

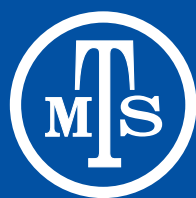
THE MANITOBA

Teacher

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016 VOLUME 94 NUMBER 4 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



Brian Pallister
| a shift to centre? |



The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society

Sign up for your MyProfile account in 4 steps

Go to the MyProfile members' area of the MTS Website at <https://memberlink.mbteach.org>

If this is your first visit to the MyProfile site, you will need to follow these four steps:

- 1 Click on the red button named **"Sign Up Now"**;
- 2 Fill out the four required fields;

- 3 If you are a MTS member or a new MTS member and have never entered the site previously, fill out all the fields under Option 2;

If you are a member and do not know your MTS number, please use the **"Forgot your MTS Number?" link on the right side of the page. Or, you can contact the Information Management department at 204-837-4666, ext. 331 or toll free at 1-866-494-5747, ext. 331.*

- 4 Click the red button labeled **"Register"**. You will receive an email, to the address you provided, indicating that you now have access to the site.

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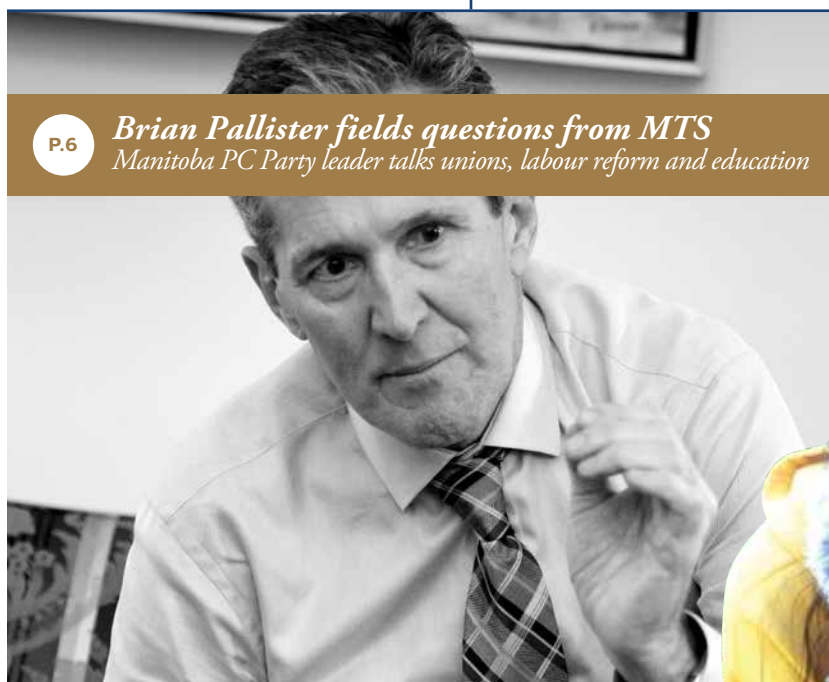
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

NORM GOULD

As the calendar turns to the New Year, more and more thoughts are turning to the next provincial election.

Like an early spring, evidence of the April vote is popping up here and there. The provincial government has made a series of announcements on education and in this issue of *The Teacher* you'll also read some of Conservative Leader Brian Pallister's views on education policies.

You will be hearing more from MTS on what the provincial politicians are saying about education, but it's not just their views we will be looking for.

Both before and after the election this year, MTS, through your elected representatives, will be looking to find out what public school teachers in the province are thinking and what issues are top of mind.

One of the most interesting and fulfilling parts of my job as president has been to visit schools and speak with teachers face to face about your concerns. It is my intention to increase that outreach this year in Winnipeg and beyond. In any position you can get so overwhelmed by day-to-day events that you can lose touch with the day-to-day and long-term issues facing those you are supposed to represent.

At MTS we try to avoid that through our polling of members and occasionally having focus groups on specific questions, but those aren't often enough.

Meeting with individual members certainly adds a human face and feelings to the data we receive from polls and other less personal research. While the yearly Annual General Meeting is a forum for members to suggest ideas to MTS management, opinions from individual members throughout the year have also proven valuable.

So, you will probably be seeing more of your MTS representatives, including Vice-President James Bedford this year. I will be in Flin Flon and Mountain View in the near future.

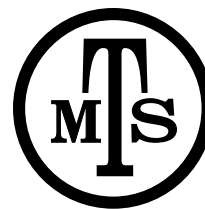
As well, in the lead-up to the election I will be playing host to the three main party leaders in a virtual town hall on April 6 that I hope many of you will join to let us and the provincial politicians know what issues you feel are important and what changes you'd like to see. Premier Greg Selinger, Progressive Conservative Leader Brian Pallister and Liberal Party Leader Rana Bokhari have all agreed to participate in a conversation about issues affecting teachers and public education.

The format will be in the form of a question and answer session that will allow the leaders to clearly articulate their parties' positions and share their vision for Manitoba.

Like the virtual townhall that MTS hosted during the federal election, only MTS members who have registered for a MyProfile account will be invited to participate, so be sure to visit the MTS website, www.mbteach.org, to sign up so that you don't miss out.

More information on the virtual town hall will be made available on the MTS website and through association presidents as it becomes available.

Norm Gould



**The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society**

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INSIDE MTS

IT'S YEAR OF PULSES, HAVE A GREAT ONE

BOBBI TAILLEFER, GENERAL SECRETARY

Welcome back to work and to 2016! Hopefully you were able to have a relaxing and fun filled break and enjoyed quality time with friends and family. It is so important to have the time with our loved ones and rejuvenate ourselves prior to embarking on the next few months of school.

I am really looking forward to this New Year – lots of things are going on that interest me. Firstly, I am excited for the April 19th election and look forward to assisting you in ensuring that education is a priority for all of the political parties and all of the candidates. MTS has many election activities planned to help teachers and the greater public understand all of the policies advanced by the main parties. We will keep you posted on all the developments related to the election and don't forget that you are invited to the next MTS Virtual Town Hall on April 6th. The Town Hall will allow you to hear from all of the party leaders and will be hosted by our very own President, Norm Gould, so make sure you have it in your calendar as it is an event you won't want to miss.

The beginning of a new year makes me try to articulate resolutions and then to keep some. Like all “resolutioners” I am wanting to eat better, exercise and sleep more and finally, just to spend more time with friends and family. Therefore I was most intrigued by the United Nations declaring 2016 the International Year of Pulses. As I did, you are probably asking yourself, what the heck is a pulse? I was certainly fascinated enough to research it and found that they are dry legumes and beans such as chickpeas and lentils. They are a very nutritious plant based protein that will assist in good nutrition globally and it is a sustainable food for both humans and animals. To celebrate the New Year, I've decided that our family will incorporate more pulses in our meals - but please don't tell them!

The issue of healthy living is also important to MTS members. Many of you have reported being very impressed with our Balance magazine and with our wellness initiatives and I invite you to visit our website for more information. Good nutrition is also an issue for teachers who

have students living in poverty. Hunger and poor nutrition is an obvious impediment to learning and has a direct effect on students' performance on standardized tests. Sadly, no one talks about that when they look at the scores of Manitoba students. In this election period, it will be important to see what the parties have to say about improving the lives of poor children and their families. These are matters of great importance to all of society and should help inform our vote. Do feel free to ask the hard questions on standardized testing, a living wage for Manitobans, your class size and composition, special needs funding and so on as candidates come to your home or school.

While election time can be tiresome and long (good news is that it is shorter than the federal election in October) please stay tuned in and keep your antenna sharp for policies that matter to education and educators.

On behalf of your MTS family I am wishing you and yours all the best in the New Year 2016 and I hope it is filled with pulses for you.

MTS gains control of constitution

The Manitoba Teachers' Society will take control of its constitution from the provincial government.

