

THE MANITOBA

Teacher

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018 VOLUME 96 NUMBER 4 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

NORM GOULD

In a year-end message sent on behalf of Manitoba's public school teachers I said, "this is a time of year we reflect on the year that was and give thanks for what we have."

There is certainly much that, as teachers, we have to be thankful for.

In a year without the inherent conflict of bargaining, we have been able to raise the profile of the Society. We were involved more than ever in numerous events across the province from Pride parades to the Folk Festival to career fairs. More and more teachers attended professional development workshops and seminars sponsored by MTS. To date, as many as 7,000 have crossed the threshold at McMaster House in order to gain professionally from the many offerings.

MTS PD Day was a highlight. Colleagues from across the province bear witness to some of the best professional development anywhere.

The past year wasn't without its unexpected challenges to continued improvements to both working conditions for teachers and students.

Most notably, the provincial government eliminated the mandated class size caps for early years and passed legislation, Bill 28, to freeze public sector salaries for two years and limit them in the following two years. It also made cuts to the department responsible for French language education and has engaged an innovation-based economic development agency to improve early childhood literacy and numeracy to which the Society was asked to contribute as an afterthought.

Those concerns are among issues that crossed from one year to the next. We're looking ahead on how to best address them, with the help of our membership.

The Society has joined with other public sector unions to challenge the legislation, yet to be proclaimed, in court this coming May. It is heartening that a poll of members, commissioned by MTS, shows that a vast majority of public school teachers support our stance (see the story on page 10).

As of now, we are uncertain how Bill 28, if it is not enacted, will impact collective bargaining. All locals will begin negotiations on new contracts later this year.

It may seem odd to be bargaining with the sword of Bill 28 hanging above the table, but we must enter these talks as we would any other year.

On the class size issue we will be reaching out to members to gather information to determine the impact on K-3 teachers. So far, we have found there is already a significant negative impact as shown in the poll results as explained in the story on page 10.

Along with our education partners within the French language community and with the support of the membership, and in particular, *Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba (EFM)*, we will continue our support for French language education and urge the government to keep resources for it at traditional levels.

Despite being excluded from key education conversations by the province, we will be consulting with you, public school teachers, on all these issues. Officers of the Society will be meeting with members in all seven of the Society's regions this month and next.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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INSIDE MTS

FOUR RESOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

BOBBI TAILLEFER, GENERAL SECRETARY

Happy New Year!

At the start of every New Year, we can't avoid reading and hearing about the making of resolutions for the upcoming year. In fact, there are even experts who make the rounds of all the news shows and opine about how to work on a resolution until you achieve success in reaching it. They say that in order to achieve your goal you have to have passion, conviction and commitment.

Well I have a lot of those three things so, according to the experts, I am in a great position to achieve success in attaining my goals for this year. So here goes....

Resolution #1 - To support public education and demonstrate its success

I am a fervent supporter and believer in public education for all. I think that the past 100 years have demonstrated that public schools are the great equalizer for all students regardless of socio-economic status, religion, ethnicity, level of ability or any other method of categorization that can be applied. Manitoba children have benefited from great education in our province and have gone on to do wonderful things in the world. It is our intention to share these success stories with you. In the coming year we will be unveiling many personal stories of appreciation for public education and educators from Manitobans of all walks of life. Check out *#MyTeacherMyStory* on the MTS website and in this magazine and feel free to join in. I invite you to share a story or a video that helps to ensure that the public hears how a teacher has influenced your life. I also ask you to promote this initiative with friends and family who surely have inspiring stories to tell.

I personally always try to share my experiences about the amazing programs that I have seen and the public school educators who make them come to life. This is important for me because I am at the age and stage where my contemporaries are long removed from being in schools and knowing what is happening in Manitoba classrooms. I believe that it is vitally important to report on the innumerable successes of public education so the public can be informed and assured that our classrooms are great places to be.

Resolution #2 - To support teachers, principals, vice principals and clinicians so they can do their best work

I appreciate how fortunate I am to work for the 15,000 members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society. I am also enthused to be working closely with the superb professional staff of MTS who, on a daily basis, work full out to provide members with all the necessary support they need to do their important work. We offer stellar professional development and professional learning – please check out the current offerings on our website www.mbteach.org and look for Professional Development and Courses. This year alone, we have had 7,000 attendees to MTS professional offerings! Make your own resolution to be one of them too.

Resolution #3 - To work with government and also to hold them to account

Our Minister, Ian Wishart, is an intelligent and kind man who genuinely cares about education and kids. There is no question about that. However, in the past few months, there have been questionable decisions and hasty implementation of policy that can only be characterized as demonstrating a lack of understanding and foresight. Cases in point are the significant changes to the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF), the "innovation" exercise with North Forge and the Summit for Learning for Life: Literacy and Numeracy. You'll find more information on these controversial initiatives in this magazine. As well, we will be commenting on them during Regional Meetings. It is important to state that while MTS is opposed to these initiatives, it is committed to an open and frank dialogue with Minister Wishart.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society wants members to note that it is coming to you in 2018. We have begun a series of Regional Meetings set up in order to discuss subjects that will affect your profession and your working environment. We want to inform you and to be informed by you. See the dates of meetings across the province at mbteach.org.

President's Regional Meetings:

Winnipeg, Wednesday, Jan. 17
at Kildonan Collegiate

Brandon, Monday, Jan. 22
at Vincent Massey Collegiate

Portage la Prairie, Tuesday,
Jan. 23 at Portage Collegiate

Thompson, Tuesday, Feb. 6
at R.D. Parker Collegiate

Winnipeg, Wednesday, Feb. 7
at Sturgeon Heights Collegiate

Gimli, Monday, Feb. 12
at Lakeview Resort

Beausejour, Tuesday, Feb. 13
at the Sun Gro Centre

Steinbach, Tuesday, Feb. 20
at Steinbach RSS

Dauphin, Thursday, Feb. 22
at Dauphin RCSS

Meetings will be held after school with exact times posted on www.mbteach.org as they are finalized. Pre-register to attend the meetings in your area by following the link: <https://memberlink.mbteach.org/Event.axd?e=823>

Resolution #4 - To remain professional, collegial and show gratitude to others

I am so very fortunate to work with esteemed colleagues who are simply the best at what they do. It is important to me that they know that I appreciate their work and that I notice how hard they work at helping you. I encourage you to do the same – let your colleagues know that they are doing a great job and that you appreciate them.

My words to live by this year are from Mahatma Gandhi – "Live as if you were to die tomorrow and learn as if you were to live forever."

Stay well.



WEED 101 WHAT COLORADO LEARNED

BY JUDY OWEN

Sarah Collins hasn't seen a huge increase in the number of stoned students at her Colorado high school.

Nor has she been handing out more drug-related discipline since the American state legalized the recreational use and purchase of marijuana by citizens aged 21 and older four years ago.

What the dean and former teacher has noticed, though, is a shift in attitude by students and their parents.

No longer is marijuana use viewed as a crime or health concern.

"I don't think we've necessarily had an increase in behavioural incidents, but I think usage among our student population is probably up," says Collins, who works at Northglenn High School in the city of Northglenn just north of Denver.

"For me, the bigger issue than that is of parents and the community; it's very difficult to have those conversations. They sort of think that because it's legal for some people, it's not as big of a deal.

"I've had students say, 'Well, it's legal, like I'm just not old enough yet.' When we ask where did you get it, I've had students say, 'Well, my parents smoke so I just took some of theirs.'

"So then the conversation with parents is kind of difficult. They don't see the negative impact of people using it. They think it's just an issue because the kid's younger."

It's a similar scenario for Dr. Jason Glass, the superintendent of Jefferson County School District, the second largest school district in Colorado.

"Canadian educators should expect some marginal increase in marijuana use and discipline violations related to this substance in schools, but if it's anything like what Colorado experienced it's not a dramatic change," he says.

"That's part of the debate or conversation. We just haven't seen this massive infusion. It's been marginal and at the edges."

The conversation he's had and heard about cannabis has also changed, even though it's still illegal to use in public.

"I don't have any evidence to back this up other than my personal opinion just being a citizen in the state, but (legalization) has sort of removed the stigma that comes with a substance being illegal that was there before," Glass says. "That's happened across the board in the state with the population."

Glass oversees about 85,000 pre-

kindergarten to Grade 12 students in 157 schools. One difference he's aware of is the type of pot educators are finding.

"There is still a sort of illegally grown and an illegally distributed marijuana that comes into our schools, but what we've really seen the increase in is marijuana brought into our schools that was purchased legally and then resold to minors, much as what you might see with alcohol that's bought at a liquor store and resold to a minor," he says.

With the Canadian government planning to legalize the purchase of marijuana by summer 2018, Collins and Glass give a glimpse of what the future may hold for educators north of the border and offer insight into what could have been done better to prepare schools for the new law.

