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JUNE 2019 VOLUME 97 NUMBER 7 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY





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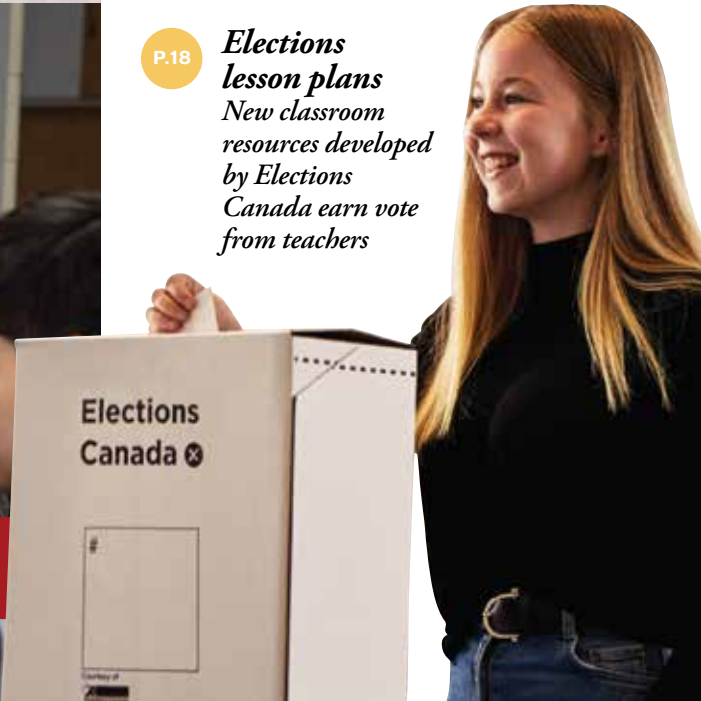
Brandon teacher heading to CERN

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

NORM GOULD

In the history of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, every year has been unique and important, but it's fair to say that 2019 has been particularly memorable.

This year we marked the MTS centennial in a variety of ways, culminating in the Gala celebration at last month's Provincial Council AGM. It was an incredible evening, and an honour to gather with those who have championed the work of the Society in the past, and those who will define its future. I've never felt more proud of our members or more inspired by our mission.

It hasn't been a non-stop party, however. The specters of two pieces of legislation—one intended but not introduced, the other passed but not proclaimed—loom large over the collective bargaining landscape. Bill 26, The Public Schools Amendment Act, designed to shift negotiations from local bargaining units to a central table, made the Order Paper and was to have been introduced last March. It wasn't, and as a result its content, and even when the Bill might come into force, remain a mystery. That said, MTS is prepared and will respond to whatever form the legislation takes.

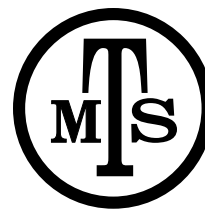
Never having been proclaimed, Bill 28, The Public Services Sustainability Act, lacks the force and effect of law. Nevertheless it has had a chilling effect on bargaining province-wide. MTS, in solidarity with other public sector unions, has launched a Charter challenge to the Bill, viewing it as an unconstitutional attack on our bargaining units.

This year we also witnessed the launch of the government's long-promised Commission on K-12 Education. This once-in-a-generation exercise is one MTS welcomes and supports. We have submitted 17 recommendations to the Commission and have posted that submission to the MTS website. We are as well encouraging our members to take any and all opportunities available to make their voices heard. As teachers, you guide and preside over classrooms growing in both size and complexity, so be sure to share your insight with everyone, from friends to your students' parents to the Commissioners themselves. There is still time to respond to a Commission survey designed especially for teachers at <https://forms.gov.mb.ca/education-review-teacher/>.

Leadership has its time, and after two years as president of the St. James-Assiniboia Teachers' Association, four years as MTS vice-president and four as its president, the time has come for change—both for me and for the Society. My thanks to our members, officers and staff of MTS, and my family—in particular my wife and partner, Jennifer—for their unwavering support of my work.

In advocating for our 16,000 members I've been given an extraordinary privilege, not a job. You have depended on me to advance your interests and those of your students, and to stand up for all that teaching itself stands for: critical thought, creativity, community, and democracy—the foundation of a just and progressive society. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served.

I wish our newly elected president James Bedford all the best as he ushers in a second century of solidarity in the service of Manitoba teachers.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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

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Publications Mail Agreement

40063378 ISSN 002-228X

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

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



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INSIDE MTS KEEN EYE KEPT ON K-12 COMMISSION HEARINGS

ROLAND STANKEVICIUS, GENERAL SECRETARY

This past month has been a very busy time for teachers in Manitoba, as is always the case as the end of the school year appears on the horizon. There is so much work to complete and achieve in the remaining calendar and a feverish pace ensues. This year is even more challenging on our time as the long awaited government K-12 Review Commission has been active on many fronts this month, soliciting feedback throughout the province on their mandate to consult widely on ideas for positive change and recommendations to improve student outcomes in their K-12 public school education.

The staff and the political leadership of the Society have attended all of the public workshops/forums that have been held in various communities across the province. These events have been well attended by many teachers as well as other community members. The passion, wisdom and knowledge shared at these sessions have been inspiring. I was able to attend two workshop events and have come away with a great appreciation of how respectfully curious and well informed all participants are on these very important matters. I believe the commissioners have had exposure to a wealth of informed feedback.

My greatest hope is that this commission experience has an authentic listening component to the hearings. I am reminded of what listening really means from the Chinese proverb 'To Listen.'

The components of the proverb unfold what true listening requires as opposed to a less meaningful experience that just pretends 'listening' and merely going through the motions. If the commission is listening in line with the proverb then these opportunities will be beneficial for the future of public schools. My impressions of these public forums events were seeing the experience of thoughtful discussion unfold in personal reflections and sharing knowledge from the diverse participants that came from the heart; as is the intention for true listening.



My reflections and thoughts on the workshops and discussion groups have told me that:

- the effects of poverty in our schools, classrooms and on students achievement are significant and must be addressed and as teachers we have advanced some practical solutions.
- elected local decision making is a better and more responsive governance model for school divisions now and going forward.
- our students need more resources (not less) in the areas of learning support for diverse learners and for mental health diagnosis, support and resilience skills development.
- class size and composition limits, expressed by parents and teachers, demand that these ongoing challenges require early and meaningful attention and support for local school student placement decisions.
- principals and vice principals are integral to a positive collaborative and cooperative education enterprise as Principal Teachers with other teachers and staff in schools in a unified profession.