Education Minister James Allum announced last month that the province will repatriate The Manitoba Teachers' Society Act. This is a significant announcement for The Manitoba Teachers' Society because it empowers the Society to amend the MTS constitution independently. Previously changes had to be made through the legislature.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is an incorporated entity that is governed by provincial legislation. The organization's constitution, the supreme governing document, is also an act of the legislature

called The Manitoba Teachers' Society Act.

Legislation is drafted to reflect the needs of the day. In 1942, when The Manitoba Teachers' Society Act was assented, the Act's objectives reflected the priorities of teachers of the day and protected the profession. As time passed, the profession evolved and irregularities and inconsistencies in the Act began to emerge, so amendments to the Act were needed. However, the necessary amendments had to be done through legislation, an often long process.

Over the years, The Manitoba Teachers' Society has repeatedly asked government to amend the constitution (The Act) so that MTS can make these changes, to

no avail. Consequently, today many of the terms contained in the Act remain outdated and do not apply to Manitoba's current educational climate.

For example, in 2001 the Province announced the amalgamation of school divisions, so in 2003, 2004 and 2006 the MTS Provincial Council passed resolutions calling on the government to give MTS the ability to make changes to the constitution's language to reflect these amalgamations. As a result, a recent review of the MTS Handbook exposed many areas of confusion that were difficult to reconcile given the antiquated language in the constitution.



BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

‘Education is No. 1’

Brian Pallister leans forward after fielding a question about unions and labour reform, his hands reaching out to emphasize the answer to follow.

And the trailing answer is not what one might expect.

“I was raised by a pretty staunch union mother and I have always felt organized labour has contributed tremendous benefit to society, frankly. I mean imagine a system without it. I don’t think it would function.”

Huh?

This is the leader of the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Party. A party that has often used unions as political piñatas, going so far as to say the current government is in the pocket of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society. He was part of a provincial government that attacked union members in the ‘90s, accused of cutting almost 2,000 nurses and teachers. He was an elected member of the right-wing Canadian Alliance, a party with no unions on its Christmas list.

And he is running under the Progressive Conservative banner that, across Canada, has meant promises to slash the size of government and make far-reaching changes to labour relations, right up to introducing laws to eliminate mandatory union dues. Then again, those ideas have helped ensure there are no Progressive Conservative governments left in Canada. Pallister hopes to restore at least one. Perhaps with a more centrist appeal.

“Overall we’ve had fairly healthy labour relationships in our province for a number of years,” he said in a sit-down, taped interview with The Teacher. “It’s never perfect, obviously. But we’ve been doing extensive consultation around the province, including with many

teachers. There are many issues that are raised, but we haven’t had a lot concerning labour or the need for radical restructuring of our labour situation in the province. The issues coming up are more pocketbook issues.”

He’s even more straight forward when discussing so-called right-to-work laws (which ban mandatory union dues) that have been implemented by Republicans in a number of U.S. states and proposed by Conservatives in

sister were also teachers, Pallister says his commitment to education is unbreakable.

“Education is the No. 1 investment in the future of our province.”

Pallister has said that any government led by him would cut waste but not cut front line services and said he considers all teachers – including those in the arts and sports – part of those front line services.

“People working at the front line of the

“I was raised by a pretty staunch union mother and I have always felt organized labour has contributed tremendous benefit to society, frankly. I mean imagine a system without it. I don’t think it would function.”

- Brian Pallister

the last Ontario election.

“I don’t think it has any application in our situation here in Manitoba.”

The Teacher sat down with Pallister after MTS had done extensive polling and focus groups involving the public, teachers and parents. One discovery was that few knew where Pallister, currently the main challenger to the NDP government, stood on education and what a PC government might do. There were concerns that his vow to cut waste might mean teacher layoffs or cuts to arts programs, introduction of extensive standardized testing or reintroduction of the extreme actions taken in the ‘90s by the last Conservative government here.

A former teacher whose mother and

public service in health care, education and social services; that’s your front line and I believe there’s waste in government. We can find the waste, we can eliminate the waste and we can protect front line services. That’s what most people care about, I believe, and that’s where we have to have our emphasis.”

However, he won’t promise to block arm’s-length organizations, such as school boards, from cutting people on the front lines.

“You have to allow local autonomy to exist. School boards have decisions to make. The decision I would make is to support education. What I am getting at is, in terms of the allocation of resources, that those resources have to be there for the front line.”

Is he saying education funding would be

kept at the same level it is now, which the current government has kept pegged to the rate of economic growth?

"The proof will be in the budgeting process. The proof will lie in the actions. I have always believed ... don't listen so much what a politician says, but what they've done.

"I've always been an advocate for education. I am not likely to stop now; too old to change my mind."

Much of his belief in the power and responsibility of education has obviously been shaped by his own experiences and that of his family. Even his views of unions appear to have been influenced somewhat by some involvement with the Society. Not only was he an MTS rep, but the union helped save his job at one point.

"I was a single guy in Gladstone teaching there and I was coaching several sports and I was doing extra classes at noon ... and I sprained my ankle reffing a basketball game. The next day I was assisting kids who were having trouble reading and I had my foot up on the desk, elevated because I sprained my ankle."

The principal came by the classroom, looked in at Pallister, never said anything but closed the door and went away.

"At the end of the year I get an analysis saying I showed disrespect to school property. When I asked what this is based on, he said I had my foot on the desk. This is a first-year teacher. I didn't know if I was going to be rehired. I had no idea what to do. I needed support."

The union intervened and that reference was removed from his appraisal.

"I was rehired. I appreciated that."

It wasn't the last time.

"I owe MTS a lot because after teaching for several years I went to return to university and I was awarded a scholarship from my union that helped me tremendously to get through that next year at school."

Pallister left teaching after a few years for more education and ended up becoming a financial planner, but says the influences on his life before that continue to this day.

"We were raised, as many Manitoba teachers were, that education being the key to uplifting our lives," he says. "We come from pretty humble circumstances but we were always hopeful and inspired by a teacher mom."

In his TV ads attacking the current government, Pallister claims that Manitoba spends more per pupil than any other province and yet is at the bottom of the pile in results for math, reading and science.

His elbows aren't as sharp when talking one-on-one about those international test results and whether Manitoba students are being

short-changed. He acknowledges that the province has some unique hurdles.

"Frankly, it doesn't surprise me when I read these test results," he says. "We face some challenges in our province, with a higher percentage than most provinces of new Canadians who have language challenges. We also have a high percentage of indigenous students who are moving into (large) schools, in many cases in the inner city, from isolated communities, remote communities, things like that. The culture shock (is) very real.

"Recognizing that is important, recognizing we have to focus on the needs of those students as young people with potential is really important. We have been gathering ideas – and I am looking for more suggestions (from) teachers who I know have a great interest and stake in – on how we can improve our offerings to those specific young people particularly."

Pallister doesn't rule out introducing more standardized tests, but says he's not yet convinced that is an answer, pointing out that results are mixed and the whole issue has been used too much as a political wedge rather than a way to help students.

However, "we need better testing," he says. "Teachers are telling me they would like to have more latitude to do more analysis, not less; more reporting, not less. But they want it to be worthwhile reporting, not necessarily reporting for show, but reporting accurately to give parents and students accurate feedback."

To that end, he is adamant that the public school system not reward students for just participating. He says he cringes when he hears of some other jurisdictions giving out minimum marks even if the student has failed.

"I cringe because that's not going to give an accurate picture to the student or family of where the young person is at. We have trained, professional people ... and they care deeply about the student. To tie their hands to an evaluation model that restricts their abilities to actually give back honest feedback, honest measurement, is not the answer."