Collins is one of two deans at her high school in the Adams 12 Five Star Schools District. She's in her third year as a dean, which she explains is an administrative position and "teacher on special assignment." It's her seventh year at Northglenn, where she started as a language arts teacher. She previously taught that subject at a middle school for five years.

The deans deal with school discipline

among the 2,100 students from grades nine to 12, including students under the influence of drugs or alcohol, attendance concerns and misbehaviour.

Collins says the attitude change toward marijuana since its legalization on Jan. 1, 2014, makes it more difficult for educators to convince students and their parents about the harmful effects of cannabis on developing brains.

“We talk about the importance of brain development and that they still shouldn’t be using it because they’re young,” she says. “Before it was legalized, the conversations were different because people overall thought it’s not OK, it’s a drug. I think now people kind of justify it a little bit more.”

“Teacher union-wise, we took a pretty strong stance against it for a variety of reasons. We’ve all had to come to terms with the uses, that we see positive impact from medical purposes and then the negatives in school.”

The Liberal government’s cannabis tax force recommended a Canadian minimum age of 18 for purchase, but provincial and territorial governments can decide their own age minimum. Manitoba is considering age 19.

The Canadian Medical Association’s submission in 2016 to the task force pointed out that brains aren’t fully developed until a person reaches about age 25. Some of the risks it cited included cognitive impairment, cardiovascular and pulmonary effects (i.e. chronic bronchitis) and increased risk of mental illness. It recommended a minimum age of 21 and a minimum of 25 for “more potent” products.

Collins also flagged the potency of marijuana in her state.

“Because people can get it legally and it’s not the grown-in-the-basement or backyard kind of marijuana, it’s more potent,” she says.

“I think that’s one of the factors that probably no one has really thought of or it hasn’t really been addressed. The potency of the marijuana that kids are smoking is significantly higher than if they’re getting it from somebody that grows it at their house.”

Her school’s police resource officer can look at and smell the pot that’s found and tell its potency, she adds. They’re also finding more containers from dispensaries that sell medical marijuana, revealing someone is buying that pot and likely selling it to the kids.

The impact of drugs on the brain’s development is emphasized when students face drug-related suspensions. If students have three offences during three calendar years, they can potentially be expelled, Collins says.

Her school district’s policy is suspensions

“CANADIAN EDUCATORS SHOULD EXPECT SOME MARGINAL INCREASE IN MARIJUANA USE AND DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS RELATED TO THIS SUBSTANCE IN SCHOOLS, BUT IF IT’S ANYTHING LIKE WHAT COLORADO EXPERIENCED IT’S NOT A DRAMATIC CHANGE. THAT’S PART OF THE DEBATE OR CONVERSATION. WE JUST HAVEN’T SEEN THIS MASSIVE INFUSION. IT’S BEEN MARGINAL AND AT THE EDGES.”

*- Dr. Jason Glass, superintendent
Jefferson County School*



“TEACHER UNION-WISE, WE TOOK A PRETTY STRONG STANCE AGAINST IT FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. WE’VE ALL HAD TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE USES, THAT WE SEE POSITIVE IMPACT FROM MEDICAL PURPOSES AND THEN THE NEGATIVES IN SCHOOL.”

*- Sarah Collins, dean
Northglenn High School*

for three to five days, depending on each case. The district holds drug and alcohol classes for those students, as well as some attended with parents, and online classes. If completed, suspensions can be decreased.

Glass says one popular form of marijuana is a growing concern.

“One of the things that we know has increased is the use of marijuana that’s coming in via edibles, so things like candy or brownies or cookies or something like that,” he says.

“It makes it really hard for us to monitor when it comes into the school. We suspect that there’s been an increase in usage just because it’s coming in in forms that make it much harder for us to detect, but we really don’t have any evidence to support that.”

“Certainly when a kid brought in a marijuana cigarette or joint, we could tell pretty clearly what that was. But a gummy bear looks like a gummy bear so it’s much more difficult for us to enforce. I wouldn’t say that we’ve seen a massive infusion of students sort of slipping them to one another. That occurs, but it may not occur at any greater rate than it did before.”

A U.S. federal law limits the location of retail marijuana stores to a minimum of 1,000 feet from schools, but local governments can decrease that distance or grandfather existing, closer businesses.

Collins says there’s a store across the four-lane road in front of her high school, but it hasn’t caused problems and the owner has talked with school officials.

“He’s trying to be a very positive community member,” Collins says. “(Store staff) also monitor the parking lot really closely.”

“During our lunch period or frequent high-traffic times, they actually have a security person that comes out into that parking lot to make sure kids don’t come in. I don’t think we’ve had anything as far as that goes.”

If Collins has one message for Canadian educators, it’s be better prepared before marijuana becomes legal.

“I would say going back, if we could do some parts of this over, I think just the education piece would be helpful,” she says.

“Our freshman students or our seventh grade, eighth grade, probably in our health classes there should be some curriculum about what happens to your brain when you do these things.”

“I think education for parents and students on what the negative impacts are, and then resources for parents and students when they find themselves in those positions, that would be the big thing, to set up resources and classes and things prior to it being legalized.”



WEED REVENUE THAT GOES TO SCHOOLS

Millions of tax dollars from the sale of retail and medical marijuana has been pumped into the Colorado education system since legalization in 2014. Colorado has a population of 5.5 million.

Here's a breakdown of the tax revenue and the amounts that have gone to public and charter schools, according to the Colorado Department of Revenue (CDR) and Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

School Funding

In 2017-18, the CDE's state education funding was a total US\$5.6 billion. It received \$90.3 million from marijuana tax revenue for that school year.

Marijuana Revenue

The CDR releases reports of tax and fee revenue from the state-wide sale of medical and recreation marijuana by calendar year. It was:

- 2017 – \$226.1 million (January through November)
- 2016 – \$193.6 million
- 2015 – \$130.4 million
- 2014 – \$67.5 million

Changes were made to the tax structure on July 1, 2017, boosting the total of taxes to 30 per cent from 28 per cent. Fifteen per cent comes from an excise tax and 15 per cent from a special sales tax.

Excise Tax

The 15 per cent excise tax is on wholesale retail marijuana related to sales from cultivation and product manufacturing facilities. Medical marijuana is exempt.

The first \$40 million of the excise tax goes into a Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program assistance fund for school capital construction. Revenue above that amount is funneled into the treasury department's public school fund. The excise tax is one of four funding sources for BEST.

In the fiscal year 2015-16, an additional one-time payment of \$40 million went to the BEST fund. Since then, it's been \$40 million per year.

Special Sales Tax

When the special sales tax on retail marijuana and related products was bumped up to 15 per cent from 10 per cent on July 1, 2017, it became exempt from the 2.9 per cent state sales tax. However, that state sales tax still applies to medical marijuana and its products.

Ten per cent of the 15 per cent marijuana retail tax revenue is allocated to local governments and distributed according to the percentage of marijuana sales within

city and/or county boundaries.

The remaining 90 per cent is a state government share divvied up three ways in the fiscal year 2017-18 with:

- 28.15 per cent (minus \$30 million) going into a general fund
- \$30 million into a state public school fund the CDE distributed to rural school districts, with 55 per cent for large rural districts and 45 per cent to small rural districts
- 71.85 per cent into the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund.

10% OF THE 15% MARIJUANA RETAIL TAX REVENUE IS ALLOCATED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND DISTRIBUTED ACCORDING TO THE PERCENTAGE OF MARIJUANA SALES WITHIN CITY AND/OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES.

However, for 2018-19 the 90 per cent will be split differently by:

- 15.56 per cent staying in the general fund
- 71.85 per cent credited to the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund
- 12.59 per cent going to the state public school fund and distributed to all school districts

Marijuana Tax Cash Fund

Money in the cash fund must be spent the following year on health care, monitoring marijuana health effects, health education, substance abuse prevention, treatment programs and law enforcement.

The CDE has used revenue from this fund for four programs. In 2017-18 that was:

- \$11.9 million for a school health professional grant program to address behavioural health issues in schools
- \$2 million for school bullying prevention and education grants
- \$2 million for drop-out prevention programs
- \$4.4 million for early literacy competitive grants to ensure reading is "embedded" into kindergarten to Grade 3 curriculum.

POT CASH FOR SCHOOLS A 'DROP IN THE BUCKET'

If Canadians believe weed will provide a windfall for school funding, that's a pipe dream.

At least, that's been the case for public schools in Colorado since the American state voted to legalize cannabis in 2014.

A portion of revenue from taxes on marijuana goes to schools, but it's a "drop in the bucket," a Colorado school superintendent says.