The Society has been a very active participant working with the Commission. We have provided our MTS Submission to the Commission, on May 8 with a face-to-face meeting with the commissioners where

the dialogue was constructive. We shared our document and our 17 recommendations with the commissioners and reinforced our commitment to an authentic process for positive change and improvements for the vital public trust that is our public education enterprise in Manitoba. We will also be submitting a final brief to the commission prior to month end and anticipate attending the public hearings in June.

These details and more information can be found on our website:

www.mbteach.org/pdfs/news/MTS_CommissionSubmission2019.pdf

It is worthwhile noting that as we came closer to the closing public workshop events the commissioners did seem to respond to what is being shared and demonstrated their own good listening. Commissioners encouraged participants that the wisdom advice and recommendations from these gatherings will require ongoing advocacy and advancement from the public in order to have the government engage in true listening. In this manner I trust that the commission has been listening to what is being shared with their own eyes, mind, heart and undivided attention and will be able to reflect that knowledge in their report and recommendations to government.

I trust and hope that the upcoming summer break is everything that can be hoped for and health and happiness are important ingredients in all of your plans.



My classroom. Our future. MTS SUBMISSION TO MANITOBA'S COMMISSION

BY SAMANTHA TURENNE

The Manitoba Teachers' Society met with commission members from the K-12 Education Review and presented 17 recommendations to help improve public education.

The recommendations focused students, teachers and the public and reinforced the relationship between teachers' working conditions and students' learning conditions and the importance of public trust.

With the second highest child poverty rates in Canada, poverty was identified as the number one barrier to education faced by Manitoba students.

There is a strong link between poverty and reduced educational outcomes and while there are many reasons why impoverished students underperform and eventually drop out of the school system, the two most common reasons, according to Manitoba teachers, have to do with food insecurity and the lack of transportation.

Research shows that hungry children have lower math scores, are more likely to repeat a grade, come to school late, or miss it entirely due to illness. On the other hand, proper nutrition supports learning and is linked to higher educational outcomes.

The Society called on the government to

establish a universal meal program for all school-age children. The program must be available for any school-age student at no cost to the student regardless of perceived need. In addition to a meal program, a pilot project offering bus tokens to students, who are unable to walk to school and have no alternate means of transportation was recommended.

The Society's report emphasized that any plan for improving educational outcomes must include a real strategy for dealing with poverty.

Other student focused recommendations included reducing wait time for assessing learning disabilities, developing a comprehensive mental health curriculum for K-12 students, ensuring that mental health services are readily accessible in schools and ensuring timely access to clinician services.

The symbiotic relationship between teachers' working conditions and students' learning conditions was reinforced in the recommendations to reinstitute the cap on class size for K-3 and the importance of taking class composition into account when determining class size.

Since the removal of the class size cap, 84

per cent of K-3 teachers said their ability to provide individualized attention to students has been negatively impacted.

Furthermore, as classrooms increase in complexities, smaller classes have been known to have the greatest positive impact on students with the greatest educational needs.

Staying on the subject of increasing classroom complexity and diversity, it is imperative that teachers have access to professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities to be able to appropriately meet the needs of their students. PLD must be adequately funded and teachers must be given autonomy to choose opportunities that are reflective of their specific classroom needs. It is also important that professional learning and development opportunities be available in English and French.

The Society has made several PLD related recommendations to this effect, as well as recommendations around teacher participation in curriculum development, the frequency of new curriculum, and the importance of supporting classroom-based formative assessments that align with existing and new curriculum.

The public places a high level of trust

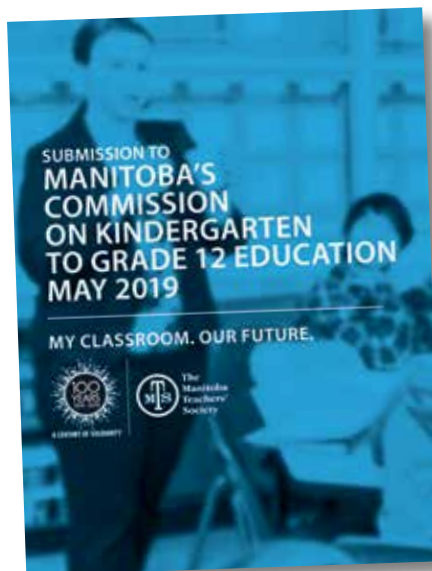
on teachers. In fact, according to a recent public poll conducted by Viewpoints Research, 85 per cent of Manitobans agree that teachers are the most reliable when it comes to speaking about education, while nine in 10 have a favourable view of public school teachers.

In turn, teachers have a responsibility to act at all times in a manner that is worthy of this public trust and consistent with the expectation of the teaching profession.

The Society recognizes the importance of transparency and accountability in maintaining this level of trust and would like to work with the Government of Manitoba to develop a uniform set of professional standards to help guide the expectations for all educators.

Teaching standards provide a framework of principles that describe the knowledge, skills, and values in the teaching profession. Standards do not quantify teaching or diminish the work of teachers and school leaders.

Equally important is the development of leadership standards, an extension of teaching standards, which would serve to reinforce Manitoba's long history of collaborative relationships between



The Manitoba Teachers' Society met with commission members from the K-12 Education Review and presented 17 recommendations to help improve public education.

teachers and school leaders (principals and vice-principals), as well as enhance our community of learning and professional governance.

Also included in the list of 17 recommendations is the call for a commitment to indigenous education issues which includes the development of age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada relevant to the local community and Nations involved be developed and funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms is crucial.

The Society also called on the government to develop a plan for recruiting and retaining French-language teachers and to make a commitment that the curricula for the immersion and francophone programs will always be created in French, in order to integrate linguistic and cultural differences and to respond to the needs of the community.

The full submission can be viewed at www.mbteach.org.

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Gay Sul is a numeracy coach in Red River Valley School Division and the only accredited Math Recovery trainer in Canada. In 2009 she was voted Math Teacher of the Year by the Manitoba Association of Math Teachers. Most recently she has been teaching courses for the University of Winnipeg in Brazil and China.

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Museum given boost

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



When its new Prairies Gallery at the Manitoba Museum opens next year, it will include a one-room school house with a focus on women teachers through the years.

And MTS and donors the Society rounded up will have had a hand in its creation.

At the Society's annual meeting last month, the museum was given a cheque for \$70,000 to help renovate the museum's current Grasslands Gallery.

MTS had asked potential donors to help with the project, offering to match whatever donors contributed up to \$50,000.

Seven donors came forward with \$35,000, which doubled to \$70,000 and will double once again because the provincial government has promised to match what the museum raised.

Claudette Leclerc, the museum's executive director and chief executive officer, says the new gallery will be the culmination of renovations that will see more than 40 per cent of the museum's display space renovated.

She said she was especially grateful that teachers have contributed because of the close relationship between the Manitoba Museum and education in general and classroom teachers specifically.

