

THE MANITOBA

Teacher

DECEMBER 2014 VOLUME 93 NUMBER 3 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



OVERCOMING HISTORY

BY JUSTICE MURRAY SINCLAIR

Rock us

at YHA 2015

**We're looking for amazing
voices, musicians
and dancers!**



Know a talented student or group who can rock our Young Humanitarian Awards? We'll be featuring three acts at our May 20, 2015, YHA show at the Fairmont Winnipeg.

Send your tip along with a YouTube link to YHA@mbteach.org

Must be public school students.
Honorarium provided.



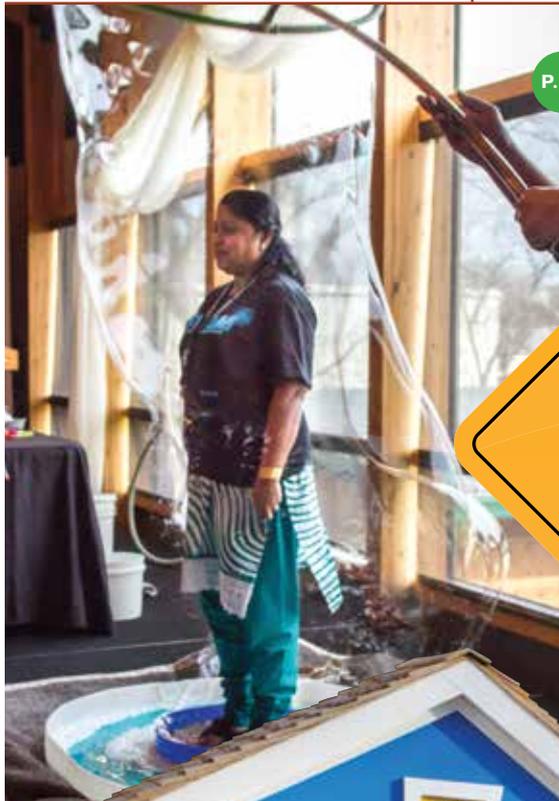
Young
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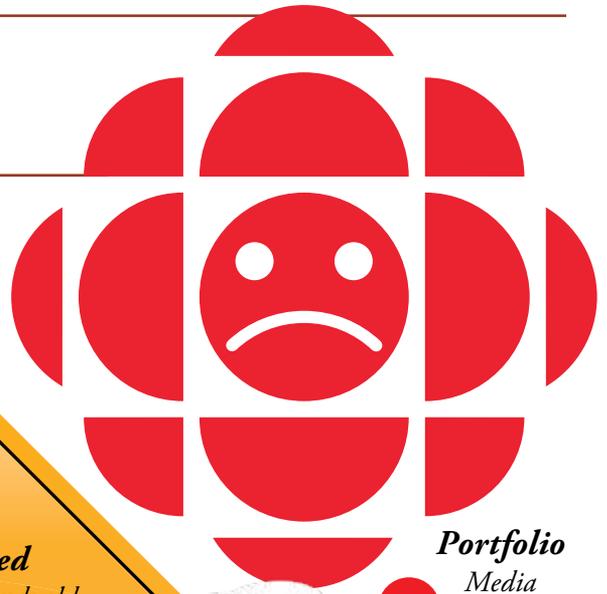
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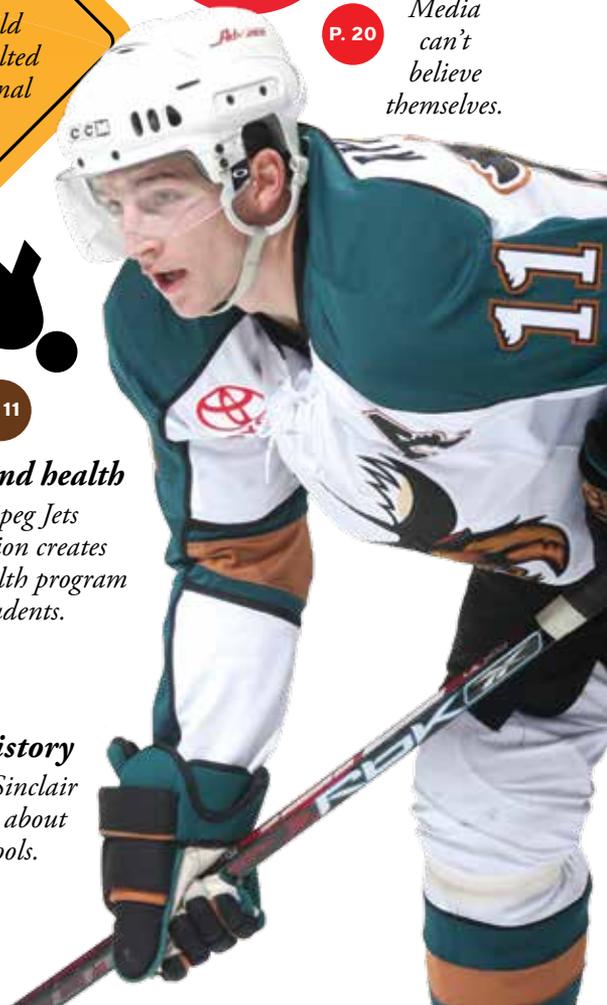


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Little, outdoor libraries are popping up in Manitoba.





PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

PAUL OLSON

I write this on the eve of Remembrance Day, and also in the long shadow of the PCAP report, which confirmed we're the worst teachers in the country. (It had graphs, so it must be true.)

One school I visited recently has a student population of 400, but last year processed 1,100 registrations—almost a 300 per cent rate of annual “churn”, mostly with federally funded First Nations schools. Nearby, a Grade 8 teacher had two kids who stayed with her from September through June—with 84 other students passing through her class (singular) during the year.

On the Remembrance Day front (pun intended), a number of veterans groups have promised to boycott any federal photo ops where these same veterans are regularly trotted out as patriotic eye candy. They apparently object to the closing of Veterans Affairs offices and what they see as the appalling treatment of veterans and their families by the Canadian government.

That's a lot of seemingly divergent threads, even for me. But I have a point, if not a plan.

The Canadian economy is twice the size it was when we invented Medicare—but we're being told we can't afford it, and that refugees don't deserve such care.

The Canadian tax system is set up in such a way that investment returns are taxed at a lower rate than wages. To clarify, the worker at a McDonalds is taxed at a higher rate than the shareholders who own them.

The Canadian government asserts that it meets its treaty obligations regarding First Nations schools in Manitoba because it funds at par with provincial schools. First of all: bollocks. And second: do you think it might cost more to run good schools in remote areas than it would in Winnipeg? 'Parity' should be a word spat out in disdain—not a goal.

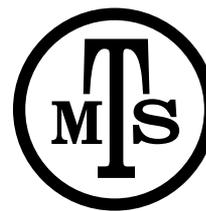
The Canadian government has also capped transfer payments for both Health and Social services at a rate that will easily be outstripped by inflation over the coming years. Provincial governments will have 'options' like selling off public assets, privatizing services, raising their own tax revenues, or letting their people suffer all the more.

When I left my last group of students in 2007 to become Vice President, I worried that I'd lose sight of the realities of the classroom. What's happened instead is that I've gained a whole new perspective on where those challenges come from, how they land on the heads of our students, and how they regularly overbear the teachers who stand between them and the abyss.

Every one of us is the Canadian government. Ottawa may be where our representatives gather, but the government is you, and me.

On this Remembrance Day, I'll be honouring my father, my brother, and all those who served and who serve by thinking about what I need to do to get my country back. This is not the nation, and these are not the values, that they thought they were fighting to protect.

I still wear a poppy with pride. Just...less of it.



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

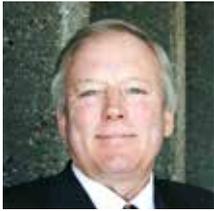
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

Information Management
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Canadian
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INSIDE MTS

KEN PEARCE, GENERAL SECRETARY

For a lot of members of MTS, the Society's AGM is probably just three letters.

But the Annual General Meeting of the Society is the culmination of a broad swath of work by staff.

One of the most time-consuming aspects of our work is in the preparation for this event but many of our members have no idea how much time goes into organizing the whole thing or, perhaps, why it is important.

Basically, the Society meets annually to ensure that the activities of committees, elected officials and staff are on track with the Society's goals of meeting members' needs in every aspect of their professional lives. For example, your fees are collected to provide you with a variety of services and also to provide the Society with the means to address issues with government and educational partners (trustees, superintendents and parent organizations, for example). What this means is that the Society acts on behalf of public school teachers by acting as agents in discussing everything from curriculum focus and certification requirements through legal services for those encountering problems.