"I think like most sin taxes, which is what this would be like gambling and cigarettes and alcohol, they always sound great on paper," says Dr. Jason Glass, whose Jefferson County School District (Jeffco) is the second largest district in Colorado.

"There's this belief that lotteries or things like this are going to deliver all these tax dollars that we can do all these wonderful things with. To some degree there's some truth to that.

"Yes, dollars have come into schools because of marijuana funds, but really this was marketed in Colorado as a solution to our school funding issues but it really hasn't delivered at that level."

According to a Colorado Department of Education (CDE) marijuana tax revenue and education fact sheet, the state's total education funding in 2017-18 was \$US5.6 billion for public and charter schools.

However, the CDE only received \$90.3 million from marijuana revenue in that school year, including \$40 million that went into the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program assistance fund from an excise tax.

The BEST fund distributes money through grants for new construction and renovations. School districts usually have to match BEST funds.

Glass put that \$40 million into perspective for Jeffco, which has 157 schools.

"(The) \$40 million is about enough to build a good-sized middle school with athletic fields – one," Glass says. "That's the amount of dollars available for the whole state.

"In my district alone, we have a billion dollars in deferred maintenance. So even if we got all of the money from this for our capital construction needs, it would just be a drop in the bucket."

A Marijuana Tax Cash Fund that receives money from a special sales tax provided \$20.3 million to the CDE in 2017-18 for grants related to a variety of school programs.

Jeffco, which has nine per cent of the state's students, applied for some of the \$11.9 million of school health professional grants and received \$825,164.

"Eleven million dollars for health prevention sounds like a lot of money..." Glass says. "(But) Jeffco schools probably has \$500 million alone in staff costs, so \$11 million across the whole state is a drop in the bucket."

He added it's actually more difficult now to raise awareness around school-funding issues "because people believe that marijuana money has solved all of our school finance problems when that really is not the case."

He expects Canada's education system will face some of the same issues when marijuana becomes legal in July 2018.

"I think sometimes the proponents oversell the benefits that it's going to bring, especially the tax dollars that it's going to bring in. At least our experience here in Colorado is that was an illusion."

RULES AND REGULATIONS IN COLORADO

Recreational marijuana use became legal in Colorado four years ago amid plenty of debate by those for and against the new law. Here's a look at some of the rules and regulations, according to state government documents.

- In 2012, Colorado voters (54.8 per cent) passed Amendment 64 to make the purchase, possession and use of marijuana legal. The commercial sale of cannabis began on Jan. 1, 2014. Towns and cities can opt out of allowing recreational pot stores.
- Only adults aged 21 and older can buy, possess or use marijuana. It's a felony to give, sell or share cannabis with anyone under 21.
- Those adults can possess up to an ounce of marijuana and can gift up to an ounce to another adult.
- Starting Jan. 1, 2018, residences will be limited to a maximum of 12 marijuana plants in an enclosed, locked area that can't be viewed openly or accessed by minors. Counties and municipalities can pass stricter laws. Homegrown weed can't be sold. Laws are different for medical marijuana users.
- Marijuana use - smoking, vaping or eating - isn't allowed in outdoor or indoor public places, including streets, parks and school grounds.
- Cannabis remains illegal at the United States federal level so Colorado citizens can't possess or use it on federal property such as national parks and ski slopes.
- A ban against the sale of marijuana edibles in the shape of animals (i.e. gummy bears), fruit and people came into effect in October 2017 in an effort to stop children from mistakenly thinking it was candy.
- A federal law requires stores that sell medical or recreational pot to be at least 1,000 feet from schools, although there's flexibility and shops can be grandfathered if schools are new or relocated.
- A state bill passed directing the Colorado Department of Education to create and maintain a free resource bank for public schools by July 1, 2017. It would include materials and curricula about marijuana use. Upon request of a public school, technical assistance would be provided in designing age-appropriate curricula on marijuana use.
- Students could lose federal financial aid opportunities for any marijuana use or possession charges.
- Employers can test for marijuana and make employment decisions based on drug test results.
- It's illegal to drive while under the influence of cannabis. By law, drivers with five nanograms of delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) per millilitre of whole blood can be prosecuted for DUI. Passengers also can't use marijuana.

Mood shifts on **government direction**

Most public school teachers in Manitoba say their experience as educators has worsened since the last provincial election.

A poll of members commissioned by The Manitoba Teachers' Society has found that public teachers' impressions of the current provincial government has changed significantly over the past year.

Half of those polled said that since the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 2016 their experience as an educator has worsened somewhat (35.7 per cent) or worsened significantly (15.3 per cent). Just over three per cent said it has improved either significantly or somewhat and 41 per cent said it has stayed the same.

The poll was done by Viewpoints Research and involved a telephone survey of 805 public school teachers. MTS represents all 16,000 public school teachers in the province and commission a poll of members once a year.

The most significant change year over year was the results of the question as to whether the government is moving in the right direction or on the wrong track in regards to K-12 public education.

Last year, seven months after the election, 47 per cent of members said the government was heading in the right direction, with 32 per cent saying it was on the wrong track. The 47 per cent was the lowest it had been since MTS began asking the question 13 years ago.

This year it was worse. Only 18 per cent of respondents said the government was heading in the right direction on education with 67.5 per cent saying it was on the wrong track.

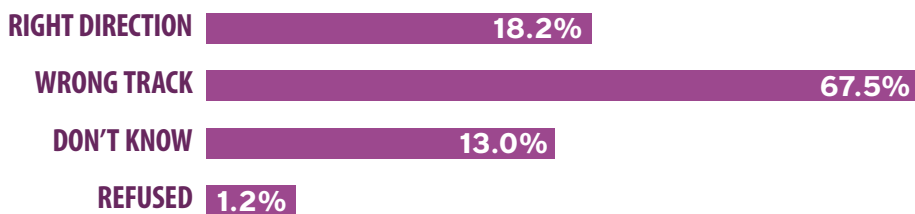
Since the last poll was taken, the government has moved to eliminate the provincially-mandated cap on class sizes in early years and introduced legislation aimed at freezing public service wages for two years and limiting them in two following years. The legislation has been passed, but not yet proclaimed.

The poll results show that teachers are overwhelmingly opposed to Bill 28, the wage freeze legislation.

More than 87 per cent of respondents either moderately oppose (24.7 per cent)



When it comes to providing quality public education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 would you say the Manitoba government is heading in the right direction or is on the wrong track?



or strongly oppose (62.8 per cent) the legislation. Only 10 per cent expressed support.

Just over 88 per cent said they agree with the statement: "Bill 28 shows that the Pallister government does not respect the role of collective bargaining and the rights of people who provide public services."

Just over 17 per cent agreed that "Teachers and public sector workers have to do their fair share to lower the provincial deficit by accepting a wage freeze for a couple of years."

As for the elimination of class size limits, members teaching in early years (K-3) said the change has had an impact on their classrooms.

More than 67 per cent said it has had a significant impact on the opportunity for more individualized attention for students. Another 13 per cent said it has had somewhat of an impact. A clear majority also said it has had an impact on student behaviour and teacher workload.

Overall, class size was listed as one of the main concerns by teachers today. More than 17 per cent said it was their single biggest concern. That was an increase of three percentage points over the past year. This year it was only topped by the 19 per cent who said too many demands and job stress was their top concern.

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Dr. Judy Halbert & Dr. Linda Kaser lead the Transformative Educational Leadership Program at the University of British Columbia, the Networks of Inquiry and Innovation, and the Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network.

Thursday, February 1, 2018
Canad Inns Destination Centre Club Regent
Casino Hotel, 9:00 am

Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach To Improving Instruction

Dr. Jim Knight, University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. Promoting collaboration between teachers and their coaches so they can choose and implement research-based interventions to help students learn more effectively.

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In defense of Section 43

BY ANNE BENNETT

- *You're headed out on a field trip and a few students are roughhousing in line for the school bus. You approach the students, and one turns to run toward the street. You instinctively grab the child's sleeve to pull her back.*
- *Your class is working in small groups when one student becomes frustrated. He shoves another boy and the two scuffle. You approach, and one picks up a chair. You grab the chair and guide the students out of the room.*
- *There's a fight on the front lawn of the school. Punches are being thrown and you approach the students from behind, taking hold of one by the shoulders, pulling him towards you and away from the other student.*

In each instance, you've had to use a level of force – most would argue a reasonable level of force – to safeguard the students involved, as well as others. Teachers encounter any number of similar situations daily, and their thoughtful, timely intervention is essential. But what if intervening could put you at risk of prosecution? Would you – should you – take the risk?

Those questions are key to the debate over Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada, sometimes called “The Spanking Law”. Section 43 provides teachers with a defense when they use reasonable force to discipline a child. It reads: Every school teacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

Seems “reasonable”, so why the debate?

