and we have every reason to believe that education will be next. Bill 28, which freezes and effectively rolls back the salaries of public sector workers, including teachers, signals what's to come. MTS is part of a 25-member coalition seeking an injunction against Bill 28, slated to be heard in late May.

In Nova Scotia, teachers are currently challenging the constitutionality of their own government's imposed wage controls. Notably the Manitoba government is the only intervenor in the Nova Scotia case, which is expected to go before that province's court of appeal by October of this year. The fact that Premier Pallister has seen fit to spend taxpayer dollars to intervene in a court case beyond our borders suggests he has significant skin in the game.

As telling as all this might be, it merely suggests an overarching direction. Beyond already announced global funding cuts to education we've seen nothing of the province's game plan. For a degree of insight MTS has looked to the experiences of other jurisdictions in which our government has shown an interest. Nova Scotia's playbook, in particular, may provide a sense of what lies ahead – and how to prepare for it.

Education Minister Ian Wishart prefers to play his cards close to the vest. Still, I continue to present MTS members as ready and willing to engage with the government around improving public education - but we need a seat at the table.

And at the table we will be, this spring, as collective bargaining commences. MTS will actively and effectively represent teachers and bargain monetary and non-monetary considerations alike. This, given the province let slide the deadline by which it needed to put forth amendments to the Public Schools Act making provincial bargaining the law of the land by June 30th, when our agreements expire.

In the first half of its four-year mandate our government's approach appears to have been one of "keep 'em guessing rather than informed". And so we are left to speculate, to draw conclusions from the experiences of other provinces, and to wait for costly court proceedings to conclude. Make no mistake, things are changing, slowly – almost imperceptibly – but they are changing nonetheless.

As teachers we must be vigilant and vocal regarding the impact of funding cuts on classrooms and kids. The government's spin doesn't match the math.

Non Moule



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INSIDE MTS BARGAINING CHANGE BUT ONE LINK IN POLICY CHAIN

BOBBI TAILLEFER, GENERAL SECRETARY

That do the Mayor of Winnipeg, the former Board of Directors of Manitoba Hydro (made up of prominent and influential citizens such as Sandy Riley, Steve Kroft, Dayna Spiring, Annette Trimbee etc. and appointed by Mr. Pallister) and the Manitoba Teachers' Society have in common? I know this sounds like the opening line to a funny story but, alas, it is not. Unfortunately, it is simply the common thread of political life here in Manitoba. Sadly this is not an exclusive experience for the parties mentioned above and none of whom still have not been able to have any communication with Premier Pallister. In fact the resignation letter signed by nine out 10 Hydro Board members cites the fact that they haven't been able to engage in meaningful dialogue with Premier Pallister and caucus about important issues for our province was the main reason they had to leave.

The fact that the Premier isn't picking up the phone and remains "incommunicado" is perplexing given the responsibilities that are part and parcel of assuming the role of Premier. At the minimum, our province's highest elected official ought to have a good sense of what is happening in Crown Corporations, with the workings of the capital city and with the province's frontline workers. Unfortunately, this lack of communication is

As I shared in my last column, the President, Norm Gould and I met with Minister Wishart and Deputy Minister Wilson on January 29. At the end of that meeting we asked them if there was anything else that we needed to know about and they both said no. Nine days later the Minister of Education revealed the government was imposing provincial bargaining on teachers. This is a major policy shift and one that Minister Wishart, Deputy Wilson and Premier Pallister had been thinking about for quite some time - yet there was no communication, consultation or dialogue with the affected parties. We were appalled by the way this unfolded but, sadly, we now recognize that we aren't special and that this is a recurring theme that has also affected the Manitoba Hydro Board, other frontline workers and the Mayor of Winnipeg. For our members, it means that after 70 years

of labour peace, with no lost days of school for students and parents, this government, without any consultation, has unilaterally decided to impose a massive system change. And worst of all, it alleged that this change was enacted at the request of MTS which is completely inaccurate and inflammatory.

MTS responded to the announcement through an email to over 20,000 current and past members who have asked to remain on our email list. Additionally, MTS arranged regional meetings throughout the province that were attended by more than 1,000 members and President Gould was able to discuss relevant issues with them and respond to their questions and concerns.

For its part, the government response to the pressure they were feeling was to parade out Colleen Mayer, MLA for St. Vital and a former school trustee. In a video she tried to suggest the imposition of provincial bargaining was no big deal as it was contained in the MTS Policy and Bylaw Handbook and had been there since 2002. While she is correct on the fact that it is in our Policy and Bylaw Handbook, she ignores the rest of the policy.

What Colleen Mayer says in the video is the very definition of taking something out of context.

We have never requested provincial bargaining in any of our annual briefs to the minister and, indeed, the concept of provincial bargaining is but a part of a more comprehensive policy. We can clearly say that it is NOT the policy of The Manitoba Teachers' Society to pursue provincial bargaining under any conditions.

The total policy is very well thought out and it has many components, none of which are meant to stand alone. When the Pallister government singles out only one of the eight components, we say that this is frankly misleading by omission. The following has been on the books since 2012 and includes eight interlocking objectives.

Collective Bargaining Principles page 123: The Society believes that collective bargaining should be undertaken by the Society and its Locals in accordance with the following principles:

(a) the purpose of bargaining is to achieve equity, improve Members' salaries,



benefits and working conditions and defend Members' rights;

- (b) Members must be able to negotiate all issues affecting their professional and working lives within an open scope system of bargaining;
- (c) a balance between local and provincial interests must be achieved during bargaining;
- (d) Members responsible for bargaining will be elected:
- (e) every Member can contribute to the establishment of the Local's bargaining package;
- (f) every Member impacted by the collective agreement is entitled to participate
- in a ratification vote:
- (g) the Society supports Provincial Bargaining; and
- (h) Members should have the ability to choose their dispute resolution mechanism binding arbitration or strike.