What kind of measurement is still an open question, but Pallister says he thinks it should have "a made-in-Manitoba focus because to me we have some interesting challenges in our education system that other provinces don't have. We should be focussing on those."

And apparently, none of those will come from the experiences of the '90s.

Pallister distances himself from some of the decisions that were made by the Conservative government at the time, while also pointing out that times have changed.

"Anyone who lived through that period knows they were probably paying 14 per cent



"The proof will be in the budgeting process. The proof will lie in the actions. I have always believed ... don't listen so much what a politician says, but what they've done."

- Brian Pallister

interest on their mortgage, they remember that the federal government did the largest cutbacks in transfers in the history of the program (and) a recession. The provincial government was saddled with those things and had to deal with them. Factors then were very different than the factors we have now."

He also points out that he wasn't part of some of those decisions because he jumped to federal politics at that time.

"There were more teachers working in Manitoba when I left provincial cabinet than when I went into provincial cabinet. That I know. But, I recognize there were some fiscal challenges when I went to Ottawa in the late '90s that the provincial government chose to address in certain ways."

The Manitoba Teacher will be profiling all party leaders' views on education in advance of the April 19 provincial election.

Workload, stress still **No. 1** concern

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

Too many demands and job stress are the biggest concerns of Manitoba public school teachers, according to the annual MTS member poll.

It's the third year in a row members have cited job stress as their No. 1 concern, but this year it has grown.

Last year job stress and class size were each named as the main concern of 17 per cent of members. This year just over 21 per cent said job stress was their main issue. Class size was cited by 14 per cent of respondents. The third most mentioned concern was student behaviour and lack of classroom support, each tied at 6.5 per cent.

While workload continues to be a concern, teachers are still overwhelmingly satisfied with their jobs. Teachers said they were either very satisfied (48.8 per cent) or somewhat satisfied (42.1 per cent) with their jobs. This is the same as last year's poll.

And 75 per cent would recommend teaching as a career to a young person. Of those who wouldn't recommend it, more than 44 per cent named workload as the reason.

Other results showed:

- That 21 per cent of teachers felt violence

and bullying were more of a problem now than five years ago, but just over 45 per cent said the problem hadn't changed.

- Just over 40 per cent, however, said that cyber-bullying had gotten worse over that period, while 22 per cent said it wasn't a problem at all.
- More than 43 per cent of members felt that students in Manitoba do not do well on standardized tests because of socio-economic, cultural and resource disparities in the province.
- Only 15 per cent agreed strongly (2.1 per cent) or somewhat (13.1 per cent) that increasing the use of standardized tests would improve education in Manitoba. A vast majority (65 per cent) said that giving local school divisions more control and flexibility over class size would help.
- More than 70 per cent of members felt MTS was doing an excellent or good job representing teachers and their issues. Only five per cent said it was doing a poor or very poor job.

MTS also commissioned a poll of the general public at the end of 2015 and found that almost nine in 10 respondents described themselves as having a favourable

view (37 per cent) of teachers or a somewhat favourable (49 per cent) view. Only 10 per cent had a somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable view.

As well, 63 per cent felt that teachers are paid the right amount with only 16 per cent saying their salaries are too high. Of those who felt salaries were too high they were most likely to be men over 60 years old.

Other results of the public poll found:

- More than 70 per cent said giving local school divisions more control and flexibility over class size would help improve education.
- More than 70 per cent opposed cutting spending on non-frontline services such as speech pathologists or psychologists as a way to improve education.
- That 84 per cent said the most reliable source of education information was the teacher at their local school. Forty six per cent said they were very reliable and 38 per cent said they were somewhat reliable. The second and third most reliable sources cited were local school boards (78 per cent) and The Manitoba Teachers' Society (75 per cent).

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Young
Humanitarian
Awards

'Mommy gap' to finally close

BY RAMAN JOB

As of January 15, 2016, teachers in Manitoba will no longer take a hit in both pay and pension benefits to have children. The Manitoba government announced a change to the Education Administration Act that will see teachers who take maternity and parental leaves get full credit for seniority and salary.

"When I had my two sons early in my career, it was stressful enough to return to work and think about being away from my babies and finding daycare," says Marcela Cabezas, a member of the Louis Riel Teachers' Association who attended the announcement. "Having to worry about credit for service and when I was going to get my next salary increment just added to that stress."

Amber Britsky, another LRTA member, is due at the end of March, 2016. She's grateful for the change in the regulation. "Thank you for making these changes and rectifying the inequity that women endure when choosing to have a family and a career."

Norm Gould, President of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, says the elimination of the "mommy gap" or parent gap is welcome news for Manitoba teachers. "It puts our female members on equal footing with male members in Manitoba, and with their colleagues in the rest of Canada. The same holds true for women and men teachers who access parental leave. And it's another example of how much this government values Manitoba teachers and listens to their concerns."

Until now, Manitoba has recognized only 85 days of credit for teachers accessing maternity and parental leave, rather than the full school year common in most other Canadian provinces. That has put Manitoba teachers who have children at a distinct disadvantage because of delayed pay increments early in their careers and smaller pensions later in life.

The effort to change the status quo was set in motion at AGM 2009 when a resolution was passed to amend a regulation in the Education Administration Act to include "maternity leave or parental leave granted in accordance with the Employment Standards Code, to a maximum in any school year of 200 teaching days for a full-time member."

The change means that members of the Society on maternity or parental leave will no longer be disadvantaged by choosing to have



Marcela Cabezas and Amber Britsky say changes to close the 'mommy gap' address inequities teachers face when having a family

children. They will be eligible, at the same time as their colleagues and counterparts, for their annual salary increments.

"No woman should ever feel that she is being penalized for having a baby," says MTS staff officer Nancy Kerr. "As a society, we have agreed on the importance of women having time at home with their babies in that critical first year of life, both through provincial legislation that grants a full year of leave, and federal legislation that grants Employment Insurance benefits for 50 weeks of that leave. Giving teachers full credit of service for that year of leave just makes sense."

The change will also have positive long-term effects on pensionable earnings and years of service towards pension. Information provided by the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF) shows that, until now, male teachers generally have had greater career earnings and more years of service than their female counterparts. Much of this inequity can be attributed to women staying home with their newborns. Today's announcement will help to correct this.

"It means young teachers will no longer have their increments delayed, significantly reducing the impact of having a baby on both lifetime earnings and pensions," says Kerr.

Jonathan Green, a Pembina Trails Teachers' Association member, appreciates the timing of the announcement. Green was at the Legislature for Bill 17's introduction with

colleagues Jordan Nelson, Shawn Dolinski, educational assistant Tonya Frost, and about 45 Grade 9 students.

"I was a little nervous about being there," says Jonathan. "My wife, Jill, who teaches at Arthur E. Wright in Seven Oaks, was past her due date and could deliver any time. Just when I was ready to head up to the gallery with the group to watch the proceedings, I got a text from Jill saying she was having contractions. So, I jumped into a taxi and raced home."

"Turns out it was a false alarm, but not by much," says Jonathan. "Jill and I welcomed our second daughter, Annick, at 4:36 a.m."

MTS staff officer Arlyn Filewich says, "This is a huge achievement for our youngest members and their growing families. It's proof that when teachers raise issues of equity and voice their concerns, we have teacher advocates who take action. We are so thankful that MTS President Norm Gould and our Provincial Executive have made this a reality."

Gould says teachers appreciate the effort the Manitoba government has taken to consult with the Society on an issue that's so important to teachers and their families. He says the change operates on three levels. "First, it eliminates a legislative injustice and discrimination that has been in place for years. Second, it will relieve some of the pressure on our younger members who take maternity or parental leave. And finally, it will give anyone who accesses these leaves more security in retirement."

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BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Unheralded history

When it comes to Canadian history, the pivotal roles of women are often overlooked — or maybe even forgotten.