In the past decade there have been a number of legislative attempts to strike down the section, with proponents arguing that there is no justification for physical discipline in any form. Others, such as the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) and the Manitoba Teachers' Society, acknowledge that abuse is never justified but argue that there are circumstances where minor physical correction is warranted, and that teachers should not

risk criminal prosecution as a result.

In 2015, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on the federal government to repeal Section 43 within its 97 Calls to Action. Senator Murray Sinclair, former Chair of the Commission, is the current sponsor for the latest challenge in the form of Bill S-206, currently at second reading before the Senate. The Bill moves to repeal the section with no replacement.

“The protection provided under Section 43 has been part of the Criminal Code of Canada since 1892,” says Bobbi Taillefer, MTS General Secretary, “and that’s likely part of the problem. Attitudes towards children, discipline and education have evolved substantively since that time, but the wording of Section 43, and its unfortunate nickname, ‘The Spanking Law’, has not, leading some to feel the section leaves students vulnerable to corporal punishment – but that’s not the case.”

Taillefer points out that as the rights of children and attitudes towards education and safety of the person have evolved, so has the manner in which Section 43 is interpreted. In its January 30, 2004 decision in response to a challenge brought by the Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) upheld Section 43. The justices ruled that the section did not violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as “it does not infringe a child’s rights to security of the person or the child’s right to equality, and it does not constitute cruel or unusual punishment”.

The CTF was an intervenor in the case, consistent with its history of advocacy and policy in opposing corporal punishment and protecting teachers to ensure they’re not subject to criminal prosecution when using reasonable force for correction purposes only.

“Physical punishment is not justified in any form, and Section 43 doesn’t permit it,” says Taillefer. “

What it does do is ensure that teachers who use reasonable and appropriate force to restrain a child or remove him or her from the classroom in extreme circumstances are protected from criminal prosecution.”



“Physical punishment is not justified in any form, and Section 43 doesn’t permit it. What it does do is ensure that teachers who use reasonable and appropriate force to restrain a child or remove him or her from the classroom in extreme circumstances are protected from criminal prosecution.”

- Bobbi Taillefer, MTS General Secretary

If Section 43 is repealed, she says, teachers will be less willing to engage, rightly fearing criminal charges.

“We count on teachers to maintain safe, secure classrooms, and Section 43 supports them in that role. Inaction by teachers where student behavior constitutes a risk to him or herself or others could increase the incidents and severity of student injury, disrupt classroom environments and necessitate calls to police. It’s essential that the protections granted under Section 43 be maintained to ensure student safety and the teacher’s ability to ensure the safety of the classroom.”

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THE FUTURE IS

BY RAMAN JOB

ALREADY HERE

“The future is already here - it’s just not evenly distributed.” - William Gibson

Nowhere is that more true than when it comes to the world of education technology.

There have been a plethora of cool gadgets and ed tech tools introduced to Manitoba classrooms over the years. And each one is met by controversy over whether the tool helps or gets in the way of learning.

Because while ed tech can be a great teaching aid, it is simply that.

U.S. educator Stephen W. Anderson, says “Technology comes and goes. Where we need to be focused is on pedagogy and process. If we get too hyper-focused on one particular application – you know ‘This is the thing that saves us all and helps students learn’ – then tomorrow it’s gone.”

Unfortunately, the folly of looking for one magic app or tech development hasn’t put the brakes on plans to do just that by Winnipeg economic development agency North Forge Technology Exchange.

Its Manitoba Open Innovation Challenge is turning the search for education ideas into Dragons’ Den-like pitch opportunities with the blessing of Manitoba’s Minister of Education and Training.

“These ideas will be pitched to a panel and the winning submission will drive literacy and numeracy initiatives in the province going forward,” says Manitoba Teachers’ Society President Norm Gould.

Proposal forms for education “solutions” ask for this kind of information:

1. Explain your solution in one or two sentences.
2. How will your solution benefit the end users (child, parent, educator)?
3. How might your idea, product or service be scaled throughout Manitoba?
4. This project is important to me, my team and/or company because...

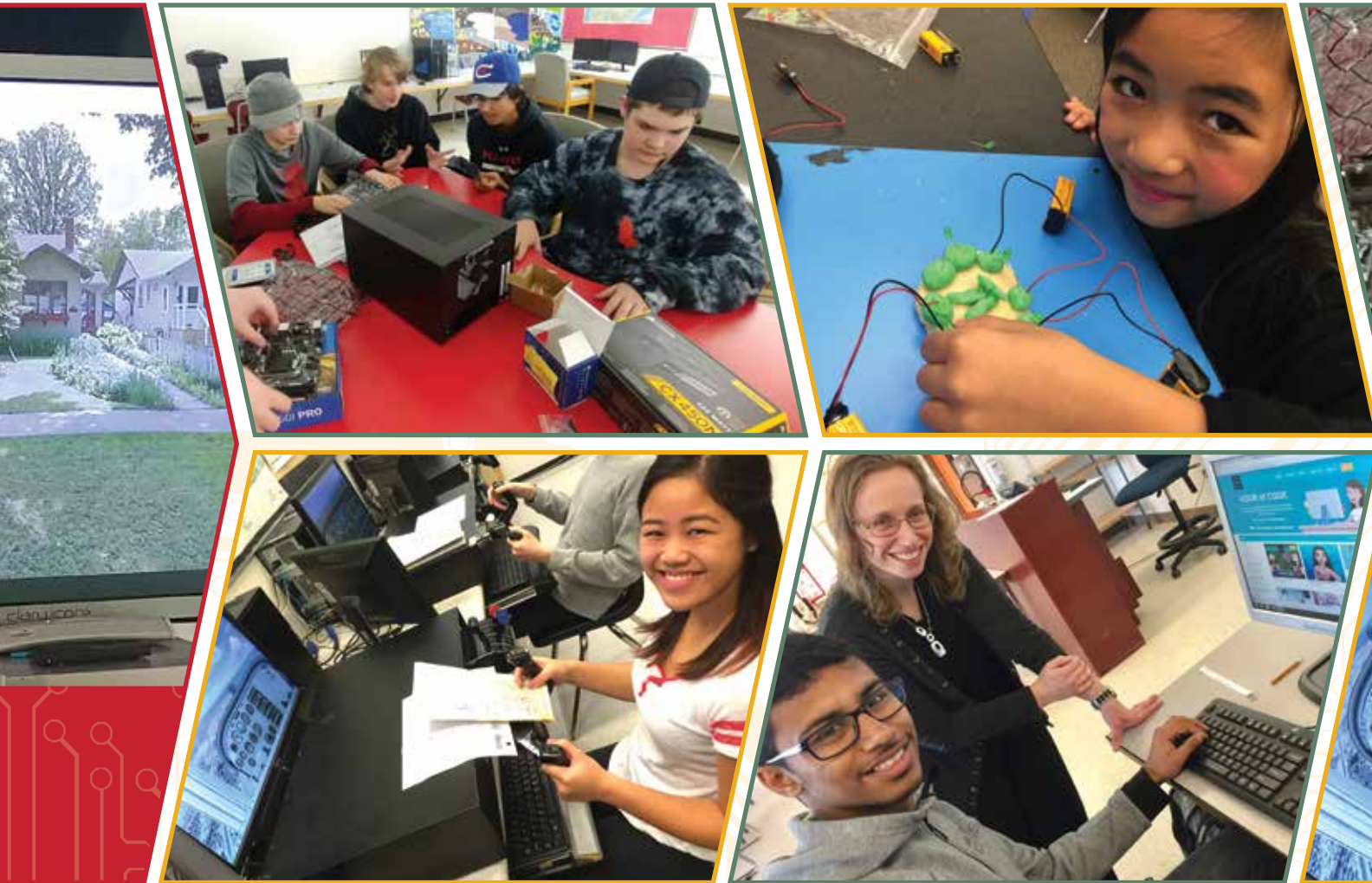
Indeed, some people have suggested that in the future teachers will be obsolete or that many significant teaching functions will be replaced by apps and automation.

The Veritasium YouTube channel has a smart rejoinder in a video called “This Will Revolutionize Education.”

“If you believe teachers’ fundamental purpose is to transmit information from their head to their students, then you’re right. They’re obsolete,” says Veritasium host Derek Muller.

“But the fundamental role of a teacher is not to deliver information, it is to guide the social process of learning. The job of a teacher is to inspire, to challenge, to excite their students to want to learn. Make every student feel like they’re important, to make them feel accountable for doing the work of learning. The foundation of education is still based on the social interaction between teachers and students.

“What really matters is what happens inside the learner’s head. And making a learner think seems best achieved in a social environment with other learners and a caring teacher.”