Last year about 90,000 students went

through the museum, visiting the displays and attending its numerous programs and events.

The renovation project, called Bringing Our Stories Forward, will see galleries renewed and others completely changed.

As well, the museum plans on making greater use of technology "to give visitors a more interactive experience." A current exhibit on the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike makes use of audio and video to illustrate different aspects of the strike and its origins.

The new Prairies Gallery, with the school house exhibit, will focus on three themes: early history of education, residential schools and public schools in Manitoba.

Part of the public school aspect will look at women teachers from the earliest days of training in 1882, to the struggle for recognition and living wages, helped by The Manitoba Teachers' Society.

Roland Stankevicius, MTS General Secretary, said Society officials and members thought it important to support the museum, especially because it provides numerous learning opportunities for Manitoba students.

Leclerc says when the gallery opens next fall the museum plans on having a special teacher weekend to thank those on whose behalf MTS made the donation.

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MTS delegates hold **the line on fees**

STORIES BY MATEA TUHTAR AND GEORGE STEPHENSON



Delegates to the 100th Annual General Meeting of MTS kept members' fees to a minimum, voted in a new president and vice president and marched in a labour parade commemorating the 1919 General Strike.

Members also passed a number of resolutions from protecting whistleblowers to promoting women teachers as leaders.

In passing the 2019-2020 budget, delegates kept the fee increase to a minimum, approving an increase of \$4 to \$1,012, less than half a per cent.

Fees have risen less than 12 per cent in the past decade.

Total expenditures for the upcoming year will be about \$15.9 million.

At various points in the meeting delegates focused on the need for more initiatives to encourage women to seek out and take on leadership roles.

A women in leadership committee will continue to implement an action plan previously approved.

Issues to be addressed include creation of a Women in Leadership Support Network, provision of child care at the AGM and conducting focus groups of younger women teachers.

Coincidentally, delegates voted in male teachers to the top two positions on the

Provincial Executive, defeating two female candidates.

It is the first time since the mid-'80s (when terms were one-year) that the Society has had three male presidents in a row. Five of the last seven have been male.

In regular business, delegates approved a number of resolutions.

Protection for whistleblowers

Delegates adopted procedures that would protect whistleblowers who report wrongdoing, defined as "conduct which is unlawful, dangerous, involves gross mismanagement of funds or assets or is contrary to the constitution, bylaws or policies of the Society or its related entities."

The policy says "members reporting reasonably held concerns in good faith shall not be subject to repercussions or reprisal by the Society or its related entities."

Introduced by the provincial executive, the policy establishes "clear lines of reporting and required actions in the event of wrongdoing being reported."

Organizing teachers on First Nations eyed

Delegates overwhelmingly agreed that the Society strike an ad-hoc committee

to study the feasibility of establishing new Locals with Associate Members of Regular Teachers or Substitute Teachers employed by the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS), First Nations, or First Nations Education Authorities.

The resolution, introduced by Lakeshore Teachers' Association, said that "...there are many teachers in Manitoba employed (within First Nations School Systems) who may want to become Society members, but lack information, resources, infrastructure and job security to initiate the process themselves."

"We have an opportunity to extend solidarity to all Manitoba teachers and make our union stronger."

Improved sex education called for

A committee will be created to develop a "strategy to advocate for comprehensive sex and health education across grade levels."

A resolution calling for creation of the committee said that "current health and sex education curriculum documents do not reflect the lives and realities of our diverse students and communities."

The resolution said there needs to be explicit mention in curriculum on topics such as diverse families, gender identity and gender expression.

NEW PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

James Bedford will be president of The Manitoba Teachers' Society for 2019–2021, following votes at the union's annual general meeting. Bedford was the immediate vice-president.

The full provincial executive for the upcoming year is:

James Bedford,
President (Louis Riel)

Nathan Martindale,
Vice-President (Winnipeg)

Members-at-large

Sonja Blank (Mountain View)

Carla Bouchard (Pembina Trails)

Jeff Cieszecki (Seven Oaks)

Kent McPherson (St. James Assiniboia)

Cynthia Taylor (Louis Riel)

Cale Dunbar (Brandon)

Chris Darazsi (River East Transcona)


Kerry Enns (Border Land)

Catherine Hart (Seven Oaks)

Bea Walker (Flin Flon)

Valérie Rémillard (Louis Riel)

'Issues of 1919 echo through 2019'

A photograph of Norm Gould, the outgoing president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. The background is a blue screen with a globe and some text. The quote is overlaid on the left side of the image.

"We are about to complete the first full year of implementation of the unproclaimed Bill 28 that imposed forced wage restrictions on public sector employees. Fair wages continue to be a priority for the Society in 2019."

- Norm Gould, Outgoing MTS President

Outgoing MTS President Norm Gould opened his remarks to the 100th Provincial Council meeting of The Manitoba Teachers' Society by acknowledging the incredible accomplishment that is 100 years of standing up for public education.

It all began on April 22, 1919, when hundreds of Manitoba's teachers poured into the Industrial Bureau at Main and Water Streets to organize themselves at their first general meeting.

"They were fighting for fair wages. They wanted better working conditions. They wanted a real voice when it came to how students were being taught, and

they demanded respect for the teaching profession. We are here today, celebrating a century of solidarity, because they laid that foundation," he said.

That solidarity has made the Society a force as we begin our next Centennial. And it's already shaping up to be a battle.

The issues that brought those teachers together in the evening of April 22, 1919 are alive and well. Wages, working conditions, having teachers' voices heard, and respect are all at the forefront of the Society's considerations today.

"We are about to complete the first full year of implementation of the unproclaimed Bill 28 that imposed forced wage restrictions on

public sector employees. Fair wages continue to be a priority for the Society in 2019."

Gould also pointed out that teachers' working conditions are under siege through inadequate educational funding from this provincial government that doesn't match the rate of inflation. He also stated his concern that teachers' voices aren't being sought by the present government, and that teachers don't have a seat on the commission for the upcoming K-12 education review.

"Despite the fact that our polling shows an overwhelming level of trust and comfort in the school system by the public and that public school teachers are the true authority on public education."

Teachers' pension plan still strong

Jeff Norton, chief executive officer of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF) says that the plan continues to be strong, as expected. The plan actuary concluded that current funding levels are adequate to provide for the current level of benefits, and no changes to the member contribution rate will be needed at this time.

The plan projects it will stay fully funded for at least the next 20 years, though there are trends that could affect the plan in the future, including investment returns, early retirement provisions and the increasing longevity of retirees.

As well, the government's portion of the pension will need further funding to prevent the funded status from deteriorating. The long-term sustainability and health of TRAF would be enhanced if the government made

additional payments to the fund.