What does this have to do with the Annual General Meeting? Everything. The Society requires that its activities be governed by its bylaws, policies and operational practices. We report through AGM to members on the way your fees were spent in the preceding year and the proposed programs, and their related costs, to be provided in the coming year.

The AGM provides reports on all its activities including its external relations and it provides a forum for debate on issues of the day and projected matters of importance to teachers. Having just spent the past two years organizing the Society's bylaws and policies, your elected and appointed representatives, working with staff, are currently focussing on what we can do to streamline the process for AGM, allowing for greater member engagement and focus. Discussions on staff and at the Provincial Executive level are being assisted by consultation with local associations, starting with Presidents' Council, a body



Association Presidents and Provincial Executive discuss changes to the AGM at the October 25 Presidents' Council.

that meets several times a year with the Provincial Executive.

We are exploring both the minor and major: format of receiving greetings, reports, questions, resolutions and overviews of insurance and pension issues and looking for any potential for creating and maintaining a dynamic and engaging business meeting. I have been asked to look at the agendas from the past several years and explore ways to streamline the business of AGM and the timing of agenda items.

Your locally elected delegates (almost 300 teachers from around the province) receive reports from the Society's Disability Plan and the operations of the Teachers Retirement and Allowances Fund board. They also examine numerous other reports and listen to presentations on issues of the day, either from committees or from invited speakers. The delegates debate potential changes to your fees and service provision, as well as provide direction to the 12-member provincial executive. The delegates' decisions become the Society's focus in the ensuing year.

The process of preparing for the Annual

General Meeting starts right after the decisions are made at the May meeting. Once the new Provincial Executive is elected and the programs and budgets for the next year are set, the meeting concludes and staff begin work on preparing documentation for the internal application of any directives from the delegates made by resolutions at this AGM. Reports on progress made by committees or staff is made at the regular Provincial Executive meetings and at the Presidents' Council meetings mentioned earlier.

Delegates have sometimes been frustrated by the lack of information and debate on some issues and a surfeit of information and questions on others. If you have your own observations on the potential for change to the way our AGM is structured, or if you have questions on what AGM is all about, I invite you to contact me by email at kpearce@mbteach.org.



Education:
cause &
solution

PHOTOS BY MATEA TUHTAR, BIRTLE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, BIRTLE MB

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is all about the education of children. We have been directed to investigate the federal government's educational system for First Nations, Inuit and Metis children that was in place for over 125 years. Educational initiatives are implied in that part of our mandate which requires us to reveal to Canadians the true and complete story of that system. The story of the schools, in an obvious sense, is a lesson in education.

However, it is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation.

Education is important.

In order for any society to function properly, it must raise and educate its children so that they can answer what philosophers such as Socrates, and Plato, and Aboriginal Elders, call 'the great questions of life'. Those questions are: Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? Who am I?

Children need to know their personal story. We all need to know the stories of our parents and our grandparents, our direct and indirect ancestors and our real and mythological villains and heroes.

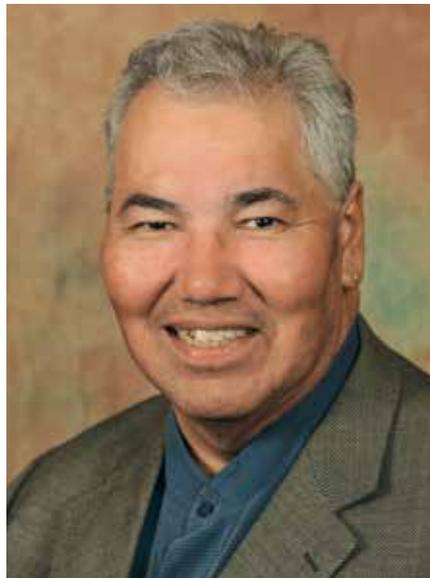
As part of that story we also need to know about the story of the community of people to which we are attached—our collective story—all the way back to our place in the creation of this world.

We all have a Creation story, and we all need to know what it is. We also need to learn that not all Creation stories are the same, but that all Creation stories are true. That is important in teaching about respect.

We also need to know where we are going. Knowing where you're going is not just about where you are going to be next week, or next year, or in 25 years. It is also about what happens to us when we die. It's about the spirit world, and life after death. It's about belief, and faith, and hope.

Knowing why you are here is also related to the other two questions. But the answer to that third question is also about knowing what role you play in the world, including in your community of people.

It's about knowing whether your purpose is fulfilled through being an artist, or a leader or a warrior or a caregiver or a healer or a helper. Clan teachings and naming ceremonies in my own culture provide answers about that, but the answer to that question is also



influenced by knowing what your family and community need, and then, filling that need, and feeling the satisfaction that derives from that.

The fourth question, "Who am I?", is the most important, because it is the one that we are always asking and always answering. It is the constant question. It is influenced by everything and everyone. We fight to maintain the answer we like, and we fight to change and improve the answer we don't. We strive to attain the perfect answer by the time we die, not realizing that in fact there is no right or wrong answer. It is a question about understanding our life. It is about identity. It is about what you have become, but it is also about what you want to become.

In many ways it is the answer that derives from knowing the answers to the other three questions. If one of them is unanswered or the answer in doubt, then this question remains unfulfilled. Your life is not in balance.

For children in residential schools, those questions went unfulfilled. The answers that they were forced to accept ran counter to much of the knowledge they already carried from their early lives as children in their own families and communities. In my culture, as is true for all others, your first teacher is your mother, and your first classroom is your family home. What you learn in those formative years influences you for life, and as you grow, you look for things that reinforce what you learned from your mother, or your grandmother, or your uncles and aunties. Indian Residential School denied all that and tried to squash that curiosity.

The schools were about changing the identities of indigenous children, but how can one do that, when there is so much information bred in your bones that is not consistent with the identity you are being told you must take on? It is difficult to believe that you can live and be just like a white man when a brown face stares back at you in the mirror.

But that only explains one side of the issue. There are others as well.

We are governed in our approach to reconciliation with this thought: the way that we have all been educated in this country—Aboriginal children in residential schools and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in public and other schools – has brought us to where we are today—to a point where the psychological and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal children has been harmed, and the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people has been seriously damaged. This is so, not just in terms of what was taught (or not taught) about residential schools, but also in terms of what Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have been taught about each other.

It is our view that, in broad terms, education has brought us to the current state of poor relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country, but education holds the key to making things better.

We know that making things better will not happen overnight. It will take generations. That's how the damage was created and that's how the damage will be fixed. But if we agree on the objective of reconciliation, and agree to work together, the work we do today, will immeasurably strengthen the social fabric of Canada tomorrow.

I'm sure you have heard many stories about the horrific abuse some have suffered at the hands of those who ran the schools. But it is not the complete story. Most children were not physically and sexually abused in the schools. Of the 80,000 claimants for Common Experience Payments paid for merely attending the schools, it's anticipated that about 25,000 to 30,000 are likely to be able to prove claims for serious injury arising from an act of abuse.

However, all the children who went to the schools have been damaged in some way, some without even realizing it. Physical and sexual abuses are not the only source of trauma. The separation from parents at such a young age, being subjected to a climate of fear,



Residential schools have now been closed for at least one generation. In fact, they had pretty much closed by the 1980s, but the legacy of those schools is very much alive.

of loneliness, of hostility and of oppression, would have been enough to cause enormous personal damage to any child, especially when combined with the children's long-term institutionalization, and isolation from family. Such matters dominate the testimony of survivors when they discuss the schools.

Even in the stories we have heard about how some survivors feel that the schools took them from home environments that were violent or neglectful and impoverished and gave them opportunities they would never have otherwise had, we must always keep in mind that we are talking about home environments that have largely been created by the legacy of residential schools. The past several generations of survivors were invariably intergenerational survivors of parents who went to the schools. It's hard and illogical to give the savior credit when, in the eyes of the Aboriginal community, it is the primary perpetrator.

Residential schools have now been closed for at least one generation. In fact, they had pretty much closed by the 1980s, but the legacy of those schools is very much alive.

It lives on in the daily experiences of the survivors in this country. It lives on in their attitudes about themselves and in the opportunities that are and are not open to them.

It lives on in their children who do not know their languages, or their cultures, and who were denied the chance to gain a sense of self respect from schools that constantly portrayed their people as savages, heathens, uncivilized, treacherous, sneaky, dishonest, thieving, and irrelevant.

It lives on in the lives of Aboriginal parents who spent years living in institutions where they would never have learned to parent properly, denied the chance to observe and receive positive parenting from their own parents, or to participate in any kind of normal family life.

And it lives on in lives of the children and grandchildren of those parents.

