

THE MANITOBA

Teacher

DECEMBER 2019 VOLUME 98 NUMBER 3 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

**UPENDING
THE SALARY
FREEZE**

**BILL
28**



ARTiculate Our Rights

Manitoba Youth invited to submit art for upcoming exhibition!

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights and Manitoba 150 are inviting youth aged 13 to 19 from Manitoba to create art projects depicting human rights today and into the future.

Young artists are invited to make their submission online until January 17, 2020.

Chosen entries will be showcased in an outdoor exhibition at The Forks, as part of Manitoba 150 celebrations.

Additional selected pieces will be featured in-gallery at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Encourage the senior years students you know to take the challenge and ARTiculate their rights.

humanrights.ca/education

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Fab5 & PD Day

More than 10,000 members engaged in professional learning

#MTSPDDAY





FROM THE PRESIDENT

JAMES BEDFORD

I am often asked about the work I do, and how it must be so much different than being in a classroom and a school. My answer is that I miss the classroom and the school, especially when I get the opportunity to visit a school (which is never often enough, hint, hint!), but the work is not that much different. At its core is education and relationships.

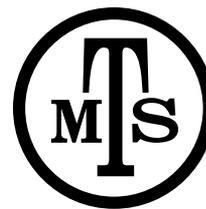
As I write this column, I am just back from attending a news conference at Winnipeg Harvest, where an extension of their Breakfast2Go Program was announced. It was an opportunity to educate an audience that establishing a universal meal program is our first recommendation to the Province's K-12 Education Commission. I had the opportunity to meet with the leadership of Winnipeg Harvest, who share our goal. Representatives of all political parties in the province were present, as was a representative from the Breakfast Club of Canada, and countless Winnipeg Harvest volunteers. Every person present was a potential partner in working with us to achieve our goal, and meeting them was invaluable.

Another important relationship for us is with the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL). It surprises some that we are not an MFL member. But we enjoy, and are very appreciative of, the positive relationship that we have with MFL and its member organizations. Through the MFL we are members of the Partnership to Defend Public Services, the partnership of unions that are challenging the constitutionality of Bill 28 (The Public Services Sustainability Act). Such a challenge is an enormous undertaking, and is good both financially and morally to have such wonderful partners on our journey.

In late November, I attended the Annual Meeting of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, and was pleased to accept an invitation to their evening gala. This is an opportunity to listen to our hard working municipal leaders from across the province. Not only can I speak about the coming changes that will impact teachers, such as the shift in education taxation, but I can learn from them and respect their concerns. It should not be surprising to anyone how easy it is to find common ground between elected leaders.

In February, the Society and the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents will jointly host the Educating for ACTion: Our Learning Journey conference. This will be our second conference co-hosted with MASS and it exemplifies the excellent relationship we have with school superintendents. The ability to design a conference that meets the learning objectives of both our organizations is an amazing achievement.

So just like the classroom, where success is built on establishing positive relationships with students, colleagues, superintendents, parents and the larger school community, the work of the Society is little different. It should not be surprising how transferrable the skills are. Perhaps I have just completed a report card, as opposed to a column?



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INSIDE MTS

WE COULD USE GEORGE BAILEY RIGHT ABOUT NOW

ROLAND STANKEVICIUS, GENERAL SECRETARY

The month of December very often holds a special and sentimental place in most people's hearts and heads. 'Tis the season ... as is often shared at this time of year ... as a reason for traditions and family gatherings, respecting a diversity of social, spiritual and religious celebrations.