The July, 2019 COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) has been set at 1.23%, but it is difficult to predict future COLAs, given the number of variables involved. As of right now, the projections suggest that COLA averaging approximately 0.93% over the long term could be granted under the current plan structure, but future COLA amounts are not guaranteed.

The current membership profile of TRAF is 42.2 per cent active teachers, 39.6 per cent retirees, and 18.2 per cent deferred members (inactive members who have contributions remaining in the plan, and who will be entitled to a benefit). The number of retired members is expected to exceed the number of active members in the near future. TRAF projects the average years on pension will be 31 years for females, and 29 for males.



TRAF also shared that:

- The average age of retirement for females is 60, and for males 60.1
- The average age of service for females is 25 years, and for males 29.9 years
- The oldest retired female is 108 and the oldest male is 102 years old.

Teachers join in solidarity parade

Hundreds of Manitoba public school teachers joined with hundreds of others in a parade to commemorate the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.

Delegates to the MTS Annual General Meeting took a break from business on Saturday, May 25, to join hundreds of other Manitobans in the solidarity parade through downtown Winnipeg.

The 1919 strike began just weeks after the Manitoba Teachers' Federation (which became The Manitoba Teachers' Society) was created. Much of the AGM was in celebration of the formation of the union and the accomplishments achieved for teachers, students and public education in general.

History was on full display at this year's meeting with displays of documents and artifacts, a reproduction of the first issue of *The Manitoba Teacher* (then called *The Bulletin*) and the unveiling of a website dedicated to the Society's first 100 years.

The history website can be accessed from the home page of the main MTS site at www.mbteach.org.



BY RANDY HALEY

Strings Attached

Slide, bottleneck, bends and bridges. New terms are finding their way into Manitoba music classes as more and more students expand the boundaries of what was once a niche interest.

Almost 100 schools are now offering guitar classes, threatening band as the go-to class for musical students.

The Manitoba Classroom Guitar Association (MCGA) has been tracking guitar growth and notes a doubling of school programs in the past decade. The guitar has established a position in most school divisions in the province and currently offered as early as Grade 4 through high school.

It appears to follow a global trend with significant increases occurring in the USA, China, Japan, and Scandinavia.

Veteran music educator, Rick Schulz recalls a much different landscape when he accepted a Grade 6-8 guitar position in Pine Falls back in 1981.

"In those days there were very few schools offering the guitar class. As a guitar teacher you really felt like you were alone on an island, separated from the traditional music community."

An attractive feature of the guitar is you can begin making music almost immediately; you really don't need extensive preliminary technical instruction to begin making interesting sounds.

Aside from the possibility of sore fingertips for the first week or so, learning to play the guitar is a relatively painless process and students are quickly rewarded once they learn a few chords or can pluck out a familiar melody. The guitar is integral to the music of the Metis, part of the cultural legacy of this province, and continues to play a key role in classical, blues, jazz, world, and myriad popular styles.

*I'm only
myself when I
have a guitar
in my hands.*

— George Harrison

"If there's a style of music you identify with, you can play it on the guitar," says Schulz, currently teaching Grade 5-12 guitar in the Louis Riel School Division.

A truly chameleon-like instrument, the guitar's strength in the classroom resides in its ability to access diverse musical genres and applications. As a result, the guitar can have an entirely different meaning and usage from

one student to the next. Whether it's the classroom, a campfire sing-a-long, or a group of friends jamming, you can't discount the level of return and social currency that comes with playing the guitar. "It's a wonderful and accessible pastime for students of all ages," says Schulz.

Guitar classrooms are typically equipped with a class set of guitars for use at school and students are encouraged to purchase an instrument for home practice. The attractive piece for families is the range of entry points when buying a guitar, according to Dan Raposo, purchasing manager at Quest Musique. "You can pick up a new student model guitar for just over \$100.00, and less if you go the used route."

Student class size mirrors academic classes and most rooms can be retrofitted to accommodate a guitar class. Since the acoustic guitar is a relatively quiet instrument, no additional sound reinforcing is usually necessary.

"You could start a program for as little as \$5,000 to \$6,000," adds Raposo. "This would provide you with a class set of student model nylon string guitars, music stands, and wall mounting-hooks." Other than replacing the occasional broken string, if well cared for, the guitars are generally maintenance free. Teachers initiating a guitar class are usually overwhelmed by the level of interest



among students while the cost-conscious administrator will be pleasantly surprised at the minimal funding level required to start and maintain a guitar program.

Sean Brown, guitar instructor at Vincent Massey Collegiate, says the guitar class attracts a diverse student base and students can enter with no previous experience at any grade level.

“The guitar has become an important part of the culture at our school and a valued component of our thriving music department.” He adds there has been no negative impact on the band program at Vincent Massey. “I used to survey the students every year and saw the same thing. Students who joined Grade 10 guitar were either new to music or had already left band in middle school. Guitar was drawing these students back to music.”

In addition to a focus on individual skills and music literacy, guitar students are also engaged in creative work, an important component of the provincial arts curriculum. With the capacity to explore harmonic and melodic play, the guitar provides an incredibly thorough musical experience, perhaps equaled only by the piano.

“The guitar is such a welcoming vehicle for music writing and ideally suited to working in the creative domain,” says Jerry Semchyshyn, music educator at Tec Voc. “Creative work is

an integral part of the guitar class and an area the guitar community really excels at. It’s just something that’s expected when you play the guitar.”

The relatively quiet volume of the guitar allows students to work independently as soloists or in smaller groups throughout the classroom. It’s also common for students to seek a quiet nook and cranny beyond the perimeters of the guitar class.

*When I am
having a bad
day, I pick up
my guitar.*

– Michelle Branch

“You see guitar everywhere in the school now,” says Brown. “I lend out instruments all the time for use during spares. It adds to the atmosphere and gives students who don’t have anything a chance to get an instrument in their hands.”

Having worked in several schools with guitar programs during her career, administrator Karen Haluschak is well

versed in the positive impact guitars can have on students and school culture.

“The school’s whole environment changes when you have students practicing or playing guitar in the hallways or common areas,” says Haluschak, principal at Windsor Park Collegiate. “The music provides a calming, soothing environment for students and staff. I have seen a great change in some students when they have a guitar in their hand and it changes the need for traditional music concerts to be the only place where students can shine.”

As a guitarist you don’t always need to be in the presence of a group of musicians to enjoy a complete, fulfilling musical experience, suggests Dr. Jody Stark, Desautels Faculty of Music. “Students don’t have to join a specific ensemble to make music for themselves; they can just pick up their guitar and experience hours of enjoyment.”

Professor Sheelagh Chadwick, University of Brandon, highlights the guitar’s ability to connect with students, particularly those underserved through traditional music offerings.