A great accumulation of damage has been done to Aboriginal cultures, languages, families and communities by residential schools.

It wasn't just Indian Residential Schools that bear the blame. The public schools do as well. A great deal of damage has been done to the relationship between Aboriginal people and all other Canadians because non-Aboriginal people have been educated not to respect Aboriginal people. Sadly, even in our public schools, Aboriginal children have been taught about this country, about themselves, and about their place in the world, in a manner which has caused them shame and humiliation. If you don't believe this then you do not understand the implications of the continuing high dropout rates of Aboriginal children in public schools.

The commission has visited hundreds of communities and heard thousands of statements. In almost every community where non-Aboriginal persons have been in the audience, someone, sometimes several people, has come up to me and said, "I didn't know. I really didn't know. I attended school in this province, high school, university even, and I didn't know any of this. I had my entire schooling in this province and I was never taught a thing about Indian Residential Schools or the laws that were passed to maintain them."

Most Canadians have been taught little or nothing about the Indian Residential Schools. But they were probably taught something, one way or another, about the history of Canada and the role of Aboriginal peoples in that history. They were probably taught, for instance, that the history of Canada began "in 1492, when Columbus sailed the ocean blue", or when John Cabot and Jacques Cartier landed on a small piece of land in the east and

claimed the entire place for a foreign power.

Nation-building has been the main theme of Canada's history curricula for a long time, and Aboriginal people, except for a few notable exceptions trotted out as if to prove the rule, have been portrayed in textbooks as bystanders, or obstacles, to the enterprise of nation-building.

Many of today's leading and prominent Canadians attended school and university in an era long before educational authorities began to take their first critical look at curricula as it relates to Aboriginal peoples. That education has influenced each and every one of us. As an Aboriginal student it denied to me any sense of pride about the role of my ancestors in the history of this part of the world. For my non-Aboriginal classmates, it taught them that we were wild and savage and uncivilized, and that given the conditions of Aboriginal people in modern society, we had not advanced very far from that state. My non-Aboriginal classmates were taught to be proud of the accomplishments of their ancestors in taming this wild country and wresting it from the savages and establishing this wonderful nation known as Canada.

My education lacked relevance for me, and this was so despite my success at it. But that success came at a price. It taught me and others that my people were irrelevant. By implication it caused me to feel that I was too. It taught us to believe in the inferiority of Aboriginal people and in the inherent superiority of white European civilization, and in order to get the grades that I did, I was compelled to repeat that unconscious mantra. The system of my day did not teach us to respect Aboriginal people because it never told us anything about the Aboriginal presence in this country that showed the humanity of the people. In public schools, we were all educated to be the same, and if we rebelled, resisted, or rejected that



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process, we were weeded out or we weeded ourselves out. Of the Aboriginal students I started grade school with, few ever graduated from high school. Even my brother and sister did not. But though I and others succeeded in that system, it was not without cost to our own humanity, and our sense of self-respect.

I have a grand-daughter—Sarah is her English name—Nimijien Niibense is her Spirit name and that is how I always call her. She is very special to me. She loves to hear stories, especially Nanabush stories—the stories of the trickster of our people. Yet from time to time I like to tell her other children stories as well, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, and Jack and the Beanstalk are among her favorites, mainly I think, because I can be a pretty believable Bear, or Big Bad Wolf, or Giant. But I like to tell her my favorite story from my childhood—the Story of the Ugly Duckling.

The story of the little duckling who was mocked and teased and bullied mercilessly by his brothers and sisters and friends and all the other ducks for being ugly, is a touching one. His sadness and humiliation and loneliness marked his life in the story. He wanted so hard to be like all the other ducks but he was never treated well and he always felt like he never fit in. He began to feel ugly. He felt he was a failure, rejected and lost.

But then one day he discovered that he was not a duck. He was in fact a beautiful, beautiful swan. He learned that himself, from seeing other swans. He discovered who he really was and he discovered that what others called ugly was, in fact, a thing of great beauty. His happiness at that discovery was one that I felt as I read the story as a child, and which I felt, as I told it to Sarah.

When I tell her that story, I tell her that she too is a beautiful swan no matter what others might tell her, and it makes her feel good to

hear that from her Mooshim.

But what I haven't been able to tell her yet—because she's too young—is that I was raised to believe I was an ugly duckling and despite my significant duck skills, I always felt shame and confusion and sadness because I did not feel like a duck. When she is old enough to understand, I will tell her about the day I became a swan—when I realized I was a strong Anishinaabe man—and that there were many things of beauty about being Anishinaabe that belong to me. I think she will have to know that part of my story too.

The second reason why I talk about the work of those academics is because it takes a long time and a great deal of concerted effort to turn around damaging public attitudes. Mainstream Canadians see the dysfunction of Aboriginal communities but they have no idea how that happened, what caused it, or how government contributed to that reality through such actions and policies as the residential schools. In that environment, it becomes easy to blame Aboriginal people for their lot in life and for their failure to overcome it as others have.

So, I want to say something about the current state of education in Canada. Education holds the key to reconciliation.

Education has changed from my day, but has it changed enough?

I'm aware that there have been genuine attempts to reform what our children—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—are taught about Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and even about the Indian Residential School system itself.

The Legacy of Hope Foundation and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation commissioned an environmental scan by Curriculum Services Canada of the curricula being used in Canadian elementary schools, secondary schools and post-secondary programs.

The 2011 report concluded that:

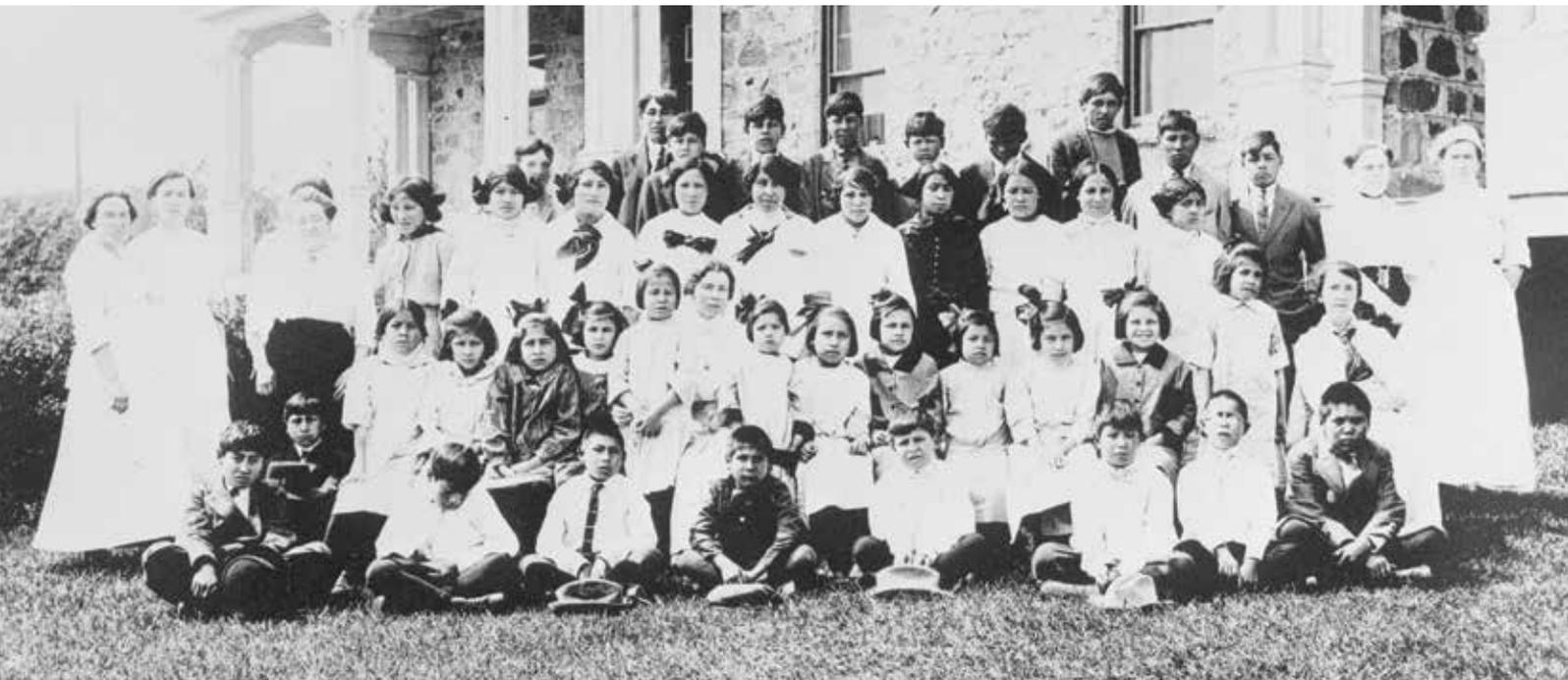
- "...the status of curriculum regarding the Indian Residential Schools varies greatly—from recently revised to revision-in-progress to curriculum that is several years old."
- "In much of the provincial/territorial curriculum, content on residential schools is limited and, if presented, is often a subset of a broad context."