Growing up in Winnipeg as a first generation European immigrant family (Lithuanian/German), the homage to Christian traditions was exceptionally enthusiastic and devoted in our home. As I grew and developed within a more open and eclectic social circle through public school, friendships and other community influences a varied appreciation of meaning and purpose of December's rituals and messages became adopted and adapted to my own personal/family growth and transformation. I can reflect that one of my most significant personal growth experiences as a much younger person, was the connection I made to the Frank Capra's 1946 classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*. It's a film that stands out as one of cinema's most cherished 'ornaments' for all to experience as an essential holiday season interlude. I especially enjoy the many layers, subplots and characterizations of life and times in fictional Bedford Falls. As the story goes, a young energetic George Bailey reluctantly inherits his family's small business and he devotes himself (grudgingly) to continuing Bailey Building and Loan as a foundation stone of progressive community development in contrast to his arch antagonist, Mr. Henry F. Potter, the embodiment of a rampant capitalist banker's scheme. The likelihood of Pottersville replacing Bedford Falls is very real in the Capra's story and if it wasn't for George Bailey's sacrifice, hard work, integrity and courage, Pottersville was the inevitable bleak future for the community. Although George is the central character in the story, the collective human links, intersections and connections weave a narrative arc that ties the whole community together to a far better, happier and more stable future



that defines a wonderful life.

Today, even as Capra's wonderful story is now more than 70 years in the telling, we see too much and too often in real life the existence and manifestation of Mr. Potter or Pottersville in many parts of our own communities and social circumstances. The growth in Payday Loans, Cash Stores, gig work, and other significant growth in the emergent precarious/transient 'new' economy. Additionally, sharply escalating housing prices and rental costs are creating serious social challenges with increased financial stress, homelessness and growing temporary living arrangements. These negative elements, now well established in our advanced and wealthy economies, indicate that we need to continue to advocate for more George Bailey style social progress, equity and social justice at a bare minimum. Although many of our social and public services such as public education and public health seem to be well established here in Manitoba and in many parts of Canada, we know that there are current efforts to further privatize, deregulate and pursue further assaults to undermine our social safety net(s). These attacks are alive and well-financed and we have to continue to be vigilant to stand together and band together to take on the many powerful private interests, driven by their own self-interest and greed.

An abundance of squalid living conditions, a growing demand for food bank programs and an escalating drug addiction crisis all speak to the Pottersville nightmare of social division, despair and fragmentation of society that should not be part of the Canadian reality in the year 2020.

It's a Wonderful Life advances a belief in community, relationships and a strong collective that can overcome the depths of a darker and desperate society. This is an important allegorical tale that I have appreciated over many countless repeat viewings. In essence, Capra's message that resonates with me is to continue to battle, to overcome the odds and dark despair and to fight for a more wonderful life. As we reflect on this year 2019 and all that we have celebrated as The Manitoba Teachers' Society during our Century of Solidarity let us collectively commit to continue to work together for a better and brighter future for all.

December will always be a special time of year for so many good and happy well wishes of celebration with family and friends. Let this December and the holiday season before us be everything that you can hope for in peace, health and happiness and that the New Year will provide inspiration and courage for us all to take on the many important challenges ahead of us.

LRTA ARBITRATION AND THE BILL 28 CHALLENGE

More than two years have gone by since the provincial government passed Bill 28, The Public Services Sustainability Act – the controversial bill that stipulates a salary freeze for teachers and other public sector workers for two years and limits increases in the third and fourth year to 0.75 per cent and one per cent respectively.

Though the bill has never been proclaimed, it has nevertheless chilled public sector bargaining by undermining the ability of unions to negotiate wage increases and other benefits, including premiums, bonuses and allowances.

Teachers across Manitoba have been without a contract since June 30, 2018. During this time, teacher locals have given notice to their respective school divisions to commence the bargaining process, but Bill 28 has made meaningful collective bargaining all but impossible. Accordingly, the locals in Pembina Trails, Louis Riel and Winnipeg have applied for arbitration. The Louis Riel arbitration began on November 25 and will wrap up on December 6, 2019. The Pembina Trails arbitration will begin on April 13, 2020 and conclude April 24. Currently, there are no arbitration dates for Winnipeg.

After the Louis Riel hearings conclude, the Arbitration Board will meet, without the parties, to review the information and evidence with a view to writing a decision. This process can take some time, meaning that a decision is likely months away. As such, and given the negative public sector labour relations environment created by Bill

28, it remains to be seen as to what impact this important decision will have upon the bargaining prospects for all other MTS locals.