“Students who want to learn guitar and participate in these classes are often a very different demographic and may have different reasons for pursuing music education than those students already participating in large ensemble classes such as band or choir.”

Continued on page 14...

My guitar is not a thing. It is an extension of myself. It is who I am.

– Joan Jett

In an effort to broaden the scope of music education at John Taylor Collegiate, band director Steve Hamilton initiated a guitar class in 2015.

“I knew this was a program that would appeal to the students at John Taylor,” he says. “There is a demographic of students who are not into band and choir who find a place to make music in the guitar classroom.” Hamilton notes, “I know there is a fear in the band community that the guitar’s popularity will draw students away from band. I have seen the opposite effect. In fact, we’ve actually increased band enrolment as a result of the guitar program.”

Offering guitar in addition to band, for example, significantly broadens the reach of music education in schools, welcoming new students to the music classroom. “It’s not about pitting one music class against another. It’s about providing more choice and ultimately finding ways to musically engage all types of students in a school,” says Hamilton.

“We know guitar is a growth area in the province,” states Chadwick. “The number of students who want to participate in guitar classes is on the rise, and this enthusiasm for the instrument and associated repertoires is something we want our students, future music educators, to be able to support and foster.” To that end the Joint Department of Music Education at Brandon University has been working on the development of a course in guitar techniques and methods, likely in place for 2019.

Fast-forward to the new millennium and the island on which Schulz felt confined is now fully connected to the mainland.

“It’s so refreshing to be able to discuss programming and share resources with so many new colleagues,” notes Schulz. “There is a real synergy in classroom guitar and it’s incredibly rewarding to see how rooted the instrument is becoming in schools.”

Randy Haley is a music teacher at JH Bruns Collegiate in Winnipeg.

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BY JENNIFER MCFEE

FOCUS ON PHYSICS

Momentum is building for a Brandon-based teacher who is heading to a European research lab that's advancing the boundaries of human knowledge.

Christopher Sarkonak was overjoyed to hear he was one of 48 teachers from around the world selected by CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) to participate in their annual International High School Teacher Programme. He will travel to Geneva, Switzerland, for the initiative from July 7 to 20.

"It's one of the biggest things that I've ever been able to be part of professionally. They've been running the program for 21 years now, and I'll be the 15th Canadian to ever go," said Sarkonak, who teaches physics and math at Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School.

"Physics has always been my passion. I absolutely love it. The opportunity that this presents is just unbelievable."

The program is geared for teachers from across the globe who want to enhance their knowledge of particle physics, learn about educational resources and collaborate with others who share the same passion.

Although he thought it was a long shot, Sarkonak decided to apply for the international opportunity. As part of the application process, he had to create a video explaining why he loves physics and teaching.

"A number of my Grade 11 and 12 students last semester insisted on helping

me with that video, so they volunteered to stay after school a couple of days. We set up my lab and did a whole bunch of takes to shoot this video—and it turned out wonderfully," he said.

"Aside from that, I had to do five short essays explaining myself and why this opportunity was important to me. From there, it was out of my hands. I sent it all off in December, and on spring break I got an email saying I was selected. My jaw is still on the floor. It's amazing."

Participants from 35 different countries will gather at CERN, which is well-known as the home of the Large Hadron Collider—the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator that can push protons or ions close to the speed of light.

"Everything that we learn in terms of particle physics and the forefront of technology is going on there right now. We get breakthroughs in particle physics that maybe don't sound like much initially but they lead us to breakthroughs in quantum physics—and that allows us to continue to improve technology," Sarkonak said.

"It's quantum physics that makes your cell phone work. It's something that seems obscure, but the technology that leads from it is incredible."

Sarkonak also points to two major experiments at CERN, called ATLAS and CMS, that are collaborative efforts among massive teams of experts.

"They have particle collisions occur inside these 10-storey-tall sensors and they

take about 40 million snapshots per second so that they don't miss anything. They have to create this new science and new engineering to actually make everything work," he said.

"Right now, they have about 3,000 of the world's top physicists at each experiment. Then they have a host of other smaller experiments with another 1,000 or so physicists working at those."

During their visit to CERN, the participants will have the chance to attend lectures, tours, workshops and more. The teachers will also work together in small groups with a focus on integrating particle physics into the high school curriculum.

The program aims to infuse excitement and knowledge into high school teachers who, in turn, can return home and pass along their enthusiasm to their students.

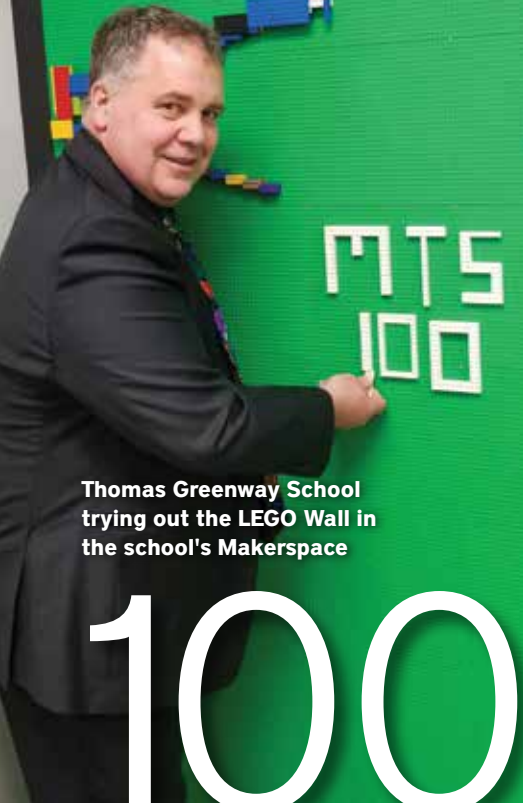
"The response from my students and colleagues has been amazing. Everyone wants to hear what it's like," Sarkonak said.

"Hopefully that brings about a whole new generation of engineers and physicists that will contribute to projects like these and we'll keep making more and more breakthroughs."

Other teachers will also have the chance to learn about Sarkonak's journey to CERN, since he is planning to provide a SAGE presentation in the fall.

"To be able to go there is absolutely astounding," he said. "It's the ultimate PD that a physics teacher could ever experience."

#111



Thomas Greenway School trying out the LEGO Wall in the school's Makerspace

#100



Whitmore School

#33



Wapanohk School Welcome

#48



Daerwood School Student Tour Guides

#82



100-PLUS

BY ANNE BENNETT

Tour 100 Manitoba schools in six months and you'll experience lots of incredible things, but ask James Bedford what stood out and he doesn't hesitate.

"Meeting the people I serve—the teachers, and the students, too. If we were a car dealership we'd be talking to our customers. We haven't done enough of that."