But Penni Mitchell is changing that through her book *About Canada: Women's Rights*, which highlights the historical roles of women and honours hidden heroes.

Women played key positions in most First Nations communities long before France and England started trading furs with indigenous people and colonizing the continent, Mitchell explains. However, this piece of history doesn't always make it into classroom lessons.

In Manitoba around 1713, for example, a young trilingual Dene woman named Thanadelthur helped broker a huge trade and peace agreement in Rupertsland.

"It's a pretty incredible story, but most of the stories students learn about the fur trade are about male traders and male indigenous hunters," she says.

"But who did these fur traders hook up with? Who built their boats, made their snowshoes and taught them how to survive the winters? Well, guess what? It was often indigenous women — so what are their stories?"

Mitchell, managing editor of *Herizons* magazine, sets out to share some of these often-omitted narratives.

"Women played a huge role right from the get-go when the French first colonized New France. Many of the very first administrators of the colony were women — Jeanne Mance, for example. They built the first schools in Ville Marie and they also learned the Algonquin and Iroquois languages. Mance taught girls and boys."

Another noteworthy woman was Margeurite Bourgeoys, who came to Ville Marie in 1653 and led an uncloistered religious community of nuns called the Congregation of Notre Dame of Montreal.

"Women like Bourgeoys raised their own money for their schools, convents and hospitals in France," she says. "In fact, Bourgeoys was canonized as Canada's first female saint."

When it comes to education, women like Mance and Bourgeoys made the grade on many levels. They started the first schools and provided education for both indigenous and settler children.

"It's important that women created the first schools in Canada," Mitchell says. "Quakers in particular believed in the equal education of girls, and many slavery abolitionists and early feminists were Quakers. Some of the first feminist battles were about the right to education."

Women also fought a 50-year battle to get into universities, Mitchell adds.

"Education has always been tied to women's status in life. We forget that education is a human right. It was a radical thing when Mary Wollstonecraft in England advocated for education for girls as well as boys," she says.

"And in Canada, women taught in their own private schools in their homes. Then starting in the 1800s when schools were public, women had to fight for equal pay compared to male teachers and for the right to teach after marriage."

In 1876, Canada's first high school principal, Emily Stowe, started the Toronto Women's Literary Club, which was the first women's

organization specifically dedicated to the idea of women voting, Mitchell explains.

When Stowe's husband fell ill with tuberculosis, she needed to make more money to support her family. She wanted to study medicine, but no Canadian college would admit her to medical school so she ended up having to go to New York. Adding to her accomplishments, Stowe eventually became Canada's first female doctor.

"The thing is that discrimination turns a lot of people into feminists or activists, so Emily Stowe came back and started a suffrage organization," Mitchell says.

"In fact, in every social and political era throughout the history of Canada, women have risen up to change the conditions under which they lived to the betterment of society as a whole."

In today's education system, it's essential to include information about these remarkable women's roles and contributions.

"I would say that not educating students about the roles that women have played throughout Canada's history gives young men and young women a substandard education. It's simply incomplete and biased. That's just part of it, though. When women's rights are discussed, as in feminism — I mean looking at how men constructed laws to give themselves rights and exclude women — this is as important as teaching slavery or about cultural genocide of indigenous people," Mitchell says.

"Sexism isn't just something in the educational system, but I think educators recognize that it's their job to broaden the story of Canada's history and give a more honest picture. It's not just a 'fair' thing. It's



Penni Mitchell, author

about giving credit where it's due."

Women have always done heroic things, she says, and teachers need to encourage girls to feel proud of this history of women.

To help integrate these topics in the classroom, Mitchell suggests including books like *About Canada: Women's Rights* in social studies, history and law. Women's achievements can also be highlighted in terms of human rights, environmentalism, literature, health and more.

"I'm not a teacher but, really, if you're discussing the development of medicare in Canada, you should be teaching about women like Annie Gale, who started the first organization that lobbied for state-paid hospitals in 1916 — the Women Ratepayer Association in Calgary," she says.

"Women started the first free well-baby clinics in Canada — preventive maternal health care. And suffragists lobbied for the creation of the federal department of health. Women, in fact, promoted the idea of free medical care within the reach of all. Tommy Douglas came way later."

To ensure that these women and their historical battles are not overlooked, Mitchell says that teachers should try to always include information about women's accomplishments and perspectives.

"Just for accuracy's sake alone," Mitchell says, "it's vital that heroes' stories include women's stories as leaders, ground-breakers."

"Canada has hundreds of foremothers who were every bit as heroic as its forefathers. And there is something else: when girls know that women have a strong history, their self-esteem improves as they feel pride — and that is a radical act."

Women worth remembering:

Molly Brant



In 1775, Mohawk Loyalist Molly Brant was powerful enough to direct the wartime conduct of young warriors.

Viola Desmond



In 1846, beautician Viola Desmond launched the modern civil rights movement in Canada when she refused to give up a seat reserved for white people in a Nova Scotia movie theatre — years before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in the United States.

Harriet Tubman



In the 1850s, Harriet Tubman led the Underground Railway and Mary Ann Shadd worked as the first female newspaperwoman in Canada. Both women supported former slaves settling in Canada.

Amelia Yeomans



In the late 1800s, Amelia Yeomans was a physician pioneer in Winnipeg who led the call for a separate jail for women.

Agnes Macphail



In 1921, Agnes Macphail was elected as Canada's first female member of Parliament. She helped to write the first pension laws, advocated for prison reform and fought to improve the lives of farmers.



Wencke Rudi, student, Seven Oaks MET School

BY DONNA MAXWELL

a Result for the Ages



Wencke Rudi got a lot out of a film project she recently participated in, and besides the regular skills that go along with producing a documentary, she learned how to share an elevator with a senior.

It's a skill the 17-year-old admits she was sorely lacking.

"I'd be in the elevator going up to my floor and someone would come in, a senior, and I'd be like, 'OK, I'm taking the stairs,'" Rudi said.

"I avoided them, and now I feel like I can sit down and talk with them."

Rudi, a student at Seven Oaks MET School, signed up for the Revera/Reel Youth Age is More film project after seeing an application online. The project brought young people together with seniors living at the Revera-owned Wellington Retirement Residence in Winnipeg to create documentaries on the seniors' lives. The students would learn valuable filmmaking techniques and both

generations, hopefully, would learn about each other in an effort to combat ageism. The approximately three-minute long documentaries are complete, a gala premiere evening has been held and the films can be seen online.

Rudi has no doubt she learned a lot about seniors. She grew up without grandparents in her life, and, like many, she feared the unknown. She said she expected old people to be tired all the time and was pleasantly surprised to discover the 90-plus year-olds she worked with had plenty of energy, were happy and very much not tired.

"What struck me the most was the connection that I got with them," she said.

"The thing that I learned the most was how important seniors are, because you learn growing up how important children are, and how children are the future but seniors were the future and they're representative of the past. They're like living proof of the past. They have all

these memories and they have all these stories."

Ninety-year-old John LaGrow was the subject of one of Rudi's documentaries and he said learning on the Age is More project was a two-way street.

The Canadian Air Force veteran said newspapers and TV news and their focus on the negative had him wondering what the world was coming to, and he had his doubts about the younger generation.

"I was beginning to lose faith in our juniors. If you read the papers and watch the newscasts there's a lot of things to report...I know they only report the bad things, but I was beginning to wonder where our children are going," LaGrow said.

"Thank god they're not all bad, the majority are good and those kids that were here were good kids."

Barbara McGregor, 91, a nurse who graduated the day before VE Day in 1945, agreed the experience with the Reel Youth



participants – some of whom were high school students, others were older – was enlightening for her as well. Logan Nadeau worked on McGregor's documentary, and she was thrilled that Nadeau was proud of his heritage.