In the midst of the Louis Riel arbitration hearings, is a court challenge, launched by The Partnership to Defend Public Services (PDPS) – a coalition of 28 public sector unions, including MTS, and the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL), all of which are challenging the constitutionality of Bill 28.

Led by the MFL, the coalition is arguing that collective bargaining rights are protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that the provincial government, by attacking public sector workers through Bill 28, is in violation of these rights.

“The fact that we have a government who would rather fight workers in court rather than work in cooperation with them has been frustrating,” said MFL president Kevin Rebeck. “We wish that we didn’t have to challenge this unconstitutional law, and that our government believed in the right to collective bargaining.”

Rebeck said that collective bargaining is a process that works well because it requires workers to come together,

prioritize things such as safer working conditions, fair wages, and retirement plans, and then negotiate their narrowed-down list with their employer.

“Collective bargaining requires compromise. Just as employers do not want to see their operations halted, workers do not want to see the services they provide affected, or the paycheques their families rely on disappear,” he said. “This process is under threat from the Pallister government.”

It is important to note that this is not the first time a provincial government has attempted to dictate the terms of public sector union contracts. Many governments, from across the country, have repeatedly attempted to interfere in the bargaining process. The Ford government in Ontario recently passed Bill 124. Nova Scotia’s Bill 148, which follows a similar pattern to Bill 28 of imposing wage restrictions on public sector bargaining, is another recent example.

The Manitoba government is undoubtedly aware of a Supreme Court ruling that obligates governments to consult with unions before intervening in the collective bargaining process, and held several meetings with public sector union leaders to discuss the fiscal circumstances of Manitoba prior to the introduction of Bill 28. However, it soon became apparent that this was simply a public relations exercise by the Pallister government to appear to be consulting with the public sector unions, and it is quite evident that they did not participate in this process in good faith.

In October 2019, the government proposed amendments to The Public Services Sustainability Act through Bill 2, which seeks to give more power to cabinet in regards to varying the restrictions imposed by Bill 28.

Ominously for teachers, it obligates arbitrators to re-issue decisions to comply with the dictates of Bill 28, thus explicitly stripping away any remaining vestige of arbitral independence; arbitrators would be transformed into little more than agents of government.

In 1956, Manitoba teachers gave up the right to strike in exchange for a fair and impartial arbitration process to settle bargaining disputes. Sixty-three years later, Bill 28 and Bill 2 threaten to destroy any chance Manitoba teachers would have to achieve a fair settlement either at the bargaining table or through arbitration.

“The fact that we have a government who would rather fight workers in court rather than work in cooperation with them has been frustrating. We wish that we didn’t have to challenge this unconstitutional law, and that our government believed in the right to collective bargaining.”

- Kevin Rebeck, president Manitoba Federation of Labour

It is important to note that since Bill 2 is an amendment to Bill 28, if the Court strikes down Bill 28, then Bill 2 also dies.

The court hearing will conclude on February 20, 2020.

“We can’t predict what the judge’s decision will be, but we are confident that Manitoba’s unions are putting forward the best legal arguments to give us the best chance to see this law struck down. We are confident that we have a strong case to present to the court,” said Rebeck. “Public sector workers deserve our appreciation and respect for the work they do every day.”

Are your students Canada’s next upstanders?

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defending human rights.**

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Middle years students and teachers who use the resource and submit projects are eligible to win.

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Learn more at humanrights.ca/upstander

 CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

Canada

Grade 12 Warren Collegiate students Jenn Fossay, Hannah Friesen and Katelyn Lacombe (l to r) were among the Top 10 finalists in this year's Caring for Our Watersheds competition.



BY LINDSEY ENNS

Plastics to bamboo

Hundreds of eco-friendly bamboo toothbrushes are now in the hands of elementary school students thanks to an innovative idea sparked by the Caring for Our Watersheds competition.