ENTER BIG DATA

Corporations have another take on learners, though. Back in 2014, IBM pushed a hardware-software package that would “revolutionize” the classroom by learning about each individual student and providing a tailored curriculum for each one from kindergarten through high school.

And if you thought this classroom of the future was some corny Popular Science - Jetsons - 1950s news reel fabrication, it is actually being piloted in Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia.

IBM’s trick to “personalizing” learning plans for every student is having teachers enter tons of standardized test and other data about their students and briefing the software about their kids’ aptitudes and learning preferences.

This kind of hyper-personalized instruction is something that worries Mike Nantais, President of the Manitoba Association for Computing Educators (ManACE) and

associate professor at Brandon University.

“The idea of tailoring learning to individual students so they can engage in things they’re passionate about is good but a lot of that can be a corporate thing,” he says. “It becomes that eerie scenario about kids sitting silently at a computer doing a lesson, and the computer telling you exactly where to go next. That is disastrous.

“They call it personalized instruction but it’s very impersonal. We lose what education is about and that is the relationships and the humanity of it.”

TATTOOS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

No one can predict exactly what the future has in store for teachers, students and educational technology. Big data and other technical developments are likely to have their seasons of popularity. But as many connected Manitoba teachers will tell you, it’s not about the tools—they’re only a means to an end.

Daniel Dillon sees a bright future for

virtual reality in schools. Dillon is a computer science teacher and tech integrator at Hapnot Collegiate in Flin Flon. He’s been recognized for his cutting edge work in VR. “It’s a tremendous tool for creating empathy,” he says.

One of Dillon’s students was struggling to stay interested in school so Dillon asked him what he would most like to learn.

His answer? Tattooing.

“We took him into a Discovery Channel VR experience and had him visit a refugee camp,” says Dillon. “Within three minutes he was seeing the deplorable living conditions of those refugees and learning about the lack of bed nets to protect children from mosquito-borne diseases.

“He learned that every 30 seconds a child dies and worked out this huge number of kids that would die by the end of the year without those nets. So he started a Google 20Time campaign to raise money in the community to buy those very bed nets. He actually gave up his Christmas gift giving to



buy bed nets for families in a refugee camp. “That intense VR experience definitely had an impact on him. It was the catalyst for his interest in social justice.”

Dillon says he’s shared VR experiences with Hapnot’s Art and Biology teachers who see it as a useful aid in teaching. He’s also delivered Virtual Reality training to other teachers as part of MTS PD Day.

“A lot of people are scared to use it and figure out how it fits into their curriculum,” says Dillon, “but the potential for helping kids in this generation is astronomical.”

Another Manitoba teacher who thinks a lot about the future of ed tech is Darren Kuropatwa, Director of Learning for Hanover School Division.

“I’d like to see classes with no front of the room,” says Kuropatwa. “With flexible seating that can be configured according to needs. And, of course, kids will have some kind of device so they can communicate and share visuals.

“I’d like to see them adopt a model like that of Finland where curriculum would be grouped by themes like climate change and social issues. Where kids could explore creativity, critical thinking and ethics

around anything that interests them. Where master teachers would craft a set of learning experiences and give students what they need to fully explore. Where a school might even be housed in the same building as a seniors’ home. Imagine the effects that would have on both the kids and the elderly.”

HIGH TECH HIGH

Tara McLaughlan is a curriculum coordinator for the St. James-Assiniboia School Division. Last spring, she made a trip to High Tech High, an innovative San Diego school which was featured in a 2015 documentary series called *Most Likely to Succeed*.

She believes the most important aspect of learning with ed tech is that students use it in a way that “makes sense for their own futures.”

McLaughlan arrived on the High Tech campus just as students were taking down their projects from a previous night’s exhibition. One group had done a project on rockets.

“Not only did they build those rockets and learn extensively about physics and science, but they looked at so much more.

For ELA they developed stories about what the colonization of other worlds would mean to us. About extending the reach of humankind. About where we might exist in the future and why.”

McLaughlan says all of those stories had to be rooted in real science, not science fiction. “It was brilliant to use technology as a passion point to start, then merge all the threads together. Naturally, online collaboration played a huge part. And all of their stories were shared through old school radio broadcasts – you know, going into the studio, recording and adding sound effects.”

So what do the next few decades of ed tech developments hold for Manitoba students and teachers? Some like the personal computer may be groundbreaking, others will no doubt be one-offs and experiments of the 1990s. There will likely be pockets of innovation bubbling up in all corners of the province – and always someone calling for the end of education as we know it. But through it all, there will be teachers guiding their students through the cool, the valuable and the fluff.

Because the future is already here, it’s just not about the tools.



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Daniel Greaves

#myteachermystory



BY JUDY OWEN

Daniel Greaves knows a thing or two about the importance of connecting with an audience.

Perhaps that's why the lead singer of The Watchmen recalls one teacher of his that got students interested in what can be a dull subject.

Reid Harrison taught Greaves Grade 11 English at Kelvin High School and brought long-ago stories to life.

"You look at Shakespeare, it seems to be not the easiest subject to get people engaged in at that time – maybe at this time, too, I don't know – but he seemed really into what he was doing," Greaves says.

"He wasn't just going through the motions. You could tell he really loved the stories. He sort of got everybody sitting upright and into it."

It was years later when Greaves discovered what may have been one of the reasons behind Harrison's passion.

"I remember seeing him in a role at Rainbow Stage in the summer," he says of the production around 1989.

"As an actor, as a performer, I think that was why he was so engaging. I'm sure teachers know they play a role. They have to sort of be on to have any success."

Greaves happened to bump into Harrison in the early '90s and was a bit surprised when the teacher remembered him.

He and his Winnipeg bandmates had gained some notoriety after the release of their first album in 1992 and were taking a break from practising in an old



building in the Exchange District.

As he walked through an area park, he saw Harrison sitting on a bench and they recognized each other.

"It was pretty friendly," he recalls of the meeting. "He said, 'Oh, I've been following you. I've been seeing your stuff.' And I mentioned that I had seen him at Rainbow Stage and didn't know he was an actor."

Greaves now lives in Toronto, where he and wife Lisa Black have a son in

Grade 8 and daughter in Grade 11.

He and The Watchmen have been back to Winnipeg numerous times for shows, and he's even sung the national anthem at Winnipeg Jets games.

That connection to Winnipeg even remains when he's in Ontario.

He and Black own Motel, a Toronto bar that features live music – and broadcasts of Jets games.

my teacher, my story

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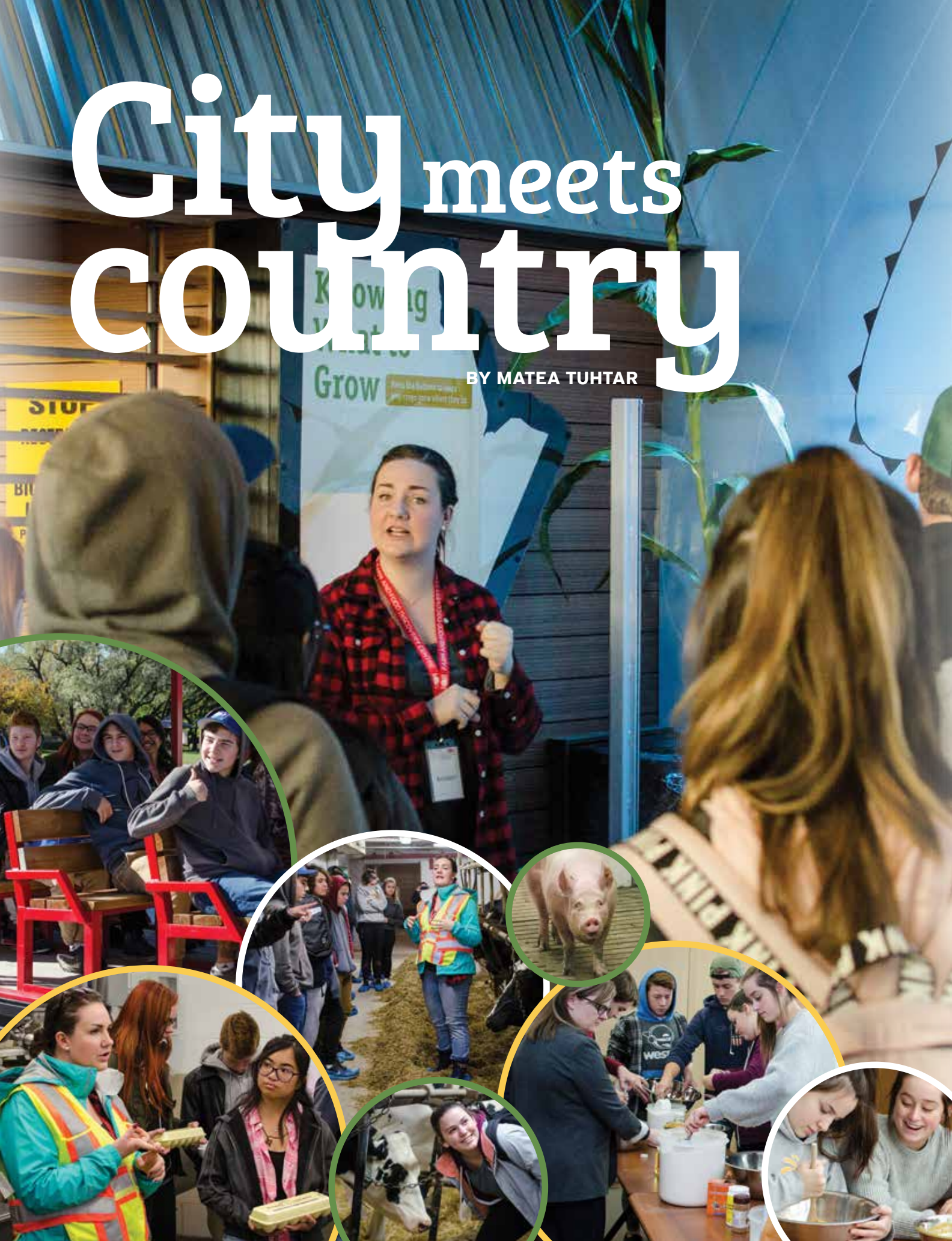
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BY MATEA TUHTAR