Then MTS vice president Bedford cheerfully agreed to the 100 schools tour, the brainchild of Council of School Leaders (COSL) chairperson, Myles Blahut. The dynamic duo reached their goal in March, but kept going. They visited their 117th school on April 18.

"There are 688 schools in Manitoba, and we've been to 117," said Bedford. "We haven't hit them all."

"Not yet," quipped Blahut a K-8 school principal before beginning a two-year term as COSL chair, Blahut suggested the tour as a way to honour the 100th anniversary of The Manitoba Teachers' Society. He approached Bedford, who jumped at the chance. Since

October, 2018, they've traveled more than 6,800 kms across the province to meet teachers on their own turf.

At each school, the first question Bedford asked students was "What makes this place special?" Students offered a wide variety of responses, but the one he heard most often was "the teachers."

"Kids come to school, stay in school, and thrive in school because of teachers," he said. "And the creativity, energy and devotion to students that I saw in our members was a huge inspiration for me."

One highlight of the tour occurred in a classroom when a teacher was suddenly called away. Blahut's inner teacher kicked in and the spelling lesson continued.

"That was great! We said, 'You go do what you have to do. We've got this!'"

Bedford enjoyed the moment, too. "That really was fun. Going into the schools reminds me that I'm a teacher. I'm a leader, but I'm a teacher first. Myles represents our school leaders, but he's a teacher first. We can't forget that."

On the somber side, both educators were struck by the amount of time teachers spend writing grant proposals for funds needed to address student needs.

"It takes so much time to secure funds and even when you do, it can dry up at any time," Bedford sighed. "And once the grant comes through there's all the paperwork that goes into proving the money is well spent, because without that back-up the funding goes away, and with it the breakfast program."

It's almost impossible to narrow the experience down to a handful of highlights, they said. "The way schools respond to their communities, to their kids, it's remarkable," said Blahut. "We saw so many incredible things made possible by so many amazing people, to list a few just wouldn't do the process justice."

Still, a few common themes emerged, with schools responding in unique ways—ways Bedford would like to see shared.

"There were several instances where we'd meet a member who'd come up with a

#72Collège Garden City
Collegiate Robotics TeamLaverendrye
School MTS VP
tasting classroom
grown tomatoes**#84**Neil Campbell School
Kindergarten Students
engaged in Play-Based
Learning**#54**Taylor School Learning Hoop
Dancing through Artists In
The School Program

SURPRISES

creative solution to a challenge, and then later in the tour we'd run into another member wrestling with the same thing. The tour presented a great opportunity for us to connect those teachers and I'd like to do more of that."

Bedford doesn't want to stop at building connections across schools, though. He sees broader, deeper opportunities for uniting allies in education.

"At times we had the president of the local, divisional representatives and school trustees all together," We were able to have these rich discussions with our educational partners and fortify relationships that are essential to accomplishing common goals. Building connections is probably the most important job I have."

Does it get a bit repetitive, looking inside 117 schools? Not according to Bedford.

"Around the halfway mark of the tour I figured we couldn't see anything new, but we always did. Every time. In the 117th school I saw something and learned something new."

On the endless list of things that impacted

them, many stood out because of the emotional connections they built.

There was Max the therapy dog at a middle school, watching a math teacher in a class where half the students were only just learning English, a rural principal who, with her husband, built "Hobbit Hill" on the school grounds using their own tractor and fuel, schools teaching meaningful lessons on Indigenous culture to all their students, the influx of students in early years French immersion and the steady drop-off rate as they age due to a lack of teachers, schools with a balanced education framework and the tremendous student response, a custodian-built curling rink, dozens of flags lining a school hallway in tribute to the vibrant cultures of its students, a Hutterian school that celebrated its first high school graduate.

"There was an auto shop where the teachers are looking to bring in electric cars so the kids can learn emerging technologies, another where we saw kids working on an 18-wheel tractor trailer. There were full-

service kitchens and hair salons, a woodshop where students are building houses indoors for use as teacherages, a rock music camp, Bedford recalled. "Think about the confidence these programs build. You can't get that from a textbook or a lecture."

"I worry that the cost of these programs will make them vulnerable to cuts, but they're so important, so fundamental to readying young people for the job market."

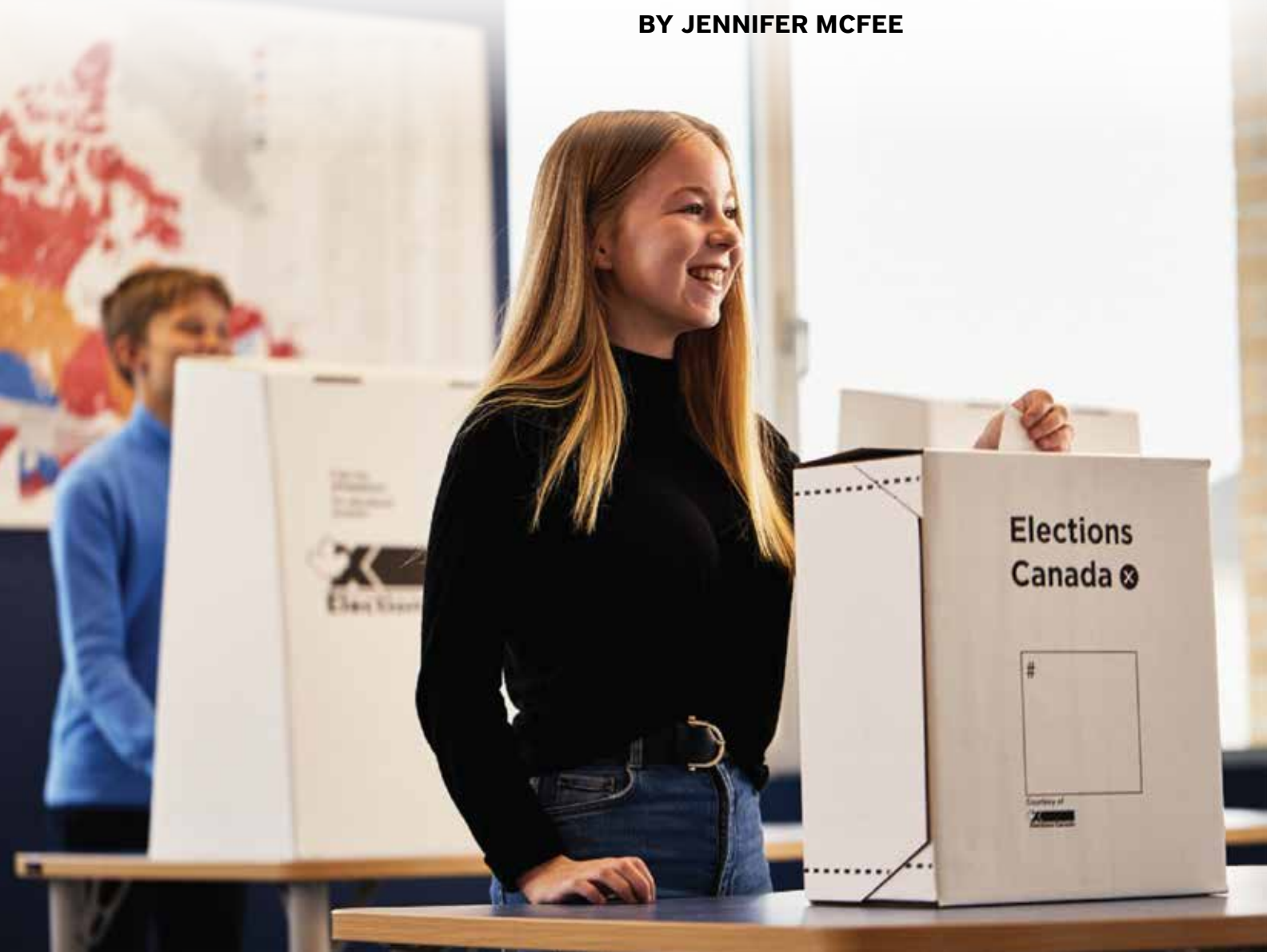
Those 117 schools provided a great window into the world of principals, said Bedford, who wishes he'd had that experience in his career. "It's an incredible responsibility and deeply meaningful, to be a school leader. Through these conversations, I got to appreciate their perspective in a way I couldn't have if we'd been talking anywhere else but in their school."