I don't want to dismiss the "broad context". The "broad context" is obviously crucial. All students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, need to learn that the history of this country did not begin in 1492, or even with the arrival of Vikings much earlier. They need to learn about the Aboriginal nations that the Europeans met, about their rich linguistic and cultural heritage, about what they felt and thought as they dealt with such historic figures as Champlain, LaVerendrye and the representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company. They need to learn why they negotiated treaties and that they negotiated them with purpose and integrity and in good faith.

They need to learn why Aboriginal leaders and elders fight so hard to defend those poorly worded treaties and why they have been ignored by Euro-Canadian settlers and governments.

They need to learn about what it means to have inherent rights and learn of the many issues that are ongoing and why.

But this is not enough. As I said before, mainstream Canadians see the dysfunction of Aboriginal communities but they have no idea how that happened, what caused it, or how government contributed to that reality through residential schools and the policies and laws in place during their existence. Our education system, through omission or commission, has failed to do that and misunderstanding, ignorance, and racism has resulted, on the one hand, and shame,



Children need to know their personal story. We all need to know the stories of our parents and our grandparents, our direct and indirect ancestors and our real and mythological villains and heroes.

humiliation, a lack of self-respect and anger have occurred, on the other.

The educational systems of this country bear a large share of the responsibility for the current state of affairs. But it can fix what it has broken.

What our education systems need to do is this: they must commit to teach Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children—our children—how to speak respectfully to and about each other in the future. It begins with teaching them the truth about our history. Knowing what happened will lead to understanding. Understanding leads to respect.

Reconciliation is about respect. The relationship must be founded on mutual respect, but we must not lose sight of the threshold importance of ensuring that firstly, Aboriginal children are given an opportunity to develop their self-respect. That must come first.

The Legacy of Hope has developed a comprehensive, high-quality package about Residential Schools. Its focus is on the inclusion of residential schools in educational curricula; it is a strong beginning to the development of important initiatives. Anyone interested in curriculum development should look at what they have done.

Some jurisdictions have developed curriculum changes concerning Indian

Residential Schools. Manitoba is piloting an initiative for middle-school years. Curriculum material on residential schools is also offered in B.C. schools.

Alberta teaches residential schools as a sub-topic of its mandatory social studies curriculum. The Northwest Territories and Nunavut have recently announced that the history of Indian Residential Schools will be a mandatory component of their curriculum. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the task of persuasion was made easier by the work of their respective Treaty Commissions which have done great work in having treaties and treaty-making taught in all schools on the basis that “We are all Treaty People.”

While sub-topics such as residential schools and treaties are important, they do need to be seen as a starting point to the development of a comprehensive approach to the inclusion of materials that fully discuss the history of this country, materials that give full and proper respect to Aboriginal people and bring balance to the nature of the historical and current relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country.

There are hurdles and I have no interest in making this sound easier than it is.

But here is my concern:

If programs which deal with the experience of Aboriginal people in this country are taught

only as electives and not as mandatory in the senior grades, even if they deal extensively and appropriately with the Indian Residential School system and the fallout from it, I expect that I will still be approached in five, 10 or 15 years from now by people saying to me, “You know, I received my elementary, secondary and post-secondary education in this country, and I never heard a single thing about the Indian Residential Schools.”

I want to prevent that from happening.

Here is what I said to the Council of Ministers of Education at their Annual Meeting in Halifax in July of 2012:

•...I am asking you this morning for a commitment to embark on a process that will result in changes in the curricula of your particular province or territory – changes that will ensure that every single child that is educated in the jurisdiction you represent is taught about the Indian Residential Schools in the course of his or her education, that every single child that is educated in your jurisdiction learns about the treatment of Aboriginal people, and the historical relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country.

Now that you know that, I ask you to push as educators and citizens of this great country to see that this is accomplished.

Jets boost plan for mental health

BY JUDY OWEN

It's easier to support a program if a teacher is interested in the topic, believes the material will benefit students and its simple to use.

Suzi Friesen is helping promote Project 11 for all those reasons, plus she has a personal connection to the subject matter.

Project 11 is a positive mental health initiative for Manitoba students in grades 5–8, which is seeking schools to take part in pilot projects beginning in January and September, 2015.

Friesen's mother struggled with mental illness for most of her life. While growing up, Friesen didn't know whom she could talk to about the effect on herself and her family.

If Project 11 had been around, it could have made a difference, she said.

"My mom is well now. She's on medication and she's in a good place. Growing up, my family and I weren't always aware of the supports available and her mental illness wasn't really talked about," said Friesen, who presented on Project 11 at a SAGE session this fall.

"Had Project 11 been something that my teacher could have used, it would have had me thinking and self-reflecting sooner. I would have sought out resources and support systems."

Project 11 was created by the Winnipeg Jets True North Foundation in honour of pro hockey player Rick Rypien, who wore No. 11 for the American Hockey League's former Manitoba Moose and was planning to wear the same number for the National Hockey League's Winnipeg Jets.

Rypien suffered for years with depression and was getting treatment while playing for the Vancouver Canucks. He took his own life in August 2011, just a month after signing a contract with the Jets.

The goal of Project 11 is to create awareness about mental health.

Friesen, a Project 11 co-ordinator, taught middle years in the Seven Oaks School Division.

Her SAGE presentation included video of the easy-to-use, free online resource, which is split into lessons for grades 5–8.

The project's content includes videos featuring kids, experts and local celebrities and athletes such as Winnipeg Jets defenceman Mark Stuart.

There are lesson plans with themes such as stress, self-reflection, friendship and communication, as well as related handouts that can be downloaded.

A fun component is called 'bodychecks', which are daily activities incorporating yoga, laughing yoga, music and rhythm, fun with food, relaxation techniques and aboriginal dancing.

Peter Gow, a behaviour resource teacher in Sunrise School Division who attended the session, said Project 11 would be easy to implement in the classroom.

"I think kids have to learn how to relax themselves because it's a pretty stressful society, even for kids," he said. "We're always on the go."

Gow works with kindergarten to Grade 6 students at Centennial School and said he might apply to be part of the pilot project.

Project 11 is seeking 50 schools from across the province to take part in the first pilot project for grades 5–6 that starts in January. Schools are being contacted in hopes teachers will apply by December 19. Participants will be selected in a lottery type of draw.

"I think it's an interesting idea, an issue that needs to be dealt with in the schools so I'm all for it," Gow said.

While he's aware of some students with mental health issues, not all of them seek help or are easily recognized. That's where a program such as Project 11 could help widen the reach.

"It would hit everybody," Gow said. "Those ones that maybe don't need it, but it would definitely hit all those ones that you don't notice. That's what I think would be good."

When Friesen was teaching, she'd often have co-workers ask her for health-related lessons so she'd dig up what she'd created for her students.

Project 11 now offers a curricular support resource written by former Manitoba teacher Heidi Fingas that's professionally developed and simple to use.

"In some schools, health issues are taught as part of phys ed classes, so this is a way for it to be really easy to integrate into your ELA as well," Friesen said.

"Teachers can play the video and it will guide them through the lesson. It's all right there and it's easy to access. It should be really user-friendly and kid-friendly."



PD DAZE

For the first time in six years, the 2014 MTS FAB 5 conference—for teachers in their first five years—was held in Winnipeg during the same week as the Special Area Groups of Educators (SAGE) Coordinated Conference Day.

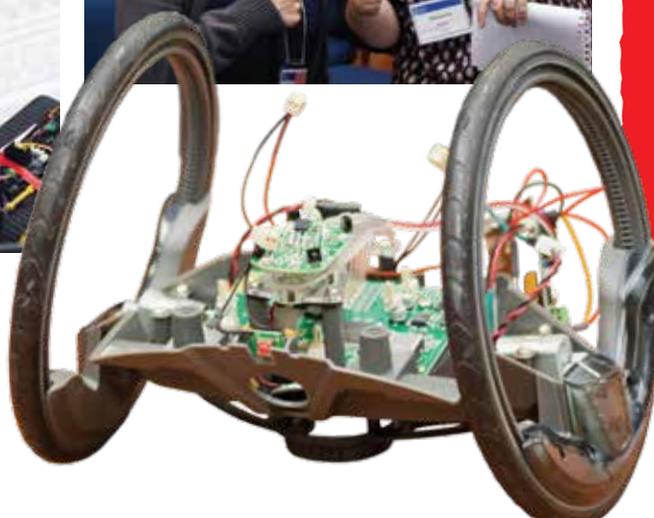
Feedback in the exit survey and from conversations with participants during the conference indicates that having the FAB 5 in the same week allowed attendees more flexibility in being able to attend the two MTS events, especially those having to travel long distances to get to Winnipeg.