Grade 12 Warren Collegiate student Jenn Fossay wrote a children's book about the effects plastic toothbrushes have on the environment. Not only did she share copies of her book with students in her school division, she will also be distributing more than 1,000 bamboo toothbrushes to elementary school students.

"I found the bamboo replacement and then to advertise it I wrote a children's book that addresses the issue that plastic toothbrushes cause for our watersheds," Fossay said, adding when she first heard about the project in her environmental science class, she was on board with the idea. "You're not only doing a project for marks but you're also making a change which is nice."

Fossay's idea, which earned her third place in the watersheds competition, was also internationally recognized and 2,000 bamboo toothbrushes will be distributed to schools throughout Argentina, the United States and Canada.

"I learned a lot about watersheds and how the plastic waste is affecting the watersheds and just a lot of practical good information to know," she said.

The annual Caring for Our Watersheds competition asks students in grades 7 to 12 what they can do to improve watersheds. Students are tasked with researching watersheds, identifying an environmental concern and then coming up with a realistic solution. Entries, which include an approximately 1,000 word proposal, are judged on innovation, environmental impact, comprehensive scope, communication, budget, realistic solution and visuals.

Fossay as well as Grade 12 Warren Collegiate students Hannah Friesen and Katelyn Lacombe were among the Top 10 finalists for this year's competition. Final presentations took place during a gathering at Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre on April 13.

Friesen's project, which earned her fifth place in the competition, centred around removing plastic tampons at her school and replacing them with environmentally friendly cardboard ones.

"It suited what we were doing and it was something that needed to be changed because we don't talk about it a lot," Friesen said. "Nobody's really brave enough to talk about this subject because it's kind of touchy to some people ... and I needed to get that

across that it needs to be talked about and it needs to be fixed.

"It was really cool to talk about it in front of a group and have the judges say it was really brave of me to bring this up."

Thanks to Friesen's initiative, her school division will soon be offering free tampons with cardboard applicators instead of plastic. She's also ordered various menstrual products such as diva cups and reusable cloth pads, which she'll be putting into a free kit for students.

"We talk about plastic bags or plastic water bottles, but there's way more out there to explore," she said.

Lacombe's waste-free lunch project, which earned her ninth place in the watersheds competition, encouraged staff and students to use alternatives to single use plastics and containers. She also raffled off a prize for whoever brought in a waste-free lunch, which included a bamboo phone case and a reusable cloth bag for snacks.

"I feel like if people used the eco-friendly alternatives to regular things that they use everyday, it would make a big change so that's what I was trying to bring awareness to," Lacombe said. "I was surprised that there is all of these options out there and lots of people don't know about them ... and they could make a big impact."

When it comes to packing a waste-free lunch, Lacombe suggests using glass containers and doing away with single use plastics.

"I know people don't like doing dishes, I don't like doing dishes, but I think it's worth it," she added.

Warren Collegiate principal Laura Perrella says all of these projects are great examples of how they are always striving to improve their school community.

"It's not only doing wonderful things for our school and our school community, but it's growing outside of our school," Perrella said. "Each of these students also have a lot of support from the people behind them that are carrying them forward."

Nathalie Bays, manager of interpretive centre operations at Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, said this year's competition received a total of 330 entries from 475 students, as some were team submissions. The Top 10 finalists also receive a monetary prize ranging from \$300 to \$1,000. Bays added they try to get all the projects implemented by the end of June each year.

The submission deadline for next year's competition is slated for March 13, 2020. For more information and how to enter, visit caringforourwatersheds.com.

Small changes can make a huge difference

Students at Warren Collegiate are encouraging others to replace everyday items with some environmentally friendly and plastic-free options such as:



BAMBOO TOOTH BRUSHES



DIVA CUPS



CARDBOARD TAMPONS



REUSABLE BAGS



BREAKFAST 2GO FUELED FOR LEARNING



BY LINDSEY ENNS

A shiny biodegradable blue bag filled with nutritious food and a positive note is helping fill the weekend food void for students at three Winnipeg schools.