It is obvious that members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society might consider supporting provincial bargaining, but only if all of the conditions are met. It is also obvious that to enact such a policy, there would have to be intensive consultation between MTS and the government – something that rarely occurs these days.

I want to point out that The Manitoba Teachers' Society has another rather important policy that has been in our handbook for decades. The Pallister government and the PC Caucus ought to particularly pay attention to it. It states that the President of The Manitoba Teachers' Society (presently Norm Gould) is the official spokesperson for our positions. Sorry MLA Mayer, that is absolutely not your job.

MTS whistleblower policy sought

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

elegates to MTS Provincial Council in May will be asked to adopt whistleblower protection within the Society, its locals and associated organizations.

The resolution says the new policy is to "encourage whistleblowing in good faith without repercussions and thereby promote good governance."

The protection would cover all aspects of MTS functions from committees and task forces to EFM, the Council of School Leaders, Special Area Groups of Educators and local executives and councils.

It emphasizes that wrongdoing within any organization should be reported. It says wrongdoing "includes, but is not limited to, significant and serious matters that are: potentially contrary to the interests of the Society" or "unlawful, dangerous, involve gross mismanagement of funds or assets or are contrary to the constitution bylaws or policies."

The resolution makes clear that "members reporting concerns in good

faith shall not be subject to repercussions or reprisals."

The proposal is just one of many to be debated at the annual general meeting.

Others include:

- A call for MTS to lobby the provincial government to allocate revenue from the sale of cannabis to:
- An education program for students and their parents on the effects of
- A professional development program for public school teachers that would include recognition of addiction, cannabis policy awareness and an overview of support services for drug use and addictions.
- A resolution that MTS will oppose any attempt to remove principals and viceprincipals from under the umbrella of the Society. Given moves in other provinces and with the impending education review in Manitoba "we must reaffirm the position of the Society the principals and vice-principals are first-

- and-foremost principal teachers of the school. The inclusion of principals and vice-principals within the Society fosters collaborative, collegial, consultative and cooperative working relationships."
- A proposal to ask the provincial government to review and embed mental health education in curricula throughout grades K-12. "While present in the curriculum, mental health issues are not taught in ways commensurate with our students' needs," the resolution says. "While there are places in the Manitoba K-12 curricula that touch on individual well-being, there have not been efforts to include mental health topics across the curriculum."
- A new policy to ease any financial burden on the relocation of presidents or vice-presidents who are elected from outside Winnipeg and must relocate for the duration of their terms.

Initiatives urged to help women

√he Manitoba Teachers' Society should undertake a number of initiatives to create a path for women to take on leadership roles in education, says a report to the next Provincial Council.

The report of the MTS Women in Educational Leadership Commission recommends a wide range of actions from providing grants to locals to providing more information and learning opportunities for women.

The commission was established two years ago at the MTS Provincial Council (annual general meeting). It held meetings across the province to determine why the number of women in educational leadership was not reflective of the number of women teachers.

For example, while 75 per cent of

Manitoba public school teachers are women, just over 50 per cent hold the position of principal. Women account for 59 per cent of vice-principals.

"Educational partners should undertake a variety of specific actions to ensure the proportional representation of women within their structures," the report says. "These actions must address the barriers women have identified and provide the support they need to be successful in a leadership role."

The commission's recommendations include:

- Using technology to provide members living outside Winnipeg to network and engage in learning experiences.
- Hosting an annual event to support and encourage networking among women who are taking on leadership roles at the

Local level and with the Society.

- Dedicating Society staff to women's issues.
- Providing child care at the annual general meeting and MTS summer seminars with the goal of expanding that to other events.
- Providing grants to assist Locals in developing a strategic plan to implement the recommendations at the local level.
- Review of AGM electoral process for Provincial Executive to facilitate and encourage women's involvement in the political process.

The commission estimates that if all the recommendations were adopted it would cost about \$49,000, not including staff time.

Fee hike of 1.7% proposed

he MTS budget proposed for 2018-2019 recommends a fee increase of 1.7 per cent.

The budget, approved by provincial executive, will be debated and decided at the Society's Provincial Council (annual general meeting) in May. If approved as is, members would see a fee increase of

\$17 per year, to \$1,005 from \$988.

The proposed increase would be the same as last year.

Last year, delegates to Provincial Council transferred \$300,000 from reserves to ease the impact of the fee increase. It is being recommended that the same amount be transferred this year

to be used in the same way.

If the budget recommendations are approved, the total Society operating budget, excluding the Disability Benefits Plan, would be \$15.7 million.

Expenditures and revenues in the final budget could change depending on decisions made at the May meeting.

CANDIDATES FOR PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

Nine MTS members have been nominated so far as members-at-large on the provincial executive for 2018-2019. There are six vacancies. Voting on the executive will take place at the Society's Provincial Council (annual general meeting) in May. Further nominations can be made at that time.

All candidates' election statements and biographies can be viewed on the MTS website at *mbteach.org*

Members-at-Large



Cale Dunbar Brandon



Kerry Enns Border Land



Catherine Hart Seven Oaks



Albert Krynski Portage la Prairie



Cathy Pellizzaro Thompson



Frank Reeves River East Transcona



Valérie Rémillard AÉFM



Sandy Turcotte Seine River



Bea Walker Flin Flon

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ALLIANA REMPEL

Most 11-year-olds don't have a book to their credit, much less one with an endorsement from Malala on the cover. But then, Alliana Rempel is no ordinary Grade 6 student. Alliana's humanitarian heart has been the impetus behind many personal and school projects at Arborg Early Middle Years School. She's helped charities bring refugees to the community and spent time during summer holidays tutoring Syrian newcomers. When she was five she sold pictures she painted to raise money for a youth shelter. At eight, she raised over \$2,000 for the Malala fund by selling her art to five different countries. She is now working on selling enough copies of her book "One" to build a school in Nicaragua.