"He was very proud of the fact that he was aboriginal, and I'm glad that he's proud of the fact that he's aboriginal," she said.

McGregor thinks the young students may have got more out of their time with the seniors than they even know.

"They asked us our experiences, but I don't think that's what they really wanted to learn, they wanted to learn life skills so they could experience life's experiences like we did," she said.

Agnes Comack said the filmmaking experience made the 94-year-old former nurse, avid writer and artist, take stock of her life – a life that she admitted she hadn't really considered to be much out of the ordinary.

"They made me think about my life," Comack said.

"When you get to this stage in life you wonder what the dickens you've done, and I started hauling out all the things I've been doing and I was amazed."

As she rummaged through the memories, she realized she'd had about 35 articles published in various newspapers and magazines since the '80s, and she reconnected with the hundreds of hand-drawn Christmas cards she's sent out since her retirement at age 65, which is when she took up drawing. And while those accomplishments were impressive, Comack thinks the budding filmmakers were most impressed with her physical ability.

"At 94 I can stretch like nobody's business," Comack said.

She joined The Reh-fit Centre at 65 and went three-days-a-week for an hour at a time until she moved into The Wellington. Now, she attends exercise classes there four times a week. One of the students told Comack she

was so inspired she's now upped her own fitness regime. Comack said she knew she had turned some heads when she put on her gym clothes and showed them what she can do.

"Oh heck yes, when they saw me doing the plank they couldn't believe it, old broad like me," she laughed.

If the students had showed up to learn a little about film making and maybe a pinch about seniors, they likely found they got more than they bargained for with the seniors. Donna Friesen, 94, said they're all glad they've made some new friends, and she was intrigued, if not a little amused, at how the students had their preconceived notions of seniors dismantled a little more with each visit.

"Logan said a very interesting thing at our gala, he said he'd been brought up to revere seniors, elders, but he found that we were an awful lot more fun than he thought we would be, which interested me, it was a different point of view about seniors," Friesen said.

Friesen was a nurse first, before continuing her education and becoming a doctor and said she was always told she was a good listener. But when she teamed up with her student filmmakers, she initially felt a strong disconnect.

"I must admit we didn't really communicate well originally. It took us a while, they were nice kids and very friendly and so on, but we did not speak the same language," Friesen said.

"There was a fair amount of adjusting."

Everything worked out fine, she said, but when it came time to see the finished product, she found herself a bundle of nerves. She'd talked to two young people for hours on end, about numerous parts of her life, and she had no idea what they deemed important and what would make the three-minute final cut.

"It is terrifying though, because all of the sudden two people you have never met in your life are going to put something on film that

will be shown to the general public, about you, and you have no idea which subject they're going to take," Friesen said.

"It's highly personal. You don't realize how personal until you're sitting in a chair and somebody's gonna show you a film about you."

Selkirk Comp student Aurora Gatchell, 15, worked on Friesen's documentary and said it was her interest in making videos that drew her to the project. And while she learned plenty about lighting and editing and interviewing, she came away with an appreciation for the seniors she worked with.

"It was really interesting because a while ago I didn't really talk to older people, they kinda scared me. But when we got to know them, it made me open my heart up, to talk to new people," Gatchell said.

"They're really nice, they have a lot of wisdom. You can learn a lot from them."

Geri Lowe, senior executive director at The Wellington, said by partnering with Reel Youth on the Age is More project, they succeeded in teaching both generations a little about each other, and they shone a light on ageism.

"It's been one of the goals of the project," Lowe said.

"What Revera found in the research is that the most discriminated against groups in our society are young people and older people, so by bringing the two groups together (we're) trying to break down some of the barriers and some of the stereotypes and some of that age discrimination."

The documentaries were screened at a gala evening at The Wellington in October, and the seniors and students came together again for the evening.

"We all had a real high on the night of the gala, even without some booze," Friesen laughed.

The documentaries can be seen at ReelYouth.ca

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Whirlwind of releases

Just after the New Year, the provincial government made a flurry of announcements on education funding.

The initiatives were announced in advance of the 90-day period before a fixed-date election in which the government would not be able to make such releases.

Among the promises was a commitment to increase funding for students with special needs to \$75.5 million and make it easier for these students to get the supports they require by eliminating applications as recommended by the Task Force on Special Needs Education.

“We want students with special needs to get the supports they need without having to make their parents and educators go through a lengthy and stressful application process,” said Education and Advanced Learning Minister James Allum.

The minister added the province will implement all the recommendations of the Task Force on Special Needs Education and that developing a model that includes eliminating applications will give special needs teachers and clinicians more time to focus on the classroom, not paperwork.

MTS President Norm Gould welcomed the announcement.

“Teachers want to spend more time working with students. This initiative will give principals, specialists, resource teachers and classroom teachers the time to do just that. Our kids need more supports, not less.”

The minister noted the Louis Riel School Division will pilot a new process for allocating special needs resources in some of its schools starting in fall 2016, working in collaboration with the province, The Manitoba Teachers’ Society and the Louis Riel Teachers’ Association.

That announcement followed several others, including one to increase public school funding by \$32.5 million, which includes \$13.9 million for literacy and numeracy programing.

Aside from that, it announced \$1.8 million to support the Student Achievement Fund, and a new website to help high school students and young adults find out exactly what kind of education and training they’ll need for a future in various careers.



Premier Greg Selinger and MTS President Norm Gould

The province also announced:

- An increase to \$100,000 per school under the targeted Community Schools Program. The premier said the more than \$2-million commitment includes \$670,000 to increase all community schools funding to \$100,000, \$150,000 to help address attendance issues in the inner city, \$240,000 to support family outreach co-ordinators at community schools and \$900,000 in targeted funding for inner-city students who face barriers to education in the Winnipeg School Division.
- A new \$500,000 First Nations Transition Grant to help Aboriginal students adjust to the public school system and further funding to help Indigenous students with literacy, numeracy and culturally appropriate learning, and pilot a model school for First Nations students that incorporates traditional languages and targeted literacy supports.
- An increase in funding to help high-needs schools not offering a nourishment program -- and to existing programs that could expand their programs.



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Hugh John Macdonald School Grade 9 students
Mustpha Lucier and Aweng Maciek

When it comes to rolling out the welcome mat for new refugees, Hugh John Macdonald School is no stranger to the process.

In fact, the inner-city middle school might even be considered an expert in integrating newcomers to the school system.

Based on experience, principal Vinh Huynh offers simple advice to schools that will be receiving new refugees this year: choose a starting point and proceed from there.

“The key thing is to start somewhere. We’re all just human beings when it comes down to it. It’s about being willing to take the long view to enter into that relationship with each other as human beings and as learners, community members and citizens,” Huynh says. “You just do whatever it takes in order to honour each other and to fully dive into the learning.”

At Hugh John Macdonald, refugee students and other newcomers have the option to participate in Peaceful Village offered through the Manitoba School Improvement Program.

This after-school initiative operates Monday to Friday from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. as an extension of the school day. Students have the opportunity to work on homework with tutors who are often former participants in the program. They also eat a healthy snack and engage in activities that include music, sports and arts.

Team leader Parsu Ram Dahal says the program keeps students engaged after school, which has the added benefit of keeping them away from negative influences.

“This is a program that’s trying to help them. Our idea is to create a new village with people from different corners of the world,” Dahal says. “What I have seen is that they learn the language very fast — not academic language but spoken language. I call it accidental education. They learn it without knowing.”

WELCOMING REFUGEES

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Refugee students and their families can also draw support from the Winnipeg School Division's intercultural support workers who act as the frontline for newcomers.

Huzaifa Ibrahim is one of about a dozen intercultural support workers based out of local schools to support the entire division in a variety of languages.