Winnipeg Harvest, the city's largest food bank, recently expanded its Breakfast2Go program to Pinkham School and Victor H. L. Wyatt School after it was piloted at Mulvey School last year.

Volunteers contributed more than 90 hours and packed more than 10,000 Breakfast2Go bags during the program's first year at Mulvey School. The program also received \$50,000 in donations to keep it going and growing.

"During our school week, we are able to provide our students with a breakfast from Monday to Friday but on the weekends there's a gap for many of our students accessing healthy foods and Breakfast2Go has bridged that gap for us," said Pinkham School principal Val Mowez.

A total of 750 children from all three schools now have access to nutritious foods on the weekends "so they can return to school fed and fueled for learning," said Winnipeg Harvest CEO Keren Taylor-Hughes.

Every Friday, Breakfast2Go kids receive two take home meals and a note of encouragement. The letters of affirmation are written by school staff, students and community members. The bags include items such as cereal, oatmeal, cheese strings, chocolate milk, yogurt, apples as well as oranges.

“We particularly appreciate the fact that this program is universal and it is made available to every student in our school, which supports an inclusive and safe approach to accessing nutritious food options for the weekend,” said Victor H. L. Wyatt School principal Laurie Ryz.

Along with learning about nutrition, students and parent volunteers at Victor H. L. Wyatt School help unload more than 250 breakfast bags from the Winnipeg Harvest truck each week.

“We are already seeing and hearing the positive impacts of the program within our school,” Ryz said. “Students look forward to checking out what’s in the blue bag each week and are excited to take home two healthy breakfasts and snacks for the weekend.”

Breakfast2Go was started after Parusia Purohit, a nurse practitioner at Mulvey School, noticed students coming to school on Mondays showing signs of malnutrition, which was hindering their ability to focus and succeed in school. To help address this need, Winnipeg Harvest teamed up with Purohit and Breakfast Club of Canada to launch the Breakfast2Go pilot program at Mulvey School last year.

“Our goal is to help children reach their full potential one breakfast at a time,” said Dennise Yarema of Breakfast Club of Canada. “We are proud to partner with Winnipeg Harvest and renew our funding commitment to support the expansion of Breakfast2Go so that all students in Manitoba have an equal chance to learn.”

The results from the first year of the program were overwhelming, Purohit said. They noticed several health benefits among students including a decrease in sick days, an increased ability to focus, better test scores as well as an increase in student self-esteem and self-image.

“Breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it steadies blood sugar levels and fuels both the brain and body,” Purohit said.

“The Breakfast2Go program is a multifaceted initiative that was created to help prevent the early development of Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure, and dyslipidemia, along with fostering positive self esteem.”

Sandra Sturrock, the mother of two children who attend Mulvey School, says her children really appreciate the program and her daughter keeps all of her letters of affirmation.

“You guys are nurturing their bodies, you guys are feeding our children, you are feeding their souls, that’s what you guys are doing,” Sturrock said, while addressing a crowd during a launch event at Winnipeg Harvest on Nov. 14, which was also World Diabetes Day. “Kids with trauma, this might be the nicest thing that is said to them all year ... so thank you. You guys are fighting the good fight.”

Winnipeg Harvest says it helps feed more than 25,000 children every month and many of these children take part in weekly school food programs and may go without on weekends.

When it came to expanding the program, Pinkham School, which is located near Health Sciences Centre, was chosen to be included in the program because it is in an area with the second-highest child poverty rate in Canada. Victor H. L. Wyatt is located in a lower-income part of St. Vital.

“The need is not getting smaller ... we know we’re going to be here to stay and we’re going to try as much as we can to help break the cycle of poverty and get people not coming into the food bank system so we’re starting in primary school with breakfast programs and Breakfast2Go,” Taylor-Hughes said. “It takes a small village to do this program. We have to raise the funds, then we have to get the food, we have to package the food, we drop it off at the school.”