HAYLEY JENKINS

Hayley Jenkins is a whirlwind of humanitarian activity and a strong promoter of human rights. She's been an integral part of Hands, Heart, and Hope (H3). Globally she has helped raise thousands of dollars to build schools in Ghana and Sierra Leone, raised awareness about women's rights overseas and has helped families to buy goats for an alternative income. She's donated countless hours serving humanitarian causes through bake sales, canteens, special events, paint nights, selling t-shirts and jewelry, collecting money in the cold, selling raffle tickets and much more. Hayley has volunteered at Christmas dinners for the homeless, made blankets for the Thompson Crisis Centre and helped raise funds to build a well in Haiti. Hayley and a fellow R.D. Parker student led the northernmost March for our Lives in Canada.



MACKENZIE CLARK

Mackenzie Clark, a Grade 8 student from École Harrison in Brandon, has been a champion for animals ever since his family took him to his first Brandon Humane Society Event. There he met Kali, a three-legged dog whose leg had been amputated because of extreme abuse. From then on, Mackenzie has been a mainstay of support for the Brandon Humane Society - raising over \$16,000 to date - and a determined advocate for animals. He has met with business, political and community leaders, organized a myriad of fundraising events and spoken at schools and high profile events. Recently, Mackenzie has combined his love for animals with his passion for cycling to create events that make huge contributions to animal welfare.



KUAMIN

Meet Kuamini, Luxton School's 24-member humanitarian group for Grades 4, 5 and 6. Whether it's a project for raising awareness, funds, or items for local charities and global initiatives, Kuamini plans are always student generated. The group has raised funds for a family that lost their home in a fire, helped to provide medicine and raised awareness to end child labour in Ethiopia, Haiti and rural China. They've raised their voices to support Pink Shirt Day and end bullying, and held an assembly to talk about the 94 calls to action for Truth and Reconciliation. They've also taught their fellow students about residential schools on Orange Shirt Day. They are the bright, shining stars of the Luxton community.



You can learn more about the Young Humanitarian Awards at mbteach.org.

Know anyone who should be nominated in 2019?



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BY JENNIFER MCFEE

oys talking about their feelings may not sound like the basis for a club, but it's been a success in one school that is now looking for ways to recreate the experience.

The first-ever Boys Club at John W. Gunn Middle School provided a safe haven for participants explore emotions, acceptance and other sensitive topics.

Funded by a Healthy Together Now grant, the pilot project operated weekly sessions after school for several months.

It was a great success in the eyes Karina Walker, community programming co-ordinator for youth in the River East Transcona School Division.

The program had to pause for a year since there was no male facilitator to run it. However, Walker is hopeful

that it will resume— as long as she can find the right person to take on the leadership

role.

"The person running this program would have to be very open-minded because they deal with sensitive issues and the boys have to be able to engage with the facilitator," says Walker, adding that

she doesn't have any males working for her this year.

"They don't even need to be university educated. They just need

have experience working with kids and with youth programming, and they have to be a kind, caring individual."

For last year's pilot project, a core group of about six boys in grades 6 to 8 gathered weekly after class for Boys Club to hang out and have a snack, followed by discussions and activities.

"Typically, males don't like to really express their feelings on any issue, so we wanted to try with Boys Club. They shared feelings on their mental health and anxiety and positive friendships — that's something that they talked about a lot," Walker says.

"It was just a nice place for guys to come and hang out where they didn't feel the pressure to fit in or the pressure to be physically active either."

Some of the club's activities were inspired by a documentary called The Mask You Live In, which explores how boys and young men try to navigate their own path within the narrow

definition of masculinity.

"In one activity, they wrote down feelings they weren't allowed to express and then they threw them across the room to each other," Walker explains. "Someone else would read it out and you wouldn't know exactly who was the one saying it."

The participants also created a kindness project and put posters all over the school to promote kind behaviours.

As last year's facilitator, Austin Valentin was able to witness positive changes in the group of boys.

"I would say that most boys are raised in a way that they're taught to suppress their emotions," says Valentin, a psychology student at the University of Manitoba.

"And it can be a big problem for them later in life when they're going into their relationships and starting a family."

For many of the boys, it was an eye-opening experience to

realize the impact of societal pressures.

"We talked about feelings and mental health and what thev see in the m e d i a depression that tells them they should be a certain way. They tried to brainstorm ways that they could see that in their school and how that carries into their personal lives," Valentin says.

"A lot of them were pretty receptive to it, which is nice. It turned out really well. I think they enjoyed it, for the most part. I hope it was

"Typically, males don't like to really express their feelings on any issue, so we wanted to try with Boys Club. They shared feelings on their mental health and anxiety and positive friendships that's something that they talked about a lot," - Karina Walker

> something that opened their eyes to tell them they could be whatever they want to be."

Another great benefit emerged from friendships that formed along the way.

> "The boys that came to Boys Club weren't necessarily boys that hung out with each other. As we were talking about all those things, I noticed that started spending a lot more time with each other," Valentin says.

"I think it was teaching them that they all have things common, which isn't something that they typically learn in a school

For Valentin, it's essential to get boys talking about their emotions and delving into topics that can sometimes be difficult to broach.

"When I was their age, even well into high school, we never talked about those kinds of things," he says. "It's important for kids to talk about those kinds of things at school because they certainly never did before."

Like Walker, Valentin hopes Boys Club will be revived and offered again.

it's something that can continue, I think it would be a great program for a lot of young men. It's an interesting world that kids are growing up in right now, and I think that there are a lot of important things that people need to be open to talking about," he says.

"It's good for kids to learn about the things that are going to be very prevalent in their life thev're starting go into high school and their life is developing. It's important to start talking about these things at a young age."

With some funds left over from last year's grant, Walker planned to host a one-day workshop open to boys in grades 6 to 12 from across the school division. The focus of the event is on mental health, goal setting and anxiety.

She also hosts ongoing monthly empowerment events for girls in grades 6 to 12, and she is always in need of volunteers to help out. As another way to get involved, Walker welcomes donations of craft supplies, snacks and items to fill goodie bags for the kids to take home.