"We are hired to try to minimize the cultural differences. Most cultures come from a different school system," he says. "We try to introduce them to the Canadian system and let teachers know about their culture and some of the problems that new immigrants might be having with the new school system."

At Hugh John Macdonald School, Ibrahim invites newcomers to activities such as community kitchen events that allow parents to cook and dine together at the school.

As well, all 291 students at Hugh John Macdonald have access to free breakfast in the cafeteria each morning as well as a subsidized lunch, since food security can be an issue in the area.

"We try to invite the parents as much as possible to see what their children are doing in the schools," Ibrahim says.

"When they come in and see how everybody's happy, they get more interested and push the kids more to stay in school."

Parents are also welcomed into the school to attend foundational English classes offered through the newcomer literacy initiative of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba. Free childcare is provided for wee ones from eight months old up to preschool age, and many adult learners also have older children who attend the middle school.

Four Foundations classes are housed at Hugh John Macdonald School, with a fifth class located off-site, explains instructor Aiman Syed.

"It's actually a really wonderful environment that we have going on here," Syed says.

"We're very proud of it. One of the things that we think is amazing is the fact that we have onsite childcare so parents can come to learn. They can have that bit of respite and not worry about their kids."

As well, the school has a well-established literacy centre that acts as a learning hub for Grade 7 to 9 students at different English levels, including many refugees.

Not only do they acquire languages skills, they also become familiar with the school environment and life in Canada. They thrive in the culturally diverse environment with students from Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea, Nepal, Thailand, Congo, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Sierra Leon.

Newcomers can also connect through the universal language of music through a program called The Bridge, developed by Steve Kirby, director of jazz studies at the University of Manitoba.

Since many students in The Bridge have limited English skills, instructor Neil Watson isn't able to talk about music or theory. Instead, the students learn by watching and imitating.

"I would play the saxophone or the guitar or the bass and show everybody their part and they would play it back. Nobody's got any music stands. They play everything completely by ear. We learn by doing," Watson says.

"We've got kids from all over the world who don't speak each others' languages, but they get on stage and they're making music together. The offshoots that I see are leadership and confidence."

In the opinion of Grade 9 student Aweng Maciek, the school's inclusive approach works well for refugees and other newcomers. Although Maciek was born in Canada, her parents moved from South Sudan to Canada in 2000.

"For students who are new to Canada

in the EAL program, we won't know them right away. But then our friends from the EAL classes will introduce us to them and then we will start getting a bond going on," Maciek says.

"We're very open to each others' cultures. Half the time, they want to know how to say hi in your language. You have to be open and not stay in your comfort zone. You don't know them until you talk to them, so don't judge a book by its cover."

Maciek's classmate Mustpha Lucier also sees the impact of the welcoming environment. His family is originally from Iraq but they now live in Transcona, and Lucier travels across the city each day to attend Hugh John Macdonald School due to its friendly atmosphere.

"It's very nice and caring," says the 14-year-old. "There are nice people all around you."

He also offers some words of wisdom for teachers and students who are preparing to welcome new refugees.

"When they come, most students don't speak fluent English," he says, "so be polite with them and get to know them better to make them feel more comfortable."

As school principal, Huynh also offers some advice as other schools embark on new initiatives to prepare for new refugees. He draws inspiration from the constellation model of mentorship.

"We're each a star, but we shine more brightly within the context of the constellation," he says. "The question we always should ask is who is mentoring you and who are you mentoring in return. Everyone has that opportunity."

If teachers or administrators need support as they prepare for newcomers, they should reach out to others who might have more experience. They can arrange a time to visit other schools, including Hugh John Macdonald, to figure out what works instead of starting from scratch.

WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION BY THE NUMBERS (as of September 2014)

6,567 students

(20%) need EAL supports, as identified by the Winnipeg School Division.

765 EAL students

are from areas that are considered war-affected or of concern, including Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Ethiopia, Kenya, Congo, Iraq, Pakistan, South Africa, Iran and Uganda.

2,179 students

(7.1% of total student population) had no English spoken in their homes.

10,169 students

(33%) had English plus another language spoken in their homes.

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

THE POVERTY TRAP

Cheaper to solve than pay for



How can poverty exist in a prosperous country like Canada? Throughout North America, the common explanation is to blame the victim, says University of Winnipeg professor Jim Silver. However, the issue is much more complex with roots in education, economics and employment.

In Silver's book *About Canada: Poverty*, he explains that the matter is more than merely a shortage of income.

"A shortage of income, of course, is a terrible problem in a society such as ours," says Silver, professor and chair of U of W's Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies.

"But in addition to that, people who are poor are typically suffering from poor housing. They have a greater chance of being in poor health. Racism and colonialism are all tied up with poverty these days. People who are poor are socially excluded."

Canada's economic system is organized in a way that marginalizes people, he adds.

"They get excluded from the mainstream economy. Increasingly in Canada, it's racialized people," he says.

"Here in Western Canada, it's aboriginal people. In many other parts of Canada, it's people of African descent or newcomers."

At the same time, the changing labour market also plays a major role in Canada's poverty problem.

"In past decades, you could come into Winnipeg with a Grade 9 education and find a job working in a factory that paid you not a very princely wage but a wage good enough to be able to support a family," he says.

"Those kinds of jobs are gone for the most part and they have been replaced by what economists call 'precarious jobs,' which are part time, pay low wages, have no job security, no benefits and no union protection. Large numbers of Canadians are now working in those kinds of jobs. You can't support a family that way."

Over the past several decades, governments have gradually and systematically eroded the social security net that was built in the 1960s, he adds. As a result, people who are struggling don't have as much protection as they did in the past.

Adding to the problem, Silver says, poverty is probably the most important factor in explaining low levels of education.

"Children who grow up in poor families are much less likely to do well in school than children who grow up in well-to-do families," he says.

"There's a whole combination of things that fit together to make poverty complicated and difficult to get out of. People can get trapped in this complex poverty."

In Winnipeg, as well as throughout Manitoba, the large aboriginal population

is disproportionately among the poor. And for them, their historical experience with education has been negative.

"I come from a fairly low-income family, but my parents made it apparent to me that I was going to go to university. I just never thought otherwise," Silver says. "But in many aboriginal families, that's not the attitude that prevails and it's because their experience with school has been so negative."

Consequently, Canada's colonial history has impacted perspectives on the education system.

"We deliberately set out to damage aboriginal families by forcing their children into residential schools and then separating parents from children. That's a recipe for damaging families and it's rippled across the generations. In Winnipeg's inner city, you have cases where children are living in families that are struggling and where there has been no positive experience with the educational system," Silver says.

"And the combination of those two things means that that child is probably not going to be very interested in school and is probably not going to be very motivated to succeed in school — as a result of the poverty, as a result of the colonialism, as a result of the damage that the colonialism has done to families and the damage it's done to the idea of education."

People who are mired in this complex

poverty often tend to internalize their circumstances, which also influences their attitude towards education.

"They come to blame themselves: 'I'm poor, therefore, I must be stupid.' So the poverty can erode people's sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. And in a lot of cases, it can even create a sense of hopelessness," Silver says.

"If you don't have confidence in yourself, if you don't have the sense of hope that you can create a better future, then the likelihood is that you're not going to put the effort into doing well in school."

To combat these concerns, Silver emphasizes the importance of adult education. If impoverished people have dropped out of school in their teen years, they might become motivated to go back to school later in life.

"In Manitoba, we have designed a whole bunch of adult education programs that work really well. For people going back, a lot has been learned about how to help them to succeed so they can finish their Grade 12 and go on to post-secondary when they're in their 30s or even older than that," Silver says.

"But also we find that when mom or dad go back to school, their kids do better at school, so there's this trickle-down effect. We find that if somebody goes back to school as an adult and they are doing well and they like it, pretty soon they bring their cousin or their brother. There's also this ripple effect."