Participants came from all areas of the province and like in the past few years, teachers new to the profession took the opportunity to network with their peers, Society staff and began forging new professional contacts.

Meanwhile, a day later, thousands of teachers attended SAGE Day conferences and workshops from demonstrations of giant bubble-making to robotics to strategies for use inside and outside the classroom.

At the FAB 5 conference, keynote speaker Mark Essay generated high enthusiasm during the opening evening session with humorous anecdotes that revealed tried and true strategies for reaching students. The next morning, teachers chose three different breakout sessions, and in the afternoon learned about six different internet-based professional development sites and applications of technology in the classroom.





This is my second time attending a Fab 5 conference and I've really enjoyed it. One of my favorite parts is how accessible a lot of the strategies are, and how easy it would be to take these back to our own classrooms. I would definitely recommend that teachers attend something like this—it's a great opportunity to network and make connections with teachers who are going through the same thing, as well as experienced teachers who have lots of knowledge.

Bailey Englot, teacher,
Samuel Burland school

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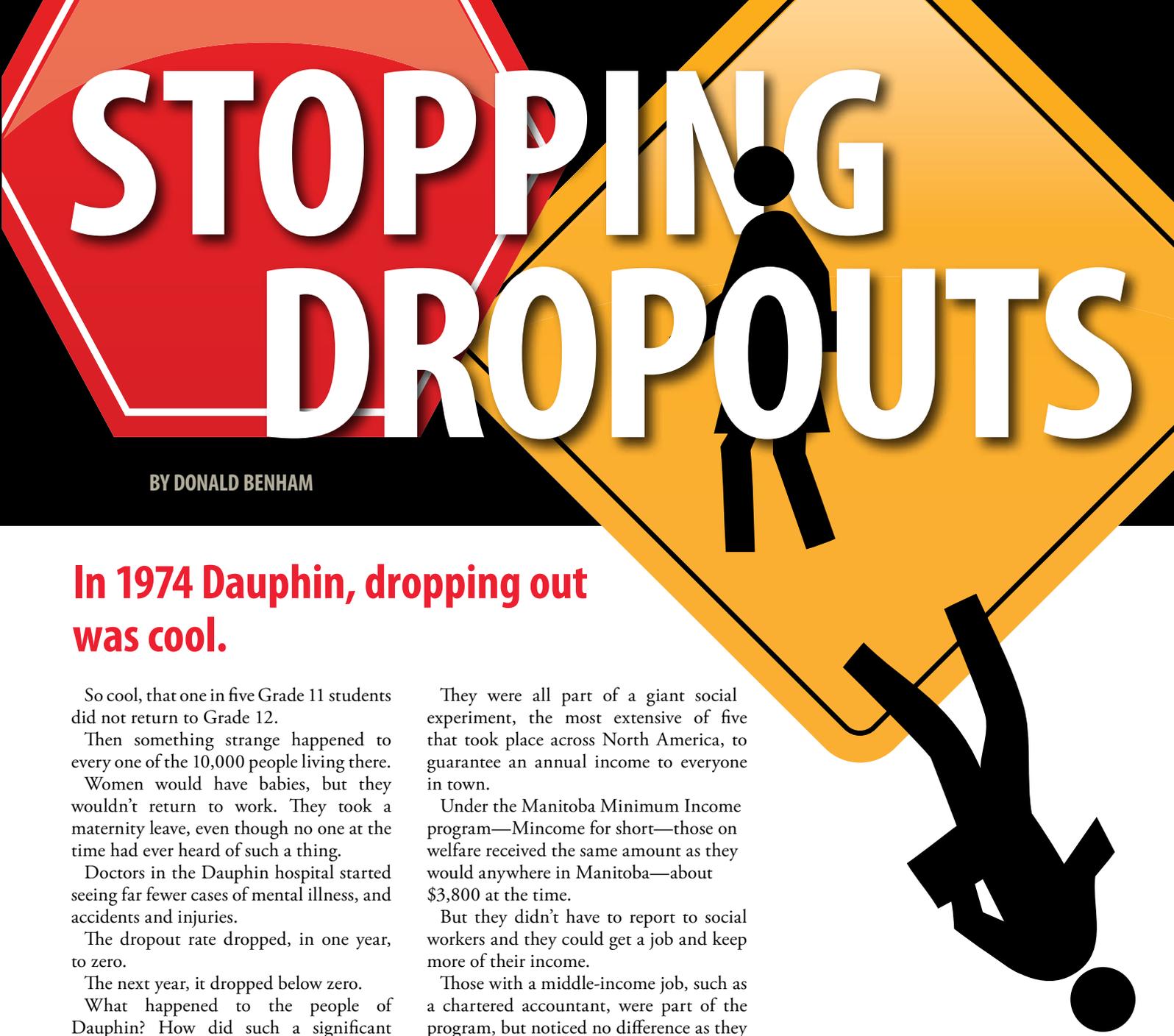
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STOPPING DROPOUTS



BY DONALD BENHAM

In 1974 Dauphin, dropping out was cool.

So cool, that one in five Grade 11 students did not return to Grade 12.

Then something strange happened to every one of the 10,000 people living there.

Women would have babies, but they wouldn't return to work. They took a maternity leave, even though no one at the time had ever heard of such a thing.

Doctors in the Dauphin hospital started seeing far fewer cases of mental illness, and accidents and injuries.

The dropout rate dropped, in one year, to zero.

The next year, it dropped below zero.

What happened to the people of Dauphin? How did such a significant change in behaviour and outcomes occur in just one year?

They were all part of a giant social experiment, the most extensive of five that took place across North America, to guarantee an annual income to everyone in town.

Under the Manitoba Minimum Income program—Mincome for short—those on welfare received the same amount as they would anywhere in Manitoba—about \$3,800 at the time.

But they didn't have to report to social workers and they could get a job and keep more of their income.

Those with a middle-income job, such as a chartered accountant, were part of the program, but noticed no difference as they paid their normal taxes and received no additional benefits.

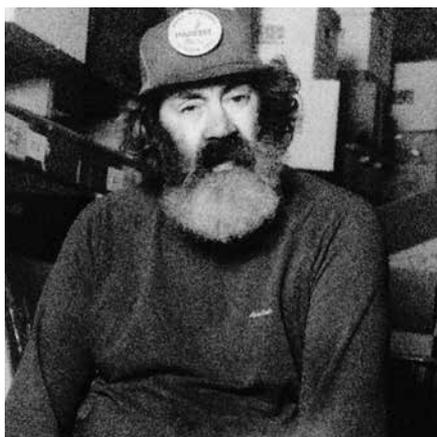
DAUPHIN

COMPARISON GROUP

1974

Hospitalizations

1978



One day, everyone at Winnipeg Harvest saw a new Big Bill walk in. He wore a new set of clothes and a new sense of self-esteem.

The people who really benefited were the working poor, who received income supplements on a sliding scale.

Several of the families told their stories to *Winnipeg Free Press* columnist Lindor Reynolds in 2009.

Hugh Henderson was a school janitor while his wife Doreen stayed at home with their two children.

Mincome allowed them to buy some new clothes for their kids.

Doreen says Mincome should be brought back for seniors and young families.

“Give them enough money to raise their kids. People work hard and it’s still not enough,” she told Reynolds. “This isn’t welfare. This is making sure kids have enough to eat.”

Amy Richardson ran the Dauphin Beauty Parlour out of her home, supporting their family of six children after her husband retired early due to a health problem.

The Richardsons used the extra money on things like school books.

“Everybody was the same so there was no shame,” Richardson told the *Free Press*.

Reynolds concluded: “Mincome did more than top up the income of the poor. It gave them dignity. Surely that’s an idea worth investing in.”

In the second-floor boardroom of Winnipeg Harvest hang black-and-white portraits of volunteers. David Northcott, executive director of the food distribution and training centre, likes to point out the man with the long hair and long, black beard.

Big Bill had lived life on the road, jumping freight trains to get from town to town. Bill settled in Winnipeg and was a long-time client and volunteer at Winnipeg Harvest. He lived in a downtown hotel. He couldn’t

always use the shower down the hall because it didn’t always work. He wore all his clothes all the time, because the one time he left some in his room, they were stolen.