As well, she is still searching for a Boys Club facilitator for next year. For more information, Walker can be reached at 204-669-9412 ext. 2960 or at kwalker2@retsd.mb.ca.



Heading into the 100th year of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, The Teacher will be running articles about the revolution and evolution of the organization, its challenges and successes.

rest tatus

BY MIREILLE THERIAULT

we topics in the history of The MTS are as vital to understanding the evolution of the organization as the quest for recognition of professional status for teachers.

It was a pursuit that burned with a passion but got colder and colder through the decades, to a point the flame flickered and died as it became clear that the vision of teachers was not the same as successive governments.

recognition as opposed establishment of professional status is an important distinction. Despite low pay, the majority of teachers had, from the very start, considered themselves to be part of a vital and esteemed profession.

While some teachers feared they would lose credibility in asking for higher pay, it wasn't lost on the founders of the Manitoba Teachers' Federation that although the general public, school boards and politicians often spoke of the dedication and nobility of teaching, real respect evaporated with the harsh realities of economics. They were convinced that an equal balance of higher standards and higher pay was needed for progress.

What teachers sought from government was to stop the lip service and accord them not only a living wage, but the power to influence decisions affecting public education on the whole. The MTF envisioned a professional body modeled on the same principles governing the medical and legal professions, but somehow teaching wouldn't fit the mold.

In addressing the AGM of 1924, the visiting general secretary of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation said:

"We have in our system many teachers whose academic qualifications and length of university training exceed the requirements

for either law or medicine, but on the other hand we have a large number who fall very far short in comparison, and the general public conception is based on the larger number. ... A further complication, which is often overlooked, lies in the fact that, whereas members of most other professions set up as individual practitioners, teachers are almost all employed by various educational bodies, and, what is of vital importance, by public bodies, who pay teachers' salaries from public funds.

What teachers sought from government was to stop the lip service and accord them not only a living wage, but the power to influence decisions affecting public education on the whole.

"These factors make it impossible to take ... any other profession as the model upon which to build, when we are considering teaching as a profession. It would seem to be the wiser course to adapt the essential features which determine a profession, to the peculiar circumstances and needs of teaching."

The MTF had already identified some of these key points and started work on many, including the first incarnations of a code of ethics, pursuing a seat at the table in matters of education policy, and establishing subcommittees to raise the standards required for both entrance to normal school and graduation from a more robust program of study and beyond.

Progress was coming but the depression made it difficult for leaders to focus on much else than helping members keep body and soul together. Twice in the late '30s the Legislative Committee met with defeat in presenting professional bills. They tried again in 1940 with The Teacher Profession Act and were defeated yet again.

In 1942, some progress was made as outlined in a report of the MTS Legislative Committee.

"The passing of The Manitoba Teachers' Society Act set forth and assented to March 31st, 1942, marked a turning point in the affairs of Manitoba teachers. It marks the culmination of years of patient struggle for professional status; it now brings teachers in line with other recognized professional groups. True, the present Act does not embody all that we had envisioned but even its severest critics will admit that its passing marks a distinct achievement."

The biggest shortfall of the Act, as they were to see over the next three decades, lay in the power of certification by the Department of Education and Minister of Education who ultimately decided who could teach in

Allowing hundreds of permit teachers into schools during the Second World War, when much of the work force was diverted to the war effort, didn't seem unreasonable. But the practice continued throughout the 1960's, even after the Faculty of Education was established at the University of Manitoba and the era of Normal Schools came to an end.

The "emergency" 12-week summer course instituted by the Department of Education in 1957 was finally discontinued in 1971.

House Accords Teachers Right To Organize

THE right of teachers to organize the teaching profession in Manitoba was approved by the Legislature Friday as it passed second reading of a bill to incorporate the Manitoba Teachers' Society Act.

The bill was introduced by Hon, van Schultz, minister of education. After years of negotia-tion with teachers and trustees, he said, the profession would be accorded a recognized status similar to that given law, medi-cine, pharmacy and dentistry.

The Winnipeg Evening Tribune - 1942



The Manitoba Teacher - 1992

The push-back on para-professionals would continue even longer.

The extent to which executive discussions focused on the need to pursue a professional bill in the 1960s are unclear for lack of records pointing to a proposal to government. In Chalk, Sweat and Cheers J. W. Chafe noted in reference to The Society's increased focus on curriculum and professional development opportunities:

... Nor can we wait to embark on the program until we win professional status ... there is not the remotest chance of securing it at this time - that is, by legislative means. But we can achieve it by doing those things which are the essence of professionalism, and to such a degree that the public may decide to assist us further in our work by legislative enactment."

In 1973 an Ad Hoc Professional Bill committee was established yet again and after seven years, endless debate and ten drafts, a delegation met with Minister of Education Keith Cosens on April 22, 1980 to present this latest proposal. By that time wage and price controls and declining enrollment were on the horizon and the need to actively pursue the proposal became an issue of priorities and divisiveness. Some argued the timing was perfect since granting professional status and due process cost the government nothing financially. Others like Assistant GS, Asper, made the case that with cuts to education funding, "What good does a professional bill do if a thousand teachers are laid off?"

It wasn't until 1989 that the provincial executive named a task force to re-visit the

The 1992 annual brief to the Minister of Education reiterated:

indicated in 1991, increased responsibility is not synonymous with empowerment. The Society advocates policies which delegate to teachers the right to make decisions affecting the delivery of their service as well as establishing some control over their professional lives.

"The complexity of today's classroom with the number of individual students requiring support from other agencies has resulted in outside professionals giving not

Given the opportunity, government will disregard teachers' professional bodies. The pursuit of status means something much different now than in the beginning.

support and assistance to teachers but rather additional persons telling them what they must do. Parallel to the requirement to reestablish teacher classroom autonomy and professional decision-making is the Society's continuing effort to have enacted its proposed Professional Bill."

Sadly, the only bills in the '90s making headlines in The Manitoba Teacher were Bill 22 and Bill 72. As in the past, cuts to education redirected resources but the Society wasn't about to let it go altogether. Quite the opposite. The MTS revamped the proposal and this time didn't shy away from addressing the biggest issue between the Society and the Minister of Education.