On the opposite end of the education spectrum, early childhood learning is equally important.

"The evidence is overwhelming that kids are going to do better if they have the advantage of early childhood education. Kids learn lots of things when they go to daycare. They're much better prepared for kindergarten at age five," he says.

"In Manitoba, we know that children growing up in low-income neighbourhoods are much less likely to be ready for school than children growing up in higher-income neighbourhoods. We can counter that by having early childhood education programs in low-income neighbourhoods."

The provincial government's Early Development Instrument (EDI) score indicates that in Winnipeg's most affluent neighbourhoods, kids are ready for school at age five. However, the closer they live to the inner city, and particularly to the North End, the proportion of kids who are ready for school drops drastically.

"There's a whole combination of things that fit together to make poverty complicated and difficult to get out of. People can get trapped in this complex poverty."

- Jim Silver, Author & U of W Professor

"They're suffering from all these poverty-related problems, so when they go into kindergarten, they don't do well. They're behind because they're starting way behind the start line. Before very long, they'll begin to think that they're not doing well because they're stupid," Silver says.

"Then they'll give up, despite the fact that, on average, these kids are every bit as intelligent as any other kids. But it's the poverty and all these related problems that are the cause for their not doing as well in school as kids in more well-off neighbourhoods do."

Manitoba Centre for Health Policy data indicates 95 per cent of young people graduate on time in the most economically well-off parts of Winnipeg. In the inner city, that number drops to 55 per cent, and in some North End neighbourhoods, it's as low as 25 per cent.

"You can see that graduation rates are directly correlated to this idea of poverty," says Silver, who includes the data in his book. "The higher the incidence of poverty, the lower the graduation rates."

Within the school system, individual teachers can play a role in addressing the overall issue of poverty.

"There are things that can be done inside the school, and the literature suggests that the most important is to have high-quality teachers who are highly skilled and motivated," Silver says.

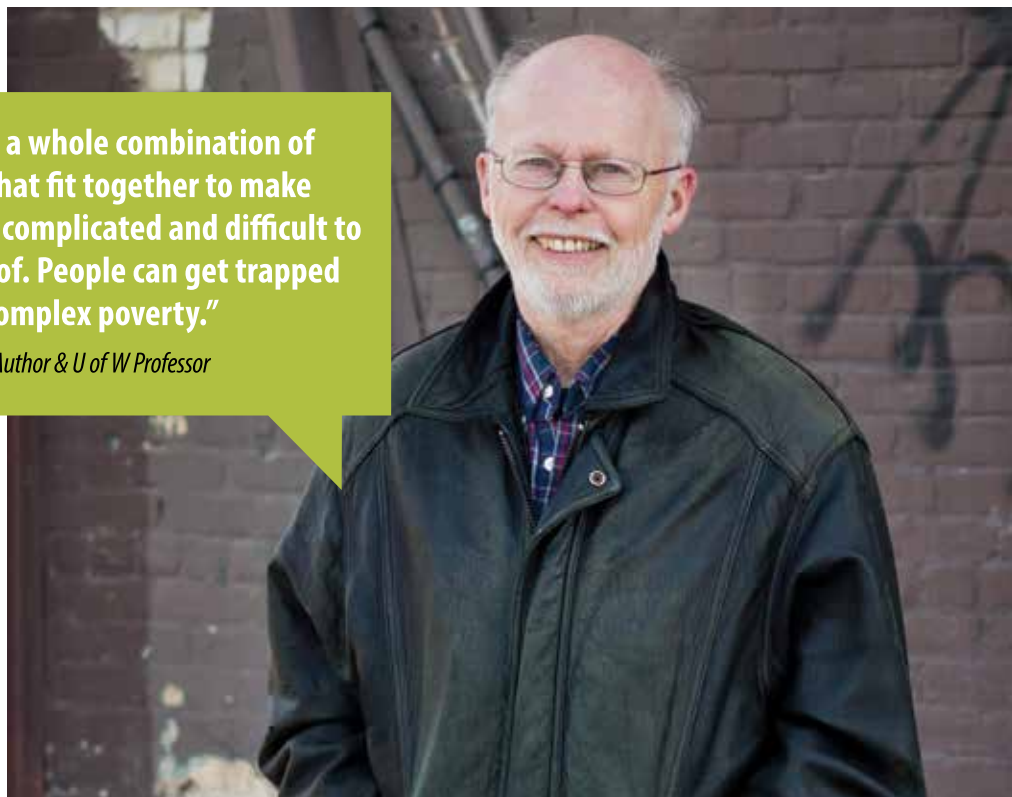
"But the other thing is to believe in the kids. I think that in some low-income neighbourhoods, there is a tendency to assume that the kids cannot succeed in school by some teachers. They can succeed in school, but in low-income neighborhoods, it's a difficult challenge because of the poverty that the kids are burdened with."

Not only is it ethically right to deal with poverty, he says, but it is also economically imperative.

"Poverty is very, very expensive. It's more expensive than solving it. An obvious example is that poverty results in children having lower educational attainment, which then means they're much more likely to end up in poverty themselves. If you're in poverty yourself, you're not working and paying income taxes, but you are drawing social assistance or employment insurance, so that's expensive to us," he says.

"Similarly, all health indicators are worse in low-income neighbourhoods than in high-income neighbourhoods. Everybody in Canada knows that health-care costs continue to climb and climb and climb. Part of that is because of poverty. Poor people suffer poor health, so if we were to deal with poverty, we would hold down health-care costs."

Silver also suggests that teachers learn more about the topic by reading *About Canada: Poverty*, published by Fernwood Publishing as part of the *About Canada* series.



PORTFOLIO

Fear of Flying Fools

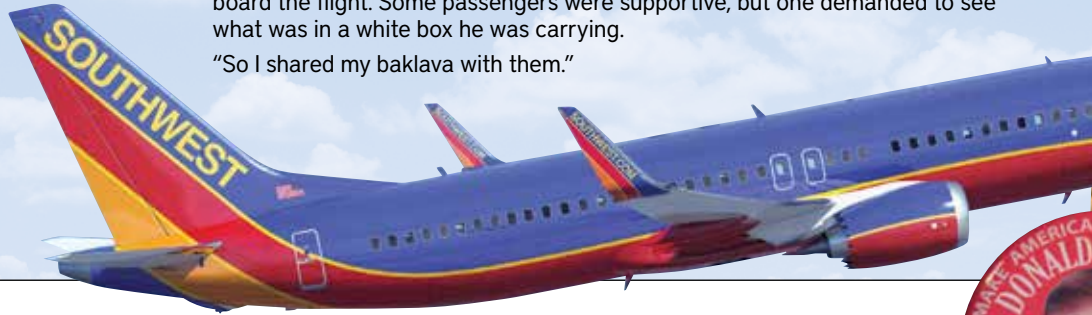
A Philadelphia pizza shop owner and his friend had to call 911 in Chicago's Midway airport in order to get on their flight home.

The airline wouldn't let the two men on the plane after another passenger said he was afraid to fly with them because he heard them speaking Arabic.

"If that person doesn't feel safe, let them take the bus," Maher Khalil said to a Southwest Airlines gate agent. "We're American citizens just like everybody else."

The two called police who came and after questioning them, allowed them to board the flight. Some passengers were supportive, but one demanded to see what was in a white box he was carrying.

"So I shared my baklava with them."



Welcoming a toxic **dumpster fire**

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman must feel he has some cosmic powers of persuasion given his recent invitation to international racist Donald Trump to visit the city.

Even as the country and city were preparing for the arrival of thousands of Syrian refugees, many of them Muslim, Bowman decided the time was right to also welcome the world's most overt bigot.