As a result, Big Bill struggled with hygiene and other issues. But he still came to help others at Winnipeg Harvest who were even less fortunate than he was.

One day, everyone at Winnipeg Harvest saw a new Big Bill walk in. He was clean. He wore a new set of clothes and a new sense of self-esteem. What had changed?

Big Bill had turned 65. He received Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Suddenly, the society that had treated him so badly began to respect him and his income needs as a citizen. He got access to decent housing and he could afford to buy groceries to cook in his own kitchen.

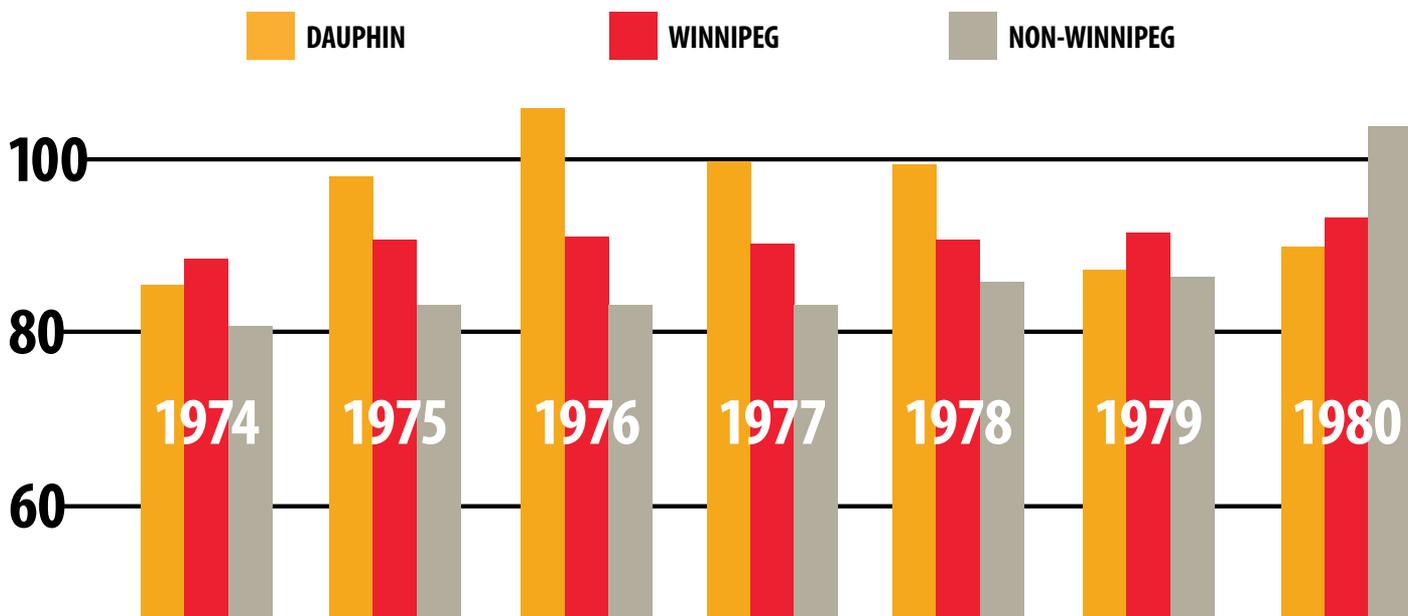
David Northcott told Big Bill’s story to a Senate committee. “This proves that, when we want, we have the capacity to design and deliver a system that works and values the citizen. Why can’t we do the same every day, for every Canadian?” Northcott asked.

In their 2010 report, *In from the Margins*, the committee, co-chaired by senators Art Eggleton and Hugh Segal, recommended the federal government study and report on a guaranteed annual income, based on the Dauphin experiment and another in Nova Scotia.

The Dauphin experiment came about through an alignment of the political stars. Both the federal government of then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau and the Manitoba government of then-premier Ed Schreyer wanted to test the concept. The two governments spent \$17 million over four years.

But when new governments were elected,

Grade 12 Enrolment As % Previous Year Grade 11 Enrolment





the experiment was halted and the results not analyzed. Reams of paper filled more than 1,800 boxes at a federal archives site in Winnipeg.

Enter Evelyn Forget. The professor in the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Medicine studies the economics of health care: How to use money more effectively in Canada's publicly-financed health care system.

Forget rescued the boxes just before they went to the shredder. She also used other statistical databases to highlight changes in Dauphin before, during and after the experimental period and to compare Dauphin with other parts of Manitoba.

First, the very small amount of research work that survives from the period had already busted the myth that giving people money would lead them to quit their jobs. Not one primary wage-earner in Dauphin quit his or her job during the period.

Second, as mentioned above, the women of Dauphin invented maternity leaves a decade or so before everyone else caught on.

One of Forget's graphs reflects the historic pattern before 1974 of only 80 per cent of Grade 11 students returning to Grade 12. Many had already given up on the goal of post-secondary education and made an economic decision to start into the workforce.

In the first year of the experiment, that social paradigm reversed itself. Grade 12 enrolment jumped to 100 per cent.

The next year, the figure climbed to 110 per cent. The only possible explanation, Forget says, is that dropouts from previous years were returning to complete their education.

For the following two years of the experiment, the return rate remained at close to 100 per cent.

As important as all that was, Forget discovered an even more significant result in health care.

She plotted the average hospitalization



rates for mental illness, and accidents and injuries, in all rural Manitoba hospitals. Then she plotted Dauphin's hospitalization rates in the same two categories.

The resulting graph was dramatic. As the experiment starts in 1974, Dauphin has significantly higher hospitalization rates in both categories. But those rates start to decline as soon as the experiment begins. They continue a sharp decline throughout the four years, eventually falling more than eight per cent below average. Shortly after the experiment ends, the lines move up again, quickly reaching the average, but interestingly, not returning to above-average.

When Forget first unveiled her results, one of the doctors in the audience was Joel Kettner, then Manitoba's chief public health officer.

"Evelyn, how much money would we save with a guaranteed annual income?" Kettner asked.

"Joel, I'll get that number for you. But with what I know so far, I will stake my professional reputation on saying we would save money overall by providing a guaranteed annual income, just with what we would save on hospitalization costs," Forget replied.

And the dropout rate? The year after the Dauphin experiment ended, the dropout rate jumped back to 20 per cent and stayed there.

Politicians and bureaucrats often say they like to make their decisions based on evidence.

The best evidence, from the most extensive experiment, shows every child in Canada could graduate from high school, if every family in Canada had a guaranteed annual income.

Donald Benham is director of hunger and poverty awareness at Winnipeg Harvest.

Everybody was the same so there was no shame.

Amy Richardson

FURTHER READING

Dauphin's great experiment: Mincome, nearly forgotten child of the '70s, was a noble experiment, by Lindor Reynolds, *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 3, 2009
www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/dauphins-great-experiment.html

The Town with No Poverty: What happens when you give an entire town a guaranteed annual income? PowerPoint presentation by Evelyn Forget, August 2012
www.winnipeg Harvest.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Presentation-by-Evelyn-Forget-on-Guaranteed-Annual-Income.ppt

This isn't welfare. This is making sure kids have enough to eat.

Doreen Henderson



Linwood School
Little Free Library



OPEN BOOKS



‘Take a book and leave a book’ is the premise behind Little Free Libraries—a literary movement that has gained popularity across North America, and is popping up across the province, including two Winnipeg schools.

A Little Free Library is just that—a small structure or box full of books where anyone may stop by and pick up a book, or drop off another book to share. According to the Little Free Library national organization (<http://littlefreelibrary.org>), it’s not just about providing free books on a shelf—it’s the personal touch and understanding that real people are sharing their favorite books with the community. “They’re not just any old books, but a carefully curated collection,” says the site.

“...a gathering place where neighbors share their favorite literature and stories.”

It’s this notion that first attracted Charlene Roziere to the idea of a Little Free Library, and prompted her to build one not just at her home, but also at Linwood School, which her two children attend.

“We first saw a story in the news about a Little Free Library in Calgary. We’re a family of readers so we thought this was the best thing ever,” says Roziere whose family put up a Little Free Library in the front yard of their St. James home in June of 2012—the first one in Winnipeg. “I looked around and there weren’t any here at the time, and I thought we could do that!”

The response from Roziere’s neighbourhood was wonderful. “It’s been such a great experience—we’ve met tons of neighbors we didn’t know, and the ones we did know, we got to know better,” says Roziere, adding that their library has also been visited by people from

THE FINAL CHAPTER?

The days of school libraries filled with dusty books and shushing old-school librarians defending the canon of literature are long gone. But though school libraries have evolved to keep up with the digital age, they’re also struggling to stay relevant—trying to weather cuts to funding, staffing and most recently the closure of the Pembina Trails Media Center.