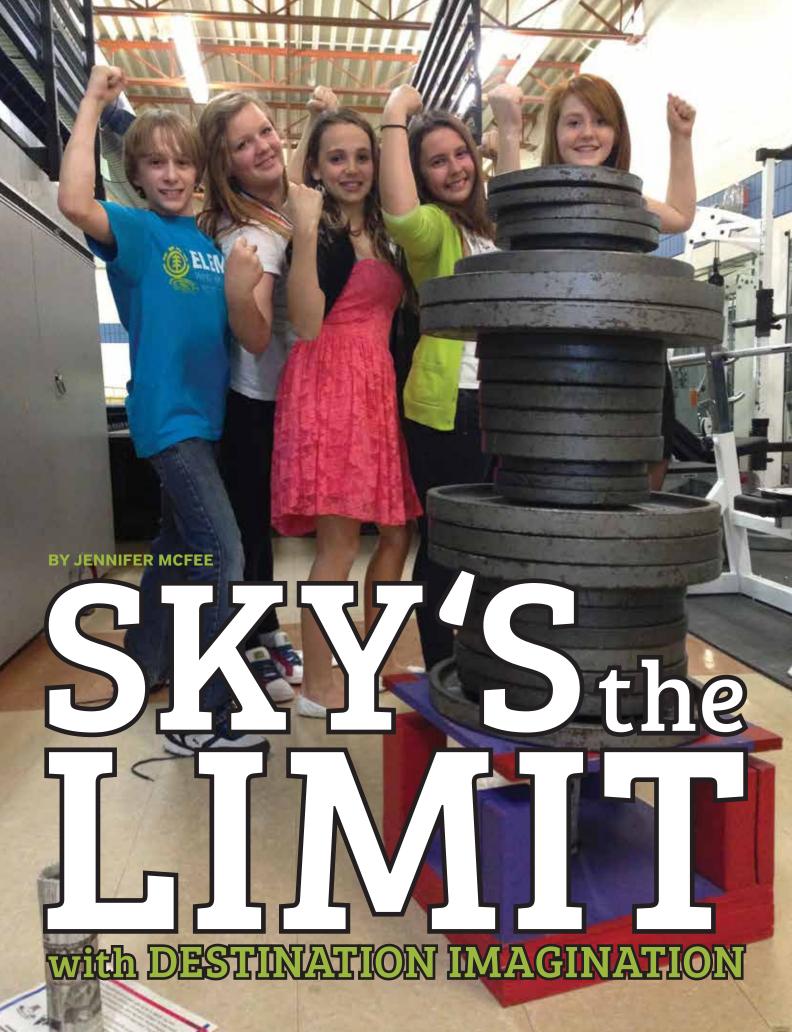
It wasn't about qualifications. Not ethics. Not even professional development. It came down to a power struggle that was reflected, not too subtlety, in the title of the document.

In 1997 the annual brief to Premier Gary Filmon and Education Minister Linda McIntosh, included a proposal for Professional Self-Goverance which would result in the formation of a College of Teachers of sorts. The MTS proposal was markedly different from provinces such as BC and Ontario where similar entities were government led and government controlled. Ours would be teacher-led, funded and affiliated with the MTS, but the majority of board members would also be teachers.

Despite previous comments by the Manitoba government that they were open to considering a professional bill, they ignored this one.

In January 1999, with repeated attacks on funding and unilateral declarations of teacher certification, the Society drew attention to the languishing self-governance proposal from two years ago only to be met with the same deafening silence.

The last 20 years or so have proven that, given the opportunity, government will disregard and even usurp teachers' professional bodies in other provinces. It is no wonder that The MTS, having witnessed those tactics, came to realize that the pursuit of professional "status" means something much different now than it did in the beginning. The paradox is that, from the beginning, teachers have always known they were part of a vital and esteemed profession.



77 hen you embark on any adventure, often the journey is just as important as the destination. That's certainly the case with Destination

Imagination (DI), an international organization that aims to inspire hands-on learning and creativity. Through open-ended challenges, teams of students benefit from their journey to come up with an effective solution.

Each year, more than 150,000 Destination Imagination participants around the globe strive to solve challenges that incorporate technical, scientific, engineering, fine arts, improvisational and service learning components for a well-rounded approach.

Shauna Cornwell, Manitoba's affiliate director for Destination Imagination, outlines the benefits of getting involved.

"It focuses on creativity and innovation for students ranging from age three to university level. It's been around for over 30 years in over 30 different countries," she says.

"DI is all about focusing on that 4C competency-based learning and developing resilience in kids. Failure is just an opportunity for learning and taking risks. Kids learn about perseverance and embrace challenge. They really come out of their shell, build confidence and feel good about what they share."

Destination Imagination puts out six STEAM-based challenges each year, plus a non-competitive early learning challenge. For several months, teams of two to seven students come together at four different levels elementary, middle, secondary and university - to tackle the task of finding a solution.

Their solution is then shared at a tournament in front of appraisers who measure their approach against set criteria.

year, Manitoba's provincial tournament will be held at the University of Winnipeg on March 21 from 4:30 to 9 p.m. About 20 to 30 teams are expected to present their solutions to a central challenge, incorporating "team choice elements" to showcase their additional strengths.

As another component of the tournament, the teams participate in an instant challenge, which is revealed to them on the spot. These short problem-solving activities need to be solved quickly, usually within 10 minutes.

"This is a shorter mini-challenge that looks at 4C learning, focusing on critical and creative thinking, collaboration and communication," Cornwell said.

"They might be building a tower on a beach ball or a bridge between two chairs or designing a gadget and making an

infomercial in a short time frame. They are appraised in that moment on how well they work together and how well they meet the criteria of the challenge."

Teams that excel might have the chance to advance to the global finals, which will be held this year in Knoxville, Tenn., from May 23 to 26. In 2017, four Manitoba teams had the chance to compete at the global level, which brings together more than 17,000 attendees for the annual event.