The mayor said he wanted to bring Trump to town to let him tour the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

In his letter to the Republican presidential candidate, Bowman says it is his hope that by visiting Winnipeg and museum Trump would "develop a more profound sense of compassion and tolerance for others." Or, he says maybe Trump would "learn the Winnipeg way of cultural inclusion."

It's hard to determine what is sadder, that this is:

- a) The dumbest publicity stunt to ever ooze from city hall or
- b) The mayor is naive enough to think this would actually work.

The obvious answer is behind door a) since the mayor wrote the letter and then made sure it got wide circulation by posting it on his Twitter feed. After all, what better way to get yourself into the news than dive into the media tsunami that Trump has created?

It worked, of course. The ridiculous letter was front-page news and led the broadcast

WHO'S BEING TERRORIZED?

A 14-year-old student in London mentioned in a class discussion that environmental extremists are sometimes called ecoterrorists.

A few days later he was pulled from class, taken to another room in the school and quizzed by two staff, one who sat in front of him and one behind.

Among the things they wanted to know was whether he was a supporter of, or affiliated with, ISIS.

Oh, yes, the boy is Muslim.

Trump would approve!

An elementary school in France thought it was a good idea to have students wear identity tags to separate those who did not eat pork and those that did.

The kids wore red or yellow tags around their necks to supposedly make things more efficient in the cafeteria. Parents complained and the school decided it wasn't such a hot idea after all. The idea of providing pork-free meals in school – mainly to Muslim immigrants – has been a divisive issue in France.

lineups of vacuous media despite its absence of, well, actual news. Any sentient being would have discerned that a letter from the mayor of Winnipeg to Donald Trump would (as Marina Hyde of the Guardian said in a different context) carry less weight than runway models in space. He might as well have sent out a blanket form letter to others on the fringe of humanity like Kim Jong-Un or Bashar al-Assad.

Even if we believed in some alternate universe the mayor was making a serious gesture, how would Donald Trump actually view the human rights museum? Most likely he would see it as a warehouse of great ideas.

Internment of citizens of Japanese ancestry during the Second World War? Trump's already said that was a worthwhile policy. The 1914 incident over the steamship Komagata Maru where the Canadian government refused entry to 400 Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs? Trump has already exceeded that idea by one or 1,000 times, advocating banning all Muslims from entering the United States.

No, Bowman would not see Donald Trump's heart grow three sizes that day. More likely, the small-minded vulgarian would have a gleam in his eyes while thanking the mayor for the all-you-can-hate buffet. There would be no joy in Whoville.

Aside from the fact the invitation had

about as much chance of sparking an authentic (or any) reply as a letter to Santa, the stunt did the civic image more harm than good.

Pretty well every story outside the province included the reference that Winnipeg has been called the most racist city in Canada, as if it's the tag line on city limit greeting signs. There is also the real problem of pumping yet more air into the Trump balloon, adding to his twisted credibility. You can see where that leads by gazing just a little south in Grand Forks where a Muslim-owned restaurant was first sprayed with racist graffiti and then firebombed last month. You may not have heard about it. It didn't get quite the amount of media time and space as the unending Trump dispatches.

It isn't a great leap to take for some from hearing the so-called ideas disgorged by Trump to tossing a gasoline bomb through the window of a Muslim-owned business.

Yet, this is the toxic train that gets invited to roll into Winnipeg. It would probably be easier to bring in a real train of toxins and magically turn it into chocolate mousse.

Or, the mayor could just find a local racist and take them to the museum. But then, what's the point of that. It probably wouldn't get his name on the front page.



ISIS. Rebel Alliance; what's the diff?

A Spanish television reporter offering an on-screen explanation of terrorism illustrated the depth of his research by showing a Star Wars image as the al Qaeda emblem.

As one news report pointed out the symbol was from a different group that operated a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away: the rebel alliance that battled Darth Vader in the Star Wars movies.

JIHADIST THREAT SLIGHTLY GREATER THAN BEING SHOT BY YOUR DOG

- Number of Americans killed in the United States by self-proclaimed jihadists in the past 15 years, according to the New York Times: 26
- Number of Americans killed in the United States by non-Muslim extremists: 48
- Number of Americans shot by guns accidentally discharged by their pets: 10



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
I'D LOVE TO HELP.
REACH ME AT [RJOB@MBTEACH.ORG](mailto:rjob@mbteach.org)

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

What's on Your Tech PD Bucket List?

Yes, it's a challenge to find time for fun and practical tech PD. You may want to help your class dive into green screening, podcasting or blogging. You may yearn to finally master Google docs or get started editing video or set up e-portfolios for your students. You may even want to get your school into an Hour of Code, join the maker movement or have your students present at TEDxYouth@FortGarry or TEDxKildonan. One thing's sure. The time will not present itself; you'll have to carve it out. Whatever your goals, here are a few suggestions you may want to include on your tech PD bucket list for 2016.

Jump into #mbedchat

Every Wednesday at 8:00 p.m., dozens of Manitoba teachers jump into an hour of conversation and sharing on Twitter. The topics? Everything from student wellness and class environment to field trips and experiential learning. Search for #mbedchat on Twitter, follow the conversation, and share your thoughts. @mbedchat already has over 1500 followers.

Pecha Kucha and IGNITE sessions

Ready for two of the most fun and challenging presentation styles? Every Pecha Kucha slide presentation clocks in at six minutes and 40 seconds, and each IGNITE is a flat five minutes. The challenge? Tell your story with only 20 slides—20 seconds each in Pecha Kucha vs. 15 seconds per slide in IGNITE. But here's the kicker: You can speak to each slide, but you can't control the slides yourself. They advance automatically. Google Pecha Kucha Winnipeg and IGNITE Winnipeg for local events. Then

challenge your students and yourself to hold your own sessions.

Ed Camp Winnipeg

Isn't it true? Some of the richest moments and connections at PD events happen over lunch, in the hallways between sessions—even in the parking lot. Ever regretted taking a seat in a session and wished you could vote with your feet and join another? Ed Camp Winnipeg is for you. The first item on the agenda is building one. Each participant suggests topics on which they'd like to share or want to know more about. For the rest of the day, everyone clusters around the topics they really want to engage in to learn from each other. It's a full day of PD nirvana and doesn't cost you a dime. (They even feed you.)

TIN Nights

Technology Information Nights (TINs) are informal teacher PD events open to teacher techies and wannabees alike. These evening events are hosted by the Manitoba Association for Computing Educators (ManACE) and are full of

smart conversation, great presentations, new friends and mentors—and often great food. Check the ManACE website for dates and times.

Beautiful BYTE, Riding the Wave

Broaden Your Teaching Experience (BYTE) is an annual tech conference for teachers. The beauty of BYTE is the quality of the 65 workshops offered this year and the approximately 400 teachers who attend. This year's theme is "digital citizenship" and Dr. Mike Ribble will present the keynote. BYTE 2016 takes place February 26, 2016, at Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School in Brandon. Scan the workshop listings at byteconference.weebly.com. Your inner geek will smile. Riding the Wave of Change is an excellent two-day conference that's known for its top-notch keynoters. Riding the Wave 2016 is May 5 and 6, 2016, in Gimli.

ISTE and BLC

Ok, now for the major leagues. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) conference bills itself as "the Premier Education Technology Conference". With 16,000 educators, 1,000 sessions and a massive exhibitor floor, those bragging rights are legit. ISTE 2016 is June 26-29 in Denver. Building Learning Communities (BLC) is more intimate at about 1,000 attendees. My experience there in 2009 absolutely rocked and, in my mind, set the bar for tech conferences. BLC 16 is July 20-22 in Boston. Make it a point to attend one of these.

Need more inspiration for your tech PD bucket list? Check out Kevan Lee's post "The 50 Things I'm No Good At With Social Media" on the Buffer Blog.

Thank you teachers

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



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