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In fact, the world will need 60% more food by 2050. That's another three billion people that will need to be fed, and according to the Bruce D Campbell Farm and Food Discovery Centre, Canadian farmers will help fill that demand.

“Our biggest hurdle we're seeing is that there is a big disconnect between agriculture and food – especially with kids now, because they might be generations away from agriculture,” says Kristen Matwychuk, coordinator at the Discovery Centre. “We're here to bring that gap and give them a fun, hands-on experience while teaching them that farmers are the reason we can all eat.”

Located at the Glenlea Research Station in Glenlea, MB, the center was built 6 years ago to be a resource for the general public, school groups and industry – anyone who wants to know more about where their food comes from. The Glenlea station is operated by the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba and covers 500 hectares of land including livestock facilities, dairy pastures and plot areas for Plant Science, Soil Science and Entomology.

“So that's how we can go into the dairy barn, and look into the hog barn and get up close to the animals,” explains Matwychuk.

“We typically see students between Grade 3 and Grade 10, and Grade 10's are one of our biggest targets because they do the Food from the Land unit in Geography. So our Farm to your Fork program was tailored to match that exactly,” says Matwychuk, adding that the tour can be matched to any age level.

The students' day runs from 10am-2pm. The students start their day with a guided tour of the center where they check out interactive exhibits that lead them from the farmer's field to the kitchen table. From there they move into a viewing area where they can look into a real working hog barn and learn about hog farming in the province, including the need for safety measures such as disinfecting

“Our biggest hurdle we're seeing is that there is a big disconnect between agriculture and food – especially with kids now, because they might be generations away from agriculture. We're here to bring that gap and give them a fun, hands-on experience while teaching them that farmers are the reason we can all eat.”

- Kristen Matwychuk, Discovery Centre coordinator

workers' clothes and shoes, and the use of respiratory masks.

Lunch is eaten at the center and the program's food component involves the kids making baked goods from locally produced ingredients. “Today we're making pumpkin muffins, and so our flour is from Elie, and we're using Manitoba Harvest hemp hearts and Manitoba eggs. We try to keep it as local as possible, and our main goal is to show students these different foods and how they're grown and how they can make something healthy out of these components. We do add chocolate chips to make it delicious!”

Baking is followed by a wagon ride to the dairy barn – a favorite activity for the students, though some are shocked by how smelly a barn is in real life. For some, this is the first time they've been exposed to a farm environment. “We have layer hens in the barn, and they get up and close with the chickens and the cows, and see the pigs. Kids are often surprised when they see how large a farm hog is. They might imagine a pig like Babe, so when they see an 800lb boar it's a shock.”

The researchers at the station study how to best house farm animals and keep them, and the workers safe. The center shows how animals are raised in agriculture in Manitoba, which might be different from what the kids imagine, or see in cartoons and movies.

“Almost every day I get surprising questions from students, like ‘you thought of that! Some adults wouldn't think of that.’ So it's really great to see them engaged and interested.”

When working with Grade 10 students, Matwychuk also makes sure to talk about some of the controversial topics in agriculture. “Some people are afraid of GMO's or pesticides, or hormones

and antibiotics. Our whole goal here is not to sway the kids one way or another but to show them science based facts, and remind them to be critical of any information they may come across.”

Often the agricultural information that students might find on social media is based on the United States, which has completely different standards compared to Canada. “It can be hard to tell sometimes, but we're miles away in every way.

So having those conversations is important – if you see something it's easy to be afraid, but do some more research and you might find something different. We encourage them to question us as well and use those critical thinking skills.”

The center works closely with Agriculture in the Classroom (www.aic.mb.ca) and Matwychuk likes to show a careers video they've created to the Grade 10 students in particular. “They may not be thinking of their future yet, but agriculture is the 3rd largest employer in Canada, and employment opportunities are growing every year. And it's so much more than just being a farmer. There are so many jobs you can have in agriculture; the possibilities are amazing.”

The center is in the process of upgrading a lot of their displays with new interactive touch screens and a virtual reality headset that will take viewers into a cattle pasture.

“We get good feedback. We get schools coming back every year, and more and more people are becoming aware of us. We're trying to reach out to schools as an extra resource to add to what the students are already learning.”

The cost for the Discovery center tour ranges from \$8.50 to \$9.50 a person, and free for teachers. For more info visit: <http://umanitoba.ca/afs/discoverycentre/>





BY MAUREEN FITZHENRY

Students flood CMHR

Kindergarten students stand together inside a bubble of bright orange light, projected from above. The light bubble moves when they move, keeping them constantly illuminated.

“Look around,” says their educational guide. “Can you see anyone who may feel left out? What can you do to help?”

Two children are standing alone in their own light bubbles – one purple, one green. The others rush over, take their hands and pull them into the main circle, which now fills with moving ribbons of light.

“That’s great,” says the guide. “Sometimes, you might be left out too. It doesn’t feel very good, does it?”

The “Lights of Inclusion” game at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg is an effective educational tool for K-4 students who visit with their class – part of the My Rights, Our Rights school program. Students learn about respecting each other’s rights and how our actions can affect others. They also watch a 360-degree surround film in an Indigenous “basket” theatre and work with a child-friendly version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which this year celebrates its 70th anniversary.

To date, almost 100,000 students of all ages have participated in eight different school programs and four tours that are offered at the CMHR. Here’s a summary:

1. Telling Our Stories:

Residential School Experiences (Grades 4 to 6): Students watch short videos of Indian Residential School survivors telling their stories about separation from family and loss of identity. Discussions continue in four different museum galleries, culminating in a “magnetic poetry” activity where students suggest words relevant to reconciliation.

2. Be an Upstander (Grades 5 to 8):

Diverse stories of human rights defenders in Canada and around the world form the basis of this program, inspiring students to take a stand for their own rights and the rights of others. The program includes a high-tech digital game where students use their hand shadows to propel an avatar around a virtual town – learning how taking action in our own communities can promote global human rights.

3. When Rights Are Denied (Grades 9 to 12):

Historical and contemporary examples of genocide and mass atrocity demonstrate what can happen when the inherent right to human dignity is violated. Students explore a digital interactive study table and listen to video stories. They watch a film about wartime anti-Semitism in Canada and discuss concepts of freedom and speaking out against discrimination.

4. Debating Rights (Grades 9 to 12):

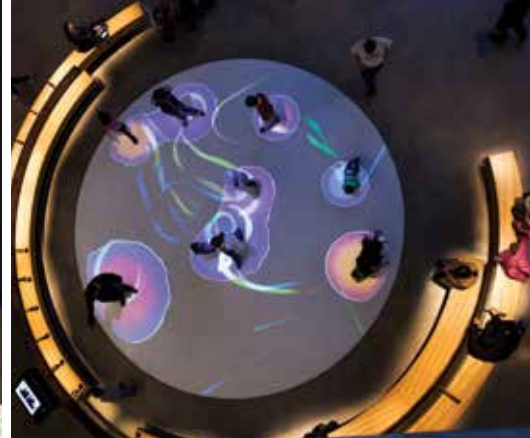
Students engage with a digital activity that requests their opinions and “verdicts” on various Canadian human rights legal cases, presented via video newscasts. They learn how people can think differently about human rights issues, and that upholding some rights can infringe on others. They also discuss the value of respectful conversations about sensitive topics where multiple perspectives are involved.