The long running Media Center which has, since 2002, offered audio-visual resources, classroom kits, print and video material to all of the grades in the school division is winding down its operations this year. It’s a move that former MSLA (Manitoba School Libraries Association) president Jeff Anderson calls ‘disappointing.’

“When I heard that decision, all of us in

the library community felt as if someone has taken their eyes off the ball,” says Anderson. “Research has shown that strong library programs in schools increase student literacy rates; produce students with greater critical thinking skills and results in higher rates of student success. How can we then look at cutting programming that has a direct impact on the success of student learning?”

Recently MSLA has submitted a proposal to Manitoba Education that the province should support digital resources for all students in Manitoba. While some divisions have access to resources such as EBSCO (an online research database), others don’t have the licenses or monies to pursue such resources, especially schools in the rural and



northern parts of the province.

“Right now some can afford it and some can’t,” says Anderson. “It’s all about allocating the money and all about priorities; some divisions don’t even really know what is available to them. We’re looking at this universally—a universal library card if you will, where every student in Manitoba has

other neighbourhoods and from as far away as New Zealand.

When Linwood School was celebrating its 100th year anniversary, Roziere approached the anniversary committee with the idea of building a Little Free Library for the school. “Our kids are the 4th generation to go here, we have a long history here, so we thought it would be a neat idea,” says Roziere who built the library with her husband and donated the materials. “The school administration has been very supportive and it’s been a huge success.”

“It is delightful to see our students stop to take a book on their way home from school, says Linwood School Principal Kelsey McDonald. “We also see many strollers with future students using the library—it’s a lovely way for new families to begin connecting with the school community.”

École Robert H. Smith in Winnipeg’s River Heights area also has a Little Free Library in its front yard. It’s a part of a sustainability goal the school has set for itself which includes vegetable and butterfly gardens. Grade 6 teacher David Leochko set up the library with his after-school ‘Adventure Club’ whose students promote environmental and sustainable practices and being outdoors.

“We want to move beyond just the recycling part and understand that sustainability is also giving back to the community—not just the environment,” says Leochko.

The Adventure Club students designed and



Painted their library and a parent volunteer helped to build it. The team also constructed two chairs for people to sit and rest while perusing a book.

What a Little Free Library looks like is up to its creator, and designs and cost vary widely—from custom built wooden enclosures, libraries built from recycled building materials, old mini fridges, cabinets and pieces of furniture, to old newspaper vending machines—anything goes as long as the library is well protected from the weather and books can be kept safe and dry. The structures can be decorated and painted in any number of ways, and both École Robert H. Smith and Linwood chose a Dr. Seuss theme for their libraries.

Once built the library can be registered with the LFL national organization with a one time payment of \$34.95 which provides each

library an official charter sign, a serial number and GPS coordinates which it then lists on a map on their site. Books can be obtained by donation from parents, students and the school library. The Winnipeg Public Library has also supported the project by letting the schools get first pick of its ‘discard’ books.

“Once we set it up parents were stopping by, dropping off books. Once it is set up it really takes care of itself,” says Leochko, who monitors the books periodically and makes sure that there are enough available for all ages. “The books can be fiction or non-fiction, or even magazines. We’re a bit more of an advantaged community so we’re fortunate that kids have a lot of books. This would be a great idea for a neighbourhood where the kids and community may not have access to books. More books go out than come back in.”

That’s kind of the idea, says Roziere who sees a lot of people using the Linwood library. “Evenings, weekends, they’re always there. We wanted to get books out into the community and into people’s homes. We also like the idea of kids having access to books on the weekends and evenings when their school library is closed.”

Neither school has had issues with vandalism or theft. “You can’t steal a free book,” says Roziere.

École Robert H. Smith has had only positive feedback as well. “It gives the whole community a little bit of pride,” says Leochko. “It promotes literacy and togetherness, and really sends a good message to the community from the school.”

access to the same learning resources. Equality of access must be front and centre when we talk about digital resources.”

MSLA members met regularly in the Pembina Trails Media Center to talk, and work on submissions such as this one—a move that Anderson calls ‘our biggest thrust on the political stage.’

“We’re losing a major player in our community and this scares me because what is the forward thinking? This is the big question. What message is going out to other divisions? Do they not see a role for school libraries and teacher librarians specifically? Is the library not the heartbeat of the school?”

The closure of the center is “just another death by a thousand cuts” says Anderson. “It’s a lot more than just the media center, because it represented a vision. Teacher librarians retire and are replaced by library

technicians and they’re often called upon to perform tasks beyond the scope of their training,” he says, adding that a lot of teacher librarian jobs have also been cut down to half-time or less. “It’s these staffing decisions that we, as teacher librarians, think are not beneficial to student learning.

The Superintendent of Pembina Trails Ted Fransen says that the decision to wind up the Media Center was two-fold. “It’s a convergence of the desire on the part of the board to ensure that we’re putting as many of our resources into the classroom. So after we examined our expenditures across the division some decisions were made, and one of them is the closure of the media center.

The second part of the decision says Fransen, is that education is changing. “Where it used to be quite common for something like the media center to provide films, cd’s, and books to teachers, most of

our technology has become online.”

Fransen says the media center was accessed less and less by classroom teachers, though he does not know the exact numbers, and points out that all the schools in the division still have teacher librarians. “The nature of the library will change, our libraries will change. There will continue to be a need for teacher librarians but their role will change—in many cases it already has.”

Anderson says that teacher librarians nowadays are “movers and shakers” when it comes to new technology, and it shouldn’t fall on classroom teachers to go and review hundreds of websites to find the best information.

According to Anderson, reading is a magical experience. “That experience has to be created, it has to be fostered and the environment has to be there to inspire and invite kids in.”

PORTFOLIO

LAZY+GOOGLE
=RECALL

A textbook publisher in Thailand recalled 3,000 math texts after it was discovered the math teacher on the cover was actually an Asian porn star.

Looking for some art, the Googling cover designer happened upon a picture of a woman in a suit that looked like a teacher and used that. It was actually a screen shot of

Mana Aoiki from her quasi-educational movie *Costume Play Working Girl*. Apparently the film does not delve much into the intricacies of Pythagorean Theorem.

The country's education commission has since banned the use of random Google search results.



IDIOT GAME SHOWS FOR \$200, ALEX

The TV show Jeopardy!, which first appeared in 1964, appears to be recycling material from the way-back machine. In a recent episode it carried a category called:

WHAT WOMEN WANT

Turns out, according to their question-answers, it's not equal pay or freedom from harassment; it's a vacuum cleaner, quiet time to do a crossword puzzle and a pair of well-fitting jeans. Oh, the average age of Jeopardy! viewers is 64. The average age of those who come up with the questions, while knitting socks for their cats, must be somewhat older.



Can't believe us

Ah, CBC.

They were the worst of times, they were the cursed of times.

Really, has anyone had a worse year?

It lost hockey, the government cut its allocation, it had to lay off hundreds of employees, a couple of its main news personalities were criticized for taking speaking fees from groups linked to ongoing news stories and then there was that name that stuck to everyone's shoe—Jian Ghomeshi.

It started as a pebble rolling downhill at the end of October. On the day word came out that CBC would be cutting almost 1,000 more jobs over the next two years, the media focus was on a single CBC employee getting the boot.

News of the impending layoffs was a grain of sand submerged by the tsunami of words generated by the firing of the radio host. Far more people tuned into the latest Ghomeshi stories than ever listened to his show, Q. His audience had never been greater.

The sordid tale, of course, offered a smorgasbord of raw meat for the media and audience: sex, violence (pretend and/or otherwise), an absurd \$55 million lawsuit, a charismatic (to some) figure and the downtrodden CBC. The other story was just about some 800 nobodies scheduled to be fired without an accompanying sex scandal. Who cares?

The media, and some high-profile figures didn't. In the immediate wake of the firing, his bizarre Facebook post and the accusations by four women that they were assaulted or harassed by him, he was actually riding a hefty wave of support.

An analysis of social media response, done by journalist Shannon Gormley showed that 78 per cent of commenters adored or believed Ghomeshi compared with 10 per cent who believed his accusers.

Well, that was just some Internet cruisers, the deep thinkers in the public realm, like the news media, would have a different view.

Ha.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May immediately voiced her support, activist (and frequent panelist on Q) Judy Rebbick voiced agreement that Ghomeshi was an amazing talent and Sheila Copps, a former deputy prime minister, expressed dismay that the host was fired.

And in much of the media we took a balloon ride into the clouds of hypocrisy.

Clutching their pearls in disbelief, many columnists were aghast that people were criticizing Ghomeshi based on accusations by four unnamed women. Where's the evidence?, they asked. Nobody knows what happened, they cried.