As for the legacy of the schools, tour, Bedford is emphatic: "It's been an invaluable experience and one I intend to repeat. I want to represent our members from their vantage point, not from an office in Winnipeg."



ELECTING FOR EDUCATION

BY JENNIFER MCFEE



New classroom resources developed by Elections Canada are already earning a vote of confidence from many teachers.

In the fall of 2018, the agency launched six new educational resources as a result of feedback from teachers across Canada. For more than two decades, Elections Canada has provided teachers with educational resources, and these new additions will help to better meet the needs of modern classrooms.

Elections Canada worked with education specialist Rachel Collishaw and an advisory circle of educators — which includes teachers from each province and territory as well as First Nations teachers and other experts from across Canada — to develop the new resources. They created national-focused cross-curricular material that is also relatable on a province-by-province basis.

“My role in the development was making sure the pedagogy was sound and that it aligns with current thinking around best practices in education,” said Collishaw, who is an Ottawa-based secondary school teacher on secondment.

Joseph Pélouquin-Hopfner, Elections Canada’s Manitoba education co-ordinator, explained that Elections Canada wanted to diversify their resources to make it much more relevant to teachers and go further than just talking about how an election works.

“They decided to take an inquiry-based learning approach,” he said, “since that is where most education is headed, making it more pertinent and engaging for students.”

The content is non-partisan, bilingual and mainly geared for 60-minute lessons.

“One of my favourite things about the resources,” Collishaw added, “is that we made them really hands-on and fun — and really short. We know that teachers don’t always have a lot of time to talk about elections or democracy, so each of the topics includes something really important in an engaging way. I’m also really proud that we have indigenous pieces threaded through the lessons.”

Most of the topics — including Civic Action: Then and Now, Does Voting Matter?, Voting Rights Through Time, Geography of Elections, and Elections by the Numbers — are designed for subject areas ranging from history and geography to numeracy and literacy.

“These are structured inquiry lessons that springboard students into more questions. At the end of each lesson, there’s an exit card that asks them to reflect on what they’ve learned and connect it to the inquiry question that we were looking at,” Collishaw said.



“By using this resource, teachers are going to learn a new strategy or tool that they can apply in other situations.”

For the lesson entitled Civic Action: Then and Now, students analyze a model for active citizenship through historical case studies that led to real change. Then they personalize the lesson by exploring ways they can take action to make a difference.

In the lesson called Does Voting Matter?, students take part in a mock election and express their opinions on different issues that have been addressed in federal politics over the past decade.

Voting Rights Through Time gets students thinking about the inclusivity of democracy while they explore issues of inclusion since 1867.

The Geography of Elections topic catches students’ attention with electoral maps and census data that allows them to compare their riding to others. Demographic fact sheets about Canada’s 338 electoral districts are also available.

Elections by the Numbers gets students to analyze real elections data and identify trends while they create a visual interpretation comparing youth voting to other age groups.

Pélouquin-Hopfner is available to work with Manitoba teachers to determine the best fit for their classroom — and he’ll even deliver a lesson so that teachers can observe their students learning. In addition, he can provide professional learning workshops for teachers, ranging from a 15-minute overview to a full day of learning. Currently, this opportunity is being piloted in Manitoba and in the Greater Toronto area.

“Part of the strategy behind this pilot project is to try to get these resources to be

used outside the year-and-a-half timeframe around an election,” Pélouquin-Hopfner said.

“We hope that teachers can address different aspects of elections and democracy at other times of the year and still make it interesting. Ultimately, it is part of the curriculum.”

University of Winnipeg Collegiate teacher Michael Saj is pleased to be using the elections and democracy resources with his Grade 9 social studies class.

“I got my hands on them as soon as I could, and I even got Joseph to go through one of them with my class,” Saj said.

“It all hits the curriculum but it’s also very engaging. The Grade 9 course deals with civics, which is a very important topic but it’s not one that students tend to gravitate towards, so this is another way to hook them and interest them.”

Based on his positive experience, Saj encourages other teachers to try out the materials too.

“It’s very accessible for teachers and very easy to use. In this day and age, it’s becoming more important to not only teach the importance of democracy but also that it doesn’t work if we don’t participate in it,” he said.

“Once you get into it, these topics are actually very interesting. It gives a bigger picture of the Canadian story.”

Currently, the lesson plans are available through Elections Canada’s Elections and Democracy website (www.electionsanddemocracy.ca), with resources that can be downloaded as well as physical kits that can be ordered and shipped directly to schools for free.

For more information, visit www.electionsanddemocracy.ca or contact education@elections.ca.

PORTFOLIO

NOBODY REMEMBERS THAT GUY

Among the many things Donald Trump doesn't understand, he was baffled about the U.S. first president, George Washington. Trump said that Washington, a major real estate speculator, should have named his properties after himself.

"If he was smart, he would've put his name on it," Trump said, according to three sources briefed on the exchange. "You've got to put your name on stuff or no one remembers you."

Along with the nation's capital, Washington's name is on a myriad of things. Alas, no casinos.

Fixed turns **flexible** for elections

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



It's a good thing we now have fixed election dates in Manitoba, it gives politicians something else to ignore.