5. Perspectives on Human Rights in Canada (Grades 5 to 12):

Students explore pivotal events, people and movements in Canadian human rights from pre-Confederation to the modern day. Thematic exhibits and a film are explored. A discovery activity connects meaningful objects to human rights stories found in the gallery.

6. First People’s Rights in a Changing Canada (Grades 7 to 12):

Students gain an understanding of Indigenous world views about responsibilities to each other and to the land. An exploration of three different galleries includes discussion about opportunities for reconciliation. A 360-degree surround film examines Indigenous perspectives about fundamental rights. The program includes a role-play activity designed to increase awareness about



the devastating effects of colonization for Indigenous Peoples in North America.

7. Women's Equality (Grades 11 to 12):

Students explore three galleries, watch a film about media literacy and engage in music-listening stations to learn more about gender stereotypes and the struggle for equality, including challenges for Indigenous women. They also learn how women's rights activists won protections in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

8. My Rights, Our Rights (Kindergarten to Grade 4):

Song and movement are used to encourage empathy for others, with a focus on inclusion and fairness. Program highlights include a film in a 360-degree circular theatre and a game using projected bubbles of coloured light.

9. Tour - Museum Highlights (one for Grades 5 to 8, one for Grades 9 to 12):

A human rights journey through Canada and the world, this tour explores the diverse ways people have worked to resist violation and uphold human rights. Students experience most Museum galleries and learn about Canada's role in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which marks its 70th anniversary this year.

10. Tour - Rights and Indigenous Peoples in Canada (Grades 9 to 12):

Students are inspired to take a positive role in reconciliation as they explore stories and perspectives about Indigenous rights throughout the Museum. Highlights include a 360-degree film, a four-storey clay artwork, an 800-year-old moccasin print and a guitar hand-painted by artist Christi Belcourt for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Discussions include the power of rejecting stereotypes and using respectful language.

11. Tour - Self-guided (Grades 9 to 12):

Groups who choose this option receive a 10-minute orientation and a set of Student Discovery Guides before heading off to explore the Museum's galleries.

This diverse set of Museum programs and tours for schools will eventually be supplemented with a Virtual Field Trip, where an interpreter leads classes on an interactive Skype journey through the Museum. This virtual initiative is now in the pilot phase.

It's one of the projects being developed by the Museum's first Educator in Residence – teacher Graham Lowes, who was seconded from the Louis Riel School Division last fall. Lowes is also working on an online curriculum-based teacher resource that can be used in the classroom before and after a trip to the Museum.

“In our increasingly digital world, there are great options for classes who cannot physically travel to the Museum,” says Lowes. “So we're creating resources, developing virtual field trips and Websites that can meet a range of teacher needs.”

Teachers have been an invaluable resource in the development of all aspects of the Museum's educational offerings: through a Manitoba Teachers' Advisory Council, an Indigenous Educators' Working Group, as well as ad hoc working committees of educators from within the province and across the country. The Manitoba Teachers' Society also contributed over \$1 million to the CMHR's capital construction project.

Bookings for school programs are accepted throughout the year. The programs – which range in length from 60 to 120 minutes, are offered morning and afternoon, Tuesday to Friday until May 28 and Monday to Friday from May 28 to the end of the school year. The cost is \$5 per student.

Financial assistance is available for Manitoba school groups from outside Winnipeg who want to visit the CMHR. Teachers are encouraged to contact the Museum to learn more.

For additional information, check out the “Learn” section of the CMHR Website at www.humanrights.ca/learn. Teachers can also e-mail education@humanrights.ca or call (204) 289-2253.

PORTFOLIO

JUST STOP DIGGING



The football writer for the Montreal Gazette doesn't appear to know when to shut down his keyboard. After Shania Twain performed at the Grey Cup, Gazette reporter Herb Zurkowsky posted a comment on Twitter that "Shania looks like a tramp." The comment created a tsunami of complaints, so MadMan Herb decided to apologize, making things even worse.

"Sorry Folks. Didn't mean to offend anyone about Shania Twain, but way too much makeup and should have dressed more conservatively. Apologies." Then, an apology for the apology: "I'm sorry for the numerous people I offended." He then tried a third time, calling his tweets "highly insensitive."

Gazette management weighed in, calling the tweets "sexist" and "disparaging" and "deserve the widespread condemnation they have received." Stick to football, Herb.

Words; who needs them, anyway?

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



Well, who would have thought words were so important?

It probably comes as no surprise that the U.S. administration ordered at least one agency to not use certain words in its budget. After all, the government is led by a president with a vocabulary on par with an average German shepherd.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were told recently that they weren't to use certain words in budget documents. On the list were such controversial words as "diversity," "fetus," "transgender," "science-based" and "evidence-based."

Of course the mandate helpfully offered some alternative language.

For example, it was suggested that "science-based" could be replaced with "CDC bases its recommendation on science in consideration with community standards and wishes."

How the leading public health institute in the U.S. could make scientific recommendations based, even partly, on community wishes is certainly puzzling. It does follow the logic of a government which once said that lies weren't lies, but "alternative facts." That would be the illustration of a certain community wishing away irritants such as reality.

The order did not provide those researching

Still lost in the wilderness



Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister, living in the same long-ago decade as Herb Zurkowsky, felt it necessary to comment on the attire of Johanna Hurme, board chair of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. Before a crowd of 1,200, gathered to hear his State of the Province address, Pallister said: "I want to thank Johanna for dressing up. I want to thank her for those heels. I notice they are a foot high."

He eventually apologized – like Herb, saying he didn't mean to offend anyone with his offensive comments – claiming he made them because he is tall. "Given my tall stature, I am particularly aware of my height and often make light-hearted comments about being taller than the people around me."

Hardy har.



LOW-HANGING FRUIT:

Sometimes the jokes just write themselves.

"NBC 4 Washington, which obtained the hundreds of work orders, reports that there have been a number of requests to deal with vermin in the White House ..."

the Zika virus effect on fetuses with an alternative for the word fetus. Maybe pre-born or conceivably pre-born or conceivably pre-born potential human.

As ridiculous as it is, all governments play with words to obscure what they are actually doing.

Certainly President Donald Trump does it in the most base way possible with his endless use of superlatives: "I am really smart." "I'm really rich." "I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created."

The U.S. tax legislation, whose main function was to significantly cut taxes for corporations was officially called The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, even though it doesn't create a single job.

The legislation in Manitoba to freeze public sector salaries is officially called The Public Services Sustainability Act. Whatever that is supposed to mean is anyone's guess. There's little evidence, and none in the bill, that preserving a vibrant public service is a priority of the current government.

So, word wars do not respect geographic boundaries. Most of the time, though, in Canada we see it with pearl-clutching politicians who get all scandalized by opponents using non-Parliamentary language.

Last year the House of Commons, apparently with nothing better to do, had to listen to an argument over a word used by former Winnipegger Michelle Rempel, now a Calgary MP. Said she: "Why does

government treat Alberta like a fart in the room that nobody wants to talk about or acknowledge?"

Green Leader Elizabeth May then demanded the comment be withdrawn because "I heard her say a word that is distinctly unparliamentary." Then, like an ancient school marm, May then spelled out the word. And it wasn't Alberta.

Oddly, fart is actually not an unparliamentary word, even though Parliament is the bastion of banned words.

It has a gigantic list of words and phrases that members of Parliament cannot utter even if they are accurate.

You can't call your opponent a Nazi, crook, fraud, pompous ass, idiot or ignoramus. Or trickster. Or "cowardly slanderer and bully." Nor can you call another member a blatherskite, a word banned in 1890 and, sadly, not used enough today.

As for phrases, an MP can't refer to someone as a "political sewer pipe" or someone "inspired by forty-rod whiskey," or "coming into this world by accident" or a "trained seal" or "bag of wind." Regrettably, truth is no defence.