Robyn Urback, writing in the *National Post*, said no one can take sides, not knowing whether the former host is "the target of malicious anonymous attacks." Christie Blatchford of the *National Post* said Ghomeshi was just "another man





Jezebel.com tracked down the best headlines on the 40 billion or so stories about the marriage of actor George Clooney and international lawyer Amal Alamuddin.

Business Woman Media headlined its story: "Internationally acclaimed barrister Amal Alamuddin marries an actor."

Next best, from i100: "World famous human rights lawyer marries star of *Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over*."

Both stories list the numerous accomplishments of Alamuddin—multilingual, advisor to former U.N. General Secretary Kofi Annan, high-profile clients, Oxford-educated, worker at the International Court of Justice etc. etc.—and

i100 ends with "Clooney's other film roles include *Grizzly II: The Predator* and *Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over*."



THAT CLEARS THAT UP

Slate.com offered up this correction to a previous post: "This post originally quoted photographer Tom Sanders as saying it takes him five years to get on the dance floor. It takes him five beers."

Meanwhile, *The Guardian* explained in a correction that Sir Patrick Stewart is not gay: "The third paragraph originally said 'Some gay people, such as Sir Patrick Stewart, think Page's coming out speech is newsworthy'.

This should have read 'Some people, such as Sir Patrick Stewart, think Page's coming out speech is newsworthy'."

Patrick Stewart responded in a tweet:

"But @guardian I have, like, five or even SEVEN hetero friends and we totally drink beer and eat lots of chicken wings!"

And: "Well, @guardian it makes for a nice change...at least I didn't wake up to the internet telling me I was dead again."

S, sources say

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

vilified by anonymous accusers." She did amend that after the number of accusers topped eight by calling the continued coverage a "lynching."

The anonymity of the women was also a big deal to many others including the *Winnipeg Free Press's* Bartley Kives who suggested no one could support or condemn Ghomeshi on what had been reported.

That was more than a tad odd, considering at that time *Free Press* reporter Bruce Owen was breaking the story, based on multiple anonymous sources, that there was a revolt brewing in the NDP government against Premier Greg Selinger. Those stories were published, one would think, because the *Free Press* believed them to be accurate, based on the interviews with the sources and the trust in their reporter. I hope they weren't too shocked that it turned out to be true.

Every day the media tosses out claims and complaints by anonymous sources and expects ... what? Is the audience supposed to dismiss them out of hand? Or put some credence in them because the media are trustworthy? Kives himself has quoted unnamed sources. Does that mean that work was meaningless? Strangely, the *Free Press* even runs anonymous Twitter comments on its editorial page. They must think they provide some useful function even when they don't even know who is sending them.

Anyway, the Ghomeshi story was not a he said-she said head scratcher. It was a he said-she said and she said and she said and she said story. And then there were a whole bunch more she said.

Whether the audience believes the allegations or not, journalists should be the last people claiming that the use of multiple anonymous sources somehow taints the information in a story. What did they think; that all these women somehow secretly got together to bring down a C-list celebrity? Or is it still the automatic default to fall back on the "jilted lover-woman scorned" cliché?

Interestingly some, such as the *National Post's* Urback, changed their minds after the number of accusers grew. Apparently you can believe nine women over one man, but not four.

Now that the Ghomeshi firestorm is little more than a smouldering pile, maybe the pundits and reporters can take a look at the real issues facing CBC and show the same concern for the next 800 people who will be fired.

There are lots of talented people at the corporation, some of whom could replace a Jian Ghomeshi. It's just sad that much of that talent will be elsewhere over the next couple of years.

They are far more important than Jian Ghomeshi ever was.

Perspective

A recent CNN poll found that 53 per cent of Americans are concerned about terrorist attacks, many of those fears no doubt sparked by politicians and the media.

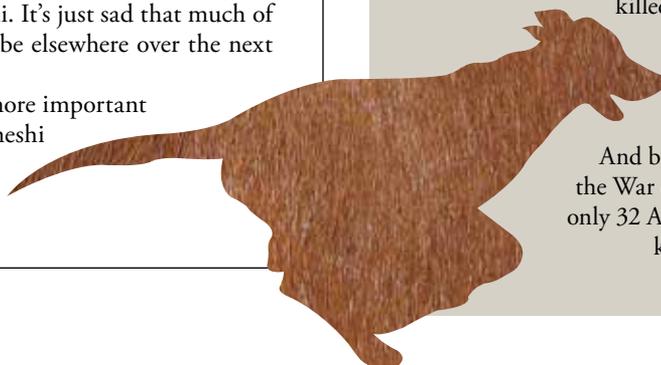
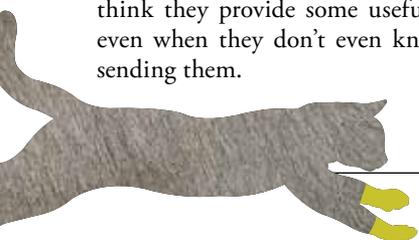
But, as Altnet.org has pointed out, they should fear dogs more.

More Americans were killed by dog bites last year than terrorist attacks in the United States. Indeed, more Americans are killed every day by gun violence than all the terrorist acts last year combined.

For the record, eight people were killed last year in the United States by a terrorist act and another 16 outside the country. More than 4,000 were

killed in workplace accidents and more than 35,000 in car accidents.

And before we begin the War on Dogs, well, only 32 Americans were killed by them.



REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

Sisler Girls Share Spotlight at Facebook



It was a pretty heady trip for Sisler High School teacher Jamie Leduc, his colleague Laurel Epp-Koop and four of his Digital Voices students. The girls were invited to present at Facebook headquarters in Toronto during a live-stream of the MediaSmarts-Canadian Teachers' Federation Media Literacy Week 2014 event.

There's no doubt they earned it.

Samantha-Maria Figueroa, Simarjeet Gill, Jennifer Pazdor and Stephanie Zabar spent the better part of a year planning, developing and coding both a web-based and an iOS augmented reality app along with a website called Save Our Minds.

Figueroa's in another class when I visit. But the other team members say they've witnessed issues with depression, body image and schizophrenia among people who are very close to them.

"We've had family and friends who've suffered silently," says Zabar.

"It's not given enough attention at workplaces and schools," says Pazdor. "We want to be able to give them the help that they need."

"We also want to reduce the stigma around mental health issues," adds Gill.

Leduc, who is department head of business and tech at Sisler, is understandably proud of his students sharing the spotlight with kids from Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa—and their national award from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health. But the spotlight has been on his students for a while now.

Disney animator Trent Correy, who's worked on *Wreck It Ralph*, *Frozen* and *Big Hero Six*, recently held a video conference with Leduc's students. Just eight years ago, Correy was sitting in Leduc's class.

The fact that his students spend every school day from 9:00–11:45 a.m. in room 57 gives them a leg-up on others who want to pursue careers in digital media. Daniel Cochon, Ethan Fernandez and Moises Lucero already have paying gigs developing websites for non-profit organizations.

"Mr. Leduc gives us the freedom to work on our own. His teaching is clear and straightforward and he's very organized," says Fernandez. Freedom indeed, the atmosphere in spacious classroom is quiet, relaxed and purposeful with Leduc nudging students through next steps in their mobile app development projects.

"My biggest goal is to help kids become engaged and find their passion," he says, "and they do. The Toronto launch? The girls did excellent work not only on the development of their apps, but they gave the best presentation at that event hands down—they crushed it."

Apps to check

Rhonna Designs—You already know about Quipio, Phonto and Over for adding text to pics. But give the incredibly versatile and elegant Rhonna a whirl and see where your muse takes you.

Quick—Over's younger cousin lets you do simple, clean text on pictures with minimum of hassle.

PicFlow—Create simple slide decks that advance to audio tracks of your favourite tunes, then post to your social platforms.

Tunepics—"Your new social media addiction," says the UK edition of *GQ*. Tunepics acts much like Instagram. The twist is that you can add iTunes previews to your images. Post one

of your brilliant fall shots and attach Milo Greene's single *Autumn Tree*. Upload your puppy in his space collar and pin Bowie's *Space Oddity* to it. You get the idea.

Fitbit Wristbands—Lost or broke your Flex wristband? Tired of the colour you picked? No need to order online. You can buy a set of three replacement bands in black, green and red for around \$30 at Chapters Polo Festival.

Speedtest—What is WRONG with your wi-fi anyway? Speedtest won't fix it for you. But it will tell you the upload and download speeds for whichever wi-fi signal you're blessed or cursed with at the moment.

Thank you teachers

for helping shape the **leaders of tomorrow.**



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