Premier Brian Pallister has told Manitobans they will be going to the polls this year, rather than in October 2020, because ... well, just because he wants to.

Under law, the province was to have an election on Oct. 6, 2020, to be exact. The law actually says the next election "must" be held on that date. "Must" must have a different definition in the rarified air of the premier's office. "Must" must mean whatever you want. Must the premier drive 30 km/h in a school zone? How about the rest of us? Who knows?

There are exceptions to the law, of course. For example, a government could fall from a vote of non-confidence, triggering an early election.

So, perhaps the premier has lost confidence in himself (doubtful) or in his government overall. That would be kind of sad, actually, visualizing him sitting in his darkened office, wishing he didn't have to govern with the government he has. It may be why he also seems to want to be mayor of Winnipeg.

He says he's been told that Manitobans don't want an election next year because the province will be celebrating its 150th birthday. Whether most Manitobans have that birthday party marked on their calendars is an open question.

In any event, the premier is being a bit hard on himself to think that his re-election



The word democratic is so left wing

Students in Michigan will learn about climate change, the Ku Klux Klan and LGBTQ rights after Republican lawmakers failed to have those and other topics removed from the K-12 social studies curriculum. A draft of the new curriculum, which included the exclusions, sparked widespread outrage from teachers and parents.

One Republican member of the state board of education condemned the new draft "extremely far left" with a "serious liberal bias." Among other issues the Republicans wanted removed was the word democratic, as in "core democratic values."



PAY ATTENTION KIDS!!!

Some 15 to 20 parents came up with a solution to a wet baseball field in Ridgefield, Connecticut. To dry it out they dumped 25 gallons of gas on it and set it alight. The result was flames shooting four metres into the air and \$50,000 damage. A crew had to be hired to remove the contaminated soil. Game postponed on account of brain, or lack thereof.

would put a damper on the celebration. Well, we do want honesty from our politicians.

On the other hand, His Tallness may just have bonked his head on one too many doorways. But, no, he's probably accustomed to a few knocks on the noggin. This disregard of a Manitoba law is nothing more than they can win big now, so why wait for an unknown future. It's all about the party in power and the weakness of other parties than a birthday party next year.

Thank you, Captain Obvious.

Given the state of politics in the province, the election now will most likely be a snoozeworthy affair. The NDP is still trying to glue together the ashes, remnants of those heady days when the provisional wing of the party turned internal bickering into self-immolation. And leader Wab Kinew has yet to grab the imagination of Manitobans, unless appearing every four seconds on Instagram is thought to be imaginative.

The Conservatives have a giant bankroll, while the NDP has little more than lint in its pockets and an eye to standing on

a boulevard with a cardboard sign and outstretched hat. But then, who needs to fundraise when the election was supposed to be more than a year away?

Meanwhile, the Liberals are trying to get their new leader known by those outside his immediate family.

So, times are good for an unnecessary election.

Unfortunately, it does not bode well for public policy. Changes in education will not get the debate they need. The premier and his minions will promise little, saying that they await the recommendations of the education review commission.

Those recommendations will come to the newly-elected government that will then implement them with limited argument over the next several years.

Had the election been held when it was supposed to, those recommendations would have been the subject of vigorous and robust debate during an election campaign.

Now that would have been a worthwhile election.



It's not like they weren't honest

A woman in Ireland is suing a bar after losing her balance and falling through the entrance while trying to get by two drunks. The suit claims the bar entrance was not large enough.

The name of the pub is the Stumble Inn Bar & Grill.

A bed-and-breakfast owner in Blaine, Washington, was charged with 21 counts under the Immigration Act for allegedly aiding seven people to illegally enter Canada.

The name of the bed-and-breakfast is Smuggler's Inn.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAN FRANCISCO

A San Francisco finance expert has calculated that to live a middle-class lifestyle in San Francisco, you would need a basic income of \$300,000. And that would be living paycheque to paycheque. "It's not an extravagant lifestyle," Dogen says. "It's a middle-class lifestyle if you consider a middle-class person should be able to afford a modest home, have at least one car, have a kid or two. There are no private jets in this budget." That may explain the fact there is a moving van shortage in San Francisco and other coastal cities.

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

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

Thank Zuck for not messing up Instagram

[@haylsworld]

Give Mark Zuckerberg some credit. When Facebook bought Instagram for \$1 billion back in 2012, the small band of 13 Insta employees and three investors cashed in big time.

But many Instagram users, including me, were horrified.

We were certain that within months, Facebook would find a way to royally screw up our lovely addiction. Many Grammers threatened to move to other platforms. It wasn't pretty.

But the app has since thrived through ad monetization, ripping off Snapchat, high-profile quitters, celebrity scandals and even Russian trolls.

The bottom line today? Instagram is the preferred social media multi-tool of not only the much coveted 18-24 year-old demographic, but many teachers.

With feeds, unmatched story and photo-editing features, face filters, direct messaging, video uploads, Instagram live, IGTV, easy shopping, and tons of stickers, GIFs, and extra features, Instagram is truly a formidable platform.

In fact, Instagram pushes out so many innovations these days, it's hard to keep up

with new additions. Here are three, along with where to go for more.

Insta Voice Messages: Much like WhatsApp, you can hold down the mic icon within IG direct messages and send a one-minute voice message. Even cooler? You can "unsend" that message any time after, if you simply tap and hold.

Message Only Close Friends: You now have the option of sending your stories to all of your followers or your close friends.

Insta Class Accounts: Ok, this is not an official feature, but Stateside many new university students are starting to connect with each other through class accounts, essentially Instagram pages administered by one or more members. They feature user pics and bios, plus intended majors, requests for roommates and personal Instagram handles.

Want to keep up with the latest Instagram features as they break? Visit Hayls World on YouTube.

Huawei kicked off Google mothership

Sure they've been a major sponsor of Hockey Night in Canada. And they make

some brilliant smart phones. But it seems Chinese tech giant Huawei will soon be hobbled outside of China because of the current trade war with the U.S.

Any future Huawei phones outside of China will lose access to the entire suite of Google apps including YouTube and Google's version of the Android operating system.

Solid hardware and superb features have put Huawei in second place in the global smartphone market: outpacing Apple, but just behind Samsung. But Huawei's dominance in 5G networking and potential security threats worries five countries, including the U.S. and Canada.

A Trump executive order now forbids Huawei and 68 of its affiliates from buying parts or components from American companies. Google is putting the brakes on now. Existing Huawei phones should have access to Google Apps, the Play Store and security updates for the next few months. But any of its Huawei's new smartphone models will be bereft of all things Google as of August 19th.

Want a superb primer on what this means for you? Catch YouTuber *Marques Brownlee's The Huawei Ban: Explained!*



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