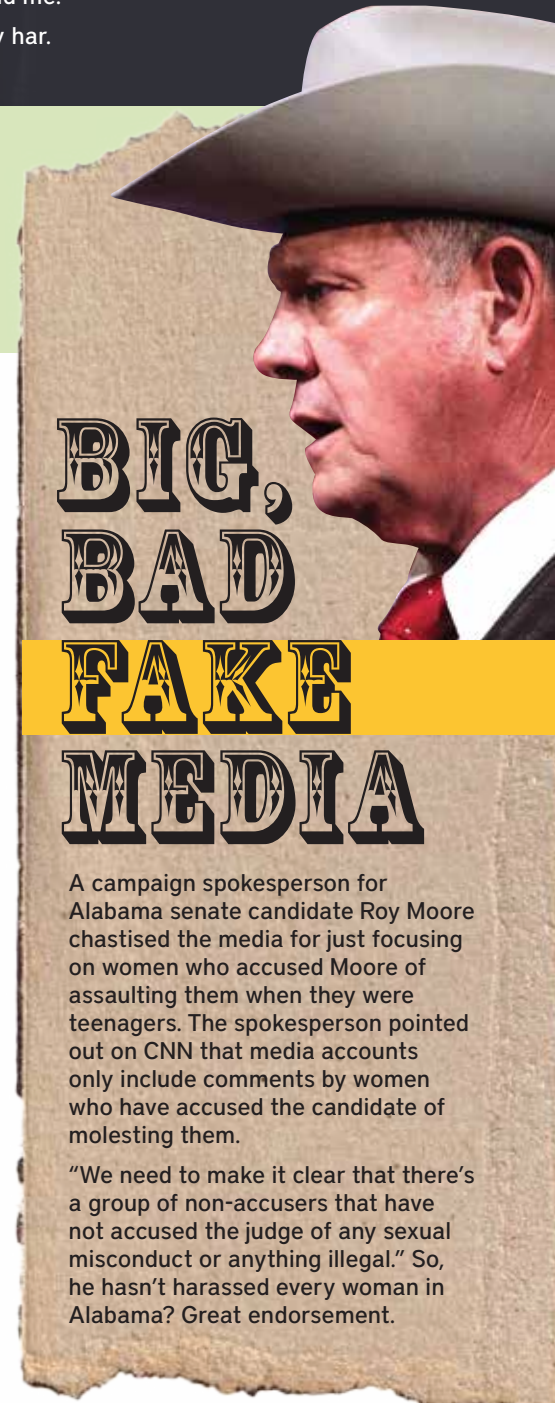
On the other hand, it was ruled in 1975 that "clownery" could be used in Parliament, which is fitting given that members must wrestle with such complex, intricate, grade-school issues like whether Alberta is a fart in a room.

What blatherskites!

BIG, BAD FAKE MEDIA

A campaign spokesperson for Alabama senate candidate Roy Moore chastised the media for just focusing on women who accused Moore of assaulting them when they were teenagers. The spokesperson pointed out on CNN that media accounts only include comments by women who have accused the candidate of molesting them.

"We need to make it clear that there's a group of non-accusers that have not accused the judge of any sexual misconduct or anything illegal." So, he hasn't harassed every woman in Alabama? Great endorsement.



R PIPE BULLY SLANDERER
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REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

7 COOL APPS YOUR FRIENDS ARE ALREADY USING



1. Google Home

Ok, this app wouldn't normally make my list, but I recently bought a Google Home Mini. Yes, one of those puck-shaped speakers that listens to whatever you say and sends it straight to CSIS. I'm kidding of course. But you need the Google Home app to get your mini assistant going. And because I love my voice-activated assistant so much, I have to give credit to the app that makes it all possible. Confused? Watch some Google Home Assistant videos. If you feel inspired, pick one up at your favourite electronics store. Best \$40 tech you'll ever buy. [#trustme](#)

2. Google Photos

If you have thousands of mobile photos – and who doesn't – you know they have to live somewhere online in addition to on your iPhone or android device. Think of it as a hedge for the day your smartphone meets a horrible death. If there's one thing you'll worry about first, it will be your pics. Google Photos will let you store unlimited pics in the cloud for free. It even sorts them, lets you do basic edits, plus churns out animations, stories and collages. Honestly, there's nothing more comforting than knowing your pics are safe in the cloud minutes after you shoot. [#strongandfree](#)

3. Google Docs

Not a convert to Google Docs yet? Time to check it out. This app allows you to create docs that will follow you to any device irrespective of who makes it. While not a full-fledged processor like Word, many times it's a perfect pared-down solution for what you need now. When the muse is with you or if you have to brainstorm or make a quick journal entry, this is for you. As for speech-to-text input and voice recognition, there is none better. Don't bother with anything else. [#seriouslygood](#)

4. Google Hangouts

I can't think of a more hassle-free way of video-calling a colleague, friend or relative. Hangouts is especially good if you want to hook up with people from multiple locations. I've talked to a dozen people in a Spanish conversation community in Europe, North America, South America and Iceland – all at once. Facetime and Skype are still great options, but the Hangouts app has never failed me. [#reliablemagic](#)

5. Pocket

Face it, you collect things. And there's nothing more frustrating than not being able to find something online that you should have

saved. Pocket makes saving web stories and videos so easy. There's a social community built around it too, but you don't have to join. Pocket just works. And it's much less hassle than an online bookmarking platform. [#youneedthis](#) [#seriously](#)

6. Snapchat

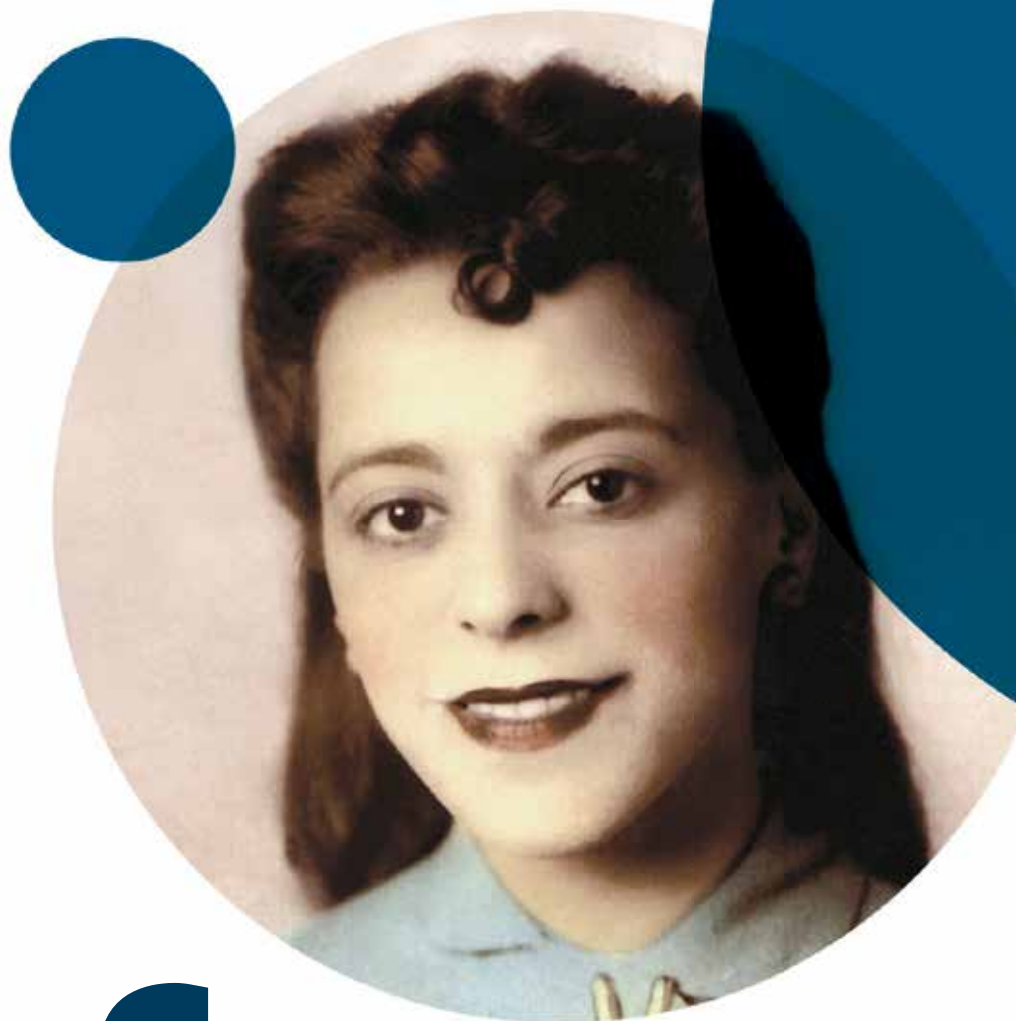
Ok, I don't have a lot of people I can snap with and my longest snap streak has been two days. But this messaging behemoth is still the original digital story-making app. And it's good. Best of all, even if you have no one to snap with, you can still create crazy good text on picture photos to download to your phone. Your kids will love the lenses. [#filterlove](#)

7. Drama Fever

Are you addicted to cutesy K-Dramas, as in Korean Dramas? It's ok, raise your hand, I am too. If titles like Strong Girl Bong-Soon, Oh My Ghost and My Shy Boss intrigue you even a little, this app will give you the biggest repository of Korean titles to stream right on your mobile. And \$60 Canadian will let you Chromecast them to your flatscreen. [#myguiltypleasure](#)

Viola Desmond

Photo courtesy of
1945 Beaton Institute,
Cape Breton University



for sitting down to take a stand

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