"One of the things I appreciate the most is that it's very much a strength-based approach. Kids come together as a team to recognize and showcase their strengths," Cornwell says. "Through DI, they learn how to learn and how to think."

Lonnie Liske, principal of Lac du Bonnet Senior School, has been involved with Destination Imagination for more than a decade - currently at the school level and previously as Manitoba's affiliate director.

Once he got started, there was no turning back. "Most people fall in love with it. It's so exciting for students. You see a lot of the growth in the kids that you can't necessarily quantify," he said.

"The biggest transformation that I've seen is their mindset. These kids become problemsolvers."

Destination Imagination participants often sing the praises of the program, even after they have finished school and transitioned to the working world.

"They develop a problem-solving mindset that employers are looking for. Recently, I got an email from a graduate who's in Lake Louise working at a busy resort. She said that she is thriving, thanks to DI," Liske says.

"In the busyness of it all, she has the ability to calmly solve problems and deal with people. She's doing very well and is being recognized by the people she deals with and she credits that to DI."

Confidence blossoms as participants develop multiple skill sets at the same time, including many transferable talents.

"They develop stress management, time management, leadership, collaboration. They

really have to get out of their comfort zone,"

"There is also logical and critical thinking. As well, they have to come up with an original thought, which we define as creativity."

This year at Lac du Bonnet Senior School, four teams of five to seven students are currently working on their DI challenges.

"We only have 215 kids, so that's over 10 per cent of our population. They're spending multiple hours during lunch and after school and on weekends working on their solutions," Liske says.

"There's no such thing as adult interference. The kids have to come up with their own solutions - and that's something else the kids typically like. They might find it a little awkward at first because they're used to being told what to do. But once they figure out the sky's the limit, then they start to really like the program."

In fact, the students and staff are so involved with Destination Imagination that it has almost become part of the school culture.

"Two of us run the program, and there are three teachers that work as team managers. All of our middle years teachers do this with their kids, too, even if it's not a competitive model," Liske says.

"They've accepted this as a great learning strategy, so they'll do instant challenges in their class because they see the value in it. They're finding different ways to assess the kids, and the kids do a lot of self-assessments too. It's really great."

As for his own involvement, Liske remains hooked on the program.

"I taught phys-ed for a lot of years and I have a business background. I never thought I'd be involved in anything like this. I've been with it for over 10 years and, busy as I am, I can't imagine giving this up because I see how it benefits the kids. I'm completely energized by seeing the thoughts that these kids come up with," he says.

"You can't get that in a typical classroom setting. The nature of the program allows for kids to be so creative and use their imagination. Then they come up with these amazing solutions to problems they're given. We often watch our students here with shivers down our spine and a tear in the eye. It's just amazing."

For anyone who would like to get involved, volunteer appraisers are always in demand for the provincial tournament. Teachers can also step up to become team managers, and training is available online and in person.

More information about Destination Imagination is available www.destinationimagination.org.

Tour success, to be continued

BY ANNE BENNETT

Gould toured the province in a series of regional meetings. The goal was to share information and hear the perspectives of teachers on a variety of issues facing public education. The response was tremendous, with more than 700 members in attendance - an impressive showing made more so by the poor weather and road conditions encountered on a number of dates.

"The tour was a great experience, and one I plan to repeat," says Gould. "Teachers are interested in how the political landscape shapes initiatives impact their classrooms, professional development and pension security. It was good to go out and meet our members on their turf."

At each of the ten sessions Gould tackled four key priorities through short presentations and a Q&A. Informational brochures on each topic were left with members - and posted to the MTS website - so those in attendance could share the information with colleagues.

"It's important for me to address not only the Society's current priorities, but also those we can see on the horizon," says Gould. "Getting that information out in a variety of ways, from our website to The Teacher magazine to social media and now face-to-face regional meetings, is essential. Our members need to know the Society is responding to government initiatives relative to literacy and numeracy, pension security, French language education, and Bill 28: the Public Services Sustainability Act (which freezes teacher salaries), among other things."

Overall, meeting members in person is what Gould values most. "The exchanges I have at these events, where I get immediate feedback on the issues - I can't overemphasize the value of it. It keeps me grounded in what's going on both in the classroom and the staffroom. It's that sort of exchange that keeps us on track and ensures we've moving forward with shared purpose."



"The tour was a great experience, and one I plan to repeat. Teachers are interested in how the political landscape shapes initiatives that impact their classrooms, professional development and pension security. It was good to go out and meet our members on their turf."

- Norm Gould, MTS President

The approach appears to be working. The province recently signaled its intent to fill positions it left vacant in the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF).

"It's an indication we're being heard," Gould said. "Certainly a number of factors influence a government's decision-making, however we're striving to maintain a constructive dialogue with Minister Wishart, informed by input from these regional meetings. And we'll continue working with him to carve a path forward that achieves what we all want - the highest standard of public education for our children."

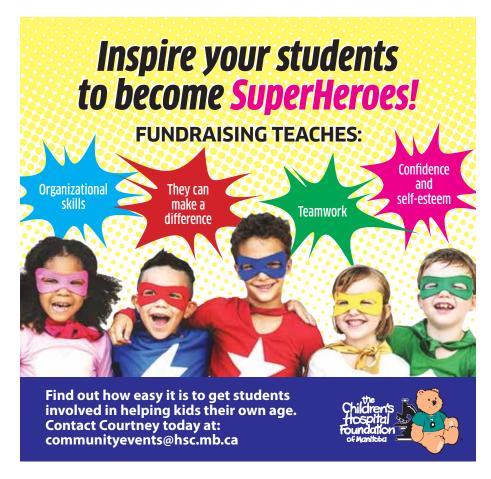
Gould plans another round of regional

meetings for the fall, as we approach municipal elections on October 24, 2018.

"We created some great momentum this spring and I want to build on that. I'm grateful to everyone who came out to listen and share their thoughts. I hope to meet with even more members this fall."

Watch for details on the next round of regional meetings in The Teacher magazine, on the MTS website and on our social media pages.







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Confidence in MTS strong

BY SAMANTHA TURENNE

ember confidence in abilities of The Manitoba Teachers' Society to represent the best interest of teachers as well as be the authority on issues affecting public education is strong.

That was among the findings of the most recent member poll, in which 87 per cent of public school teachers said they are better off being members of MTS.

In the annual membership poll, conducted by Viewpoints Research on behalf of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, 805 public school teachers were asked about their views on the effectiveness of MTS and to weigh in on the benefits of membership.

When asked about MTS' ability to advocate for public education 95 per cent of respondents were confident in its ability to do so, up three points since 2016.

Furthermore, the view that MTS is doing an excellent job has doubled since 2014 (33 per cent), with 85 per cent of respondents rating the work of MTS as excellent or

It is interesting to note that, confidence in MTS' ability to advocate for public education and the view that it is doing a good or excellent job representing teachers' rights rises as members' view of their teaching experience since the last provincial election worsens.

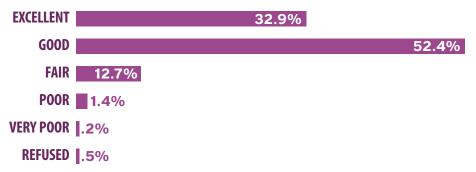
According to the membership poll, a majority of teachers (51 per cent) feel their experience as educators has worsened under the Pallister government and are opposed to the direction the government is moving in on education (67 per cent).

In a time when the government's direction on education is contrary to the views of frontline teachers, it is not surprising to see that members are placing a higher value on things like job security, support and strength in numbers - rights and protections afforded to them as members of MTS.

More than 40 per cent, an increase of two per cent, point to support and protection (job security) as the number one benefit of MTS membership, while 17 per cent place great value on strength in numbers.



Would you say The Manitoba Teachers' Society is doing an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of representing teachers' rights and issues in Manitoba?



Needless to say, as the organization representing all 16,000 public school teachers, strength in numbers is one of our biggest assets.

Respondents placed less value on the ability to bargain collectively (12 per cent) and in fact there was a one percent decrease in the number who said that competitive wages was the most important benefit of MTS membership (four per cent).

Female teachers were more likely to say that support/protection/job security are the main benefits of MTS membership, while males were more likely to choose representation, strength in numbers or bargaining.

In addition to MTS' strength as an advocate for teachers and public education, members also find the organization to be a highly credible and reliable source of information about education issues. Close to 70 per cent of teachers find MTS to be a very reliable source of information on issues pertaining to education in Manitoba.



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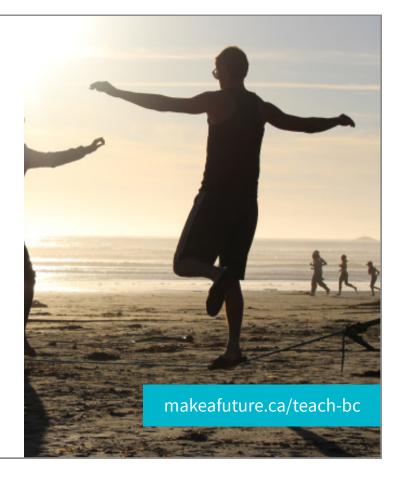
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The myth of lazy young people

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



ver the past several years the general view of millennials and teenagers has fallen somewhat short of adoration.

They've been called lazy, entitled, disinterested in the world and they do little more than peer into their smart phones all day.

It could be summed up in an interview reprinted by Time Magazine, given by Simon Sinek, an author and supposed expert in leadership.

"Millennials are unmanageable in corporations because they are impatient, lazy and entitled as a result of bad parenting, addiction to cellphones and Facebook depression. However, it's not the Millennials' fault. They were dealt a bad hand. The solution is for corporations to parent Millennials by adding 'parenting' as a bullet point to the corporate responsibility charter. This solution requires corporations to hire a new age management consultant to teach middle managers how to parent new hirelings."

You have to wonder what he thought of the March of Our Lives last month where hundreds of thousands of young people marched primarily in the U.S. but also across the world in favour of gun controls. It would seem that Sinek does not have the corner on leadership.

The marches were initiated by the survivors of the school massacre at

KKET

Even as funerals were being held for student victims from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, adults fundraising for a youth baseball team decided to continue raffling off an AR-15 rifle, the kind used in the Florida massacre.

The coach defended the raffle pointing out that none of the seven-to-10-year-old players would be forced to sell tickets. Meanwhile two Republican candidates were also fundraising by raffling off AR-15s. One, Austin Petersen, told a TV station that while he "feels for the victim" ... "there isn't any tragedy that justifies taking away the rights of innocent people." So much for the right to life.

SUDAFED AND STEP BACK

In Florida, CBS points out, it is legal to buy as many guns as you like at any one time and most purchases are not registered. However, it is illegal to purchase more than nine grams of common cold medication like Sudafed within a 30-day period. It is illegal to buy more than three packages at once. And you have to show photo ID to prove you're 18 and every sale is recorded in a database. Such medication contains an ingredient used to create methamphetamine. In 2016, 327 people died from meth use in Florida. In the same year 2,559 gun deaths were recorded.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida where 17 classmates and teachers were killed earlier this year. The students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas were but a handful of the hundreds of thousands - many of whom have been among the 180,000 students exposed to gun violence in schools over the past few decades - who crammed the streets of Washington D.C. to demand action from timid politicians.

The marches were both thoughtful and peaceful. No vandalism. No violence. Nothing set on fire. Compare that with, say, the aftermath of a city winning a sports championship.

Their poise, passion and depth of knowledge were inspiring and should have at least given pause to those who view young people as hollow barrels with nary a thought beyond fashion, Facebook and fads. We've seen it through very specific uplifting accomplishments of MTS Young Humanitarian Award winners. It's obvious, though, the zeal for change to improve people's lives is within a great many more.

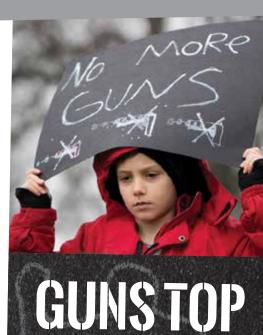
Indeed, it was their supposedly grown-up opponents who showed their shallowness, ignorance and lack of empathy.

There was former Republican U.S. Senator Rick Santorum, telling the students they shouldn't be promoting "phony gun laws."

"How about kids instead of looking to someone else to solve their problem, do something about maybe taking CPR classes or trying to deal with situations that when there is a violent shooter that you can actually respond to that." Yes, CPR does wonders for gunshot victims. And isn't asking that someone else the government - to solve problems a basic feature of democracy?

No matter, some adults have few working brain cells or ethical boundaries. Their "solutions" run from arming teachers to putting armed guards in every school. And their answers to the march have been to attack the students to the point of doctoring photographs to make it appear one of their leaders was tearing up the U.S. Constitution. In fact the original picture was of her tearing up a gun range target.

Whether the students can sustain their movement in the face of such attacks remains to be seen. But at least we have ample proof that the negative banalities about young people are nothing more than myths.



FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Following the massacre in Florida, a Houston school district threatened to suspend students who took part in any demonstrations in favour of tightening gun laws. The superintendent told parents and guardians that students would face a three-day suspension if they joined the protests. "Life is all about choices and every choice has a consequence whether it be positive or negative. We will discipline no matter if it is one, fifty, or five hundred students involved," he wrote. "All will be suspended for three days and parent notes will not alleviate the discipline."

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
I'D LOVE TO HELP.
REACH ME AT RJOB@MBTEACH.ORG

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR



WHEN YOUR LIFE FLASHES BEFORE YOU Blame Google (and Facebook)

Face it, we all have concerns about privacy. We know in the back of our minds that the information we freely transmit to Google, Facebook and a myriad of other apps and platforms remains not in some fluffy cloud somewhere, but etched onto the hard drives of silent servers in distant places.

What if those ephemeral reams of personal information could suddenly be placed under our noses? Suppose the unseen, daily log of our lives was made tangible and served up for us to scrutinize, admire, reminisce about and cringe over.

What if you could find and open the black box of your online life?

Well, Dylan Curran did exactly that. And he wrote about it in an online Guardian post called "Are you ready? Here is all the data Facebook and Google have on you."

Curran launches into a frightfully entertaining snapshot of his own 10-year online history which he accessed by downloading his huge 5.5 GB Google file (356,300 pages in Word) and his 600 MB Facebook file (37,800 pages).

Reviewing copious amounts of his hour-byhour data, Curran learned a few things. Google knows where we are; how long we spend at work, home and everywhere in between; everything we've ever searched for and deleted; which apps we use; the websites we've accessed; who we talk to on Facebook; what countries we speak with, our entire YouTube history and when we go to bed.

It also knows whether our politics play right or left; whether we're depressed, happy or struggle with mental health issues; the files we've downloaded; what we text about and to whom; our gender, age, career and interests, call history, contacts, photos; how to access our webcams and microphones; the smartphones we've owned, how many steps we take every day, and this is just a short list.

Facebook, too, has enough virtual kilos of our personal information to form incredibly accurate psychographic profiles of us. And every app that we give permission to upload our contacts is gathering the goods on our family members and friends.

In a recent CBC piece, Ramona Pringle, tech columnist and Ryerson's master of digital media, asks if the recent Cambridge Analytica/Facebook scandal could become social media's "Big Tobacco" reckoning.

She details how social media has multiple deleterious effects on individuals and societies. She adds that Facebook knew since 2015 that the info Cambridge Analytica had collected on 50 million of us was being compiled and abused – but did nothing to protect us.

Perhaps an extreme approach to an online footprint is the one my son, a software developer, has taken – simply don't have one. He uses his smartphone to call and text, period.

But for many of us, that's simply not practical. Where does that leave us? Can we quit our cavalier relationship with the "Agree" button? Can we bridle the copious amounts of personal info we flush to ad companies every week? Would we subscribe to less-invasive paid platforms on condition they don't sell us down the social river?

There's an old Internet adage that says if you receive an online service for free, you're not the customer, you're the product.

One thing's sure.

We're all guilty of oversharing – and online advertisers exploit us every day.



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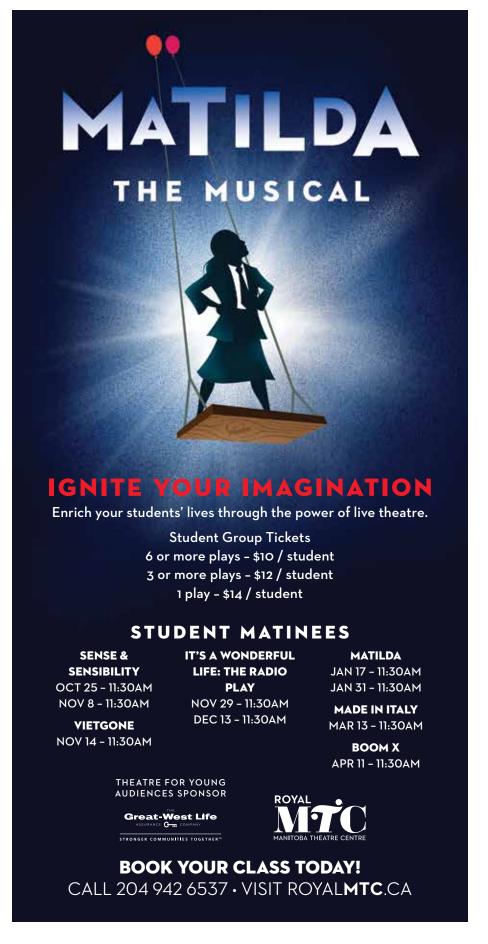
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