Establishing a universal meal program for all school-aged children at no cost is the Society’s top recommendation for the province’s Kindergarten to Grade 12 education review commission.

“If we’re going to talk about improving educational outcomes in the province of Manitoba, we have to address hunger first, everything else will follow along the way,” said James Bedford, president of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society. “Breakfast2Go takes



Breakfast2Go was started after Parusia Purohit, a nurse practitioner at Mulvey School, noticed students coming to school on Mondays showing signs of malnutrition, which was hindering their ability to focus and succeed in school. To help address this need, Winnipeg Harvest teamed up with Purohit and Breakfast Club of Canada to launch the Breakfast2Go pilot program at Mulvey School last year.

that weekday breakfast a step further recognizing there are seven hungry days in a week potentially for students who come from an impoverished background.

“It’s an absolutely brilliant initiative.” To learn more about the Breakfast2Go program or to donate, visit winnipegharvest.org.



U ♥ 'd

PD DAY & FAB 5





MTS Professional Development Day *October 25, 2019*

MTS Professional Development Day featured almost 1,300 workshops hosted by 32 SAGEs including ÉFM, COSL and LIFT in Winnipeg, Brandon and numerous satellite sites around the province. Thousands of members attended their self-selected professional learning opportunities on October 25 and shared their experiences with colleagues on social media through the **#MTSPDDAY** hashtag which trended on Twitter.

FAB 5 Conference

October 23 & 24, 2019 (Winnipeg and Brandon)

Fab 5 Winnipeg and Brandon were FABULOUS once again! More than 100 teachers from all corners of the province – and as far away as Nunavut – were inspired by stellar educator Jey Thibedeau and Cate Friesen of the Story Source. A wide variety of workshops and information sessions were open to participants throughout October 23 and 24.





Maples Met School principal Ben Carr points to Met Schools on a world map.

RARE PROGRAMS, COMMON WORRIES

BY LINDSEY ENNS

When it came to choosing a high school, Kalkidan Mulugeta says Maples Met School just felt like the right fit.

The Grade 11 student credits this choice with helping fast-track her future career plans.

"I feel like if I went to a normal high school I would still be wanting to do baking ... and then I'd realize I don't want to do that after spending all that time and money," she said. "Since I've come to Met School it's really built my confidence up, especially with my internships."

There are currently around 200 big picture learning schools in the world, with the only two in Canada being in Winnipeg within the Seven Oaks School Division.

With the province signaling school division amalgamations could be on the horizon as part of the K-12 education review, some divisions fear it could lead to changes to unique programming, such as the Met schools, or strip them of their local voice.

The most recent school division amalgamations took place in 2002, when the NDP government passed legislation to reduce the number of school divisions from 54 to the now 38.

Seven Oaks School Division Supt. Brian O'Leary says amalgamation isn't the answer if the goal is to save money.

"We're cost effective, successful, we're well managed," he said. "We really want to hang

on to a culture that we really think is worth hanging on to."

The reason the Met Schools were established in Winnipeg and continue to find success is due in part to decisions made at the local level, according to Maples Met School principal Ben Carr.

"The idea is that the education of the student is centred around the students' interests, passions and curiosities, we are a school that is for anybody but we're not for everybody. Our school does not exist and does not succeed without the support of the greater community."

- Ben Carr, Maples Met School Principal

"Brian O'Leary ... had not just the vision and the calculated risk taking sense to move forward with the prospect of bringing this to our division, but as the superintendent in an autonomous division, he had the ability to do that," Carr said. "This was not something that had to go through hundreds of hours of conversations, through red tape, through bureaucratic processes that would slow it down. He was able to recognize what kids in

his division needed."

Similar to how the original opened at Garden City Collegiate, Maples Met is located inside Maples Collegiate. Maples Met is currently in its fourth year, while the Seven Oaks Met School is in its 11th.

"The idea is that the education of the student is centred around the students' interests, passions and curiosities," Carr said. "We are a school that is for anybody but we're not for everybody."

"Our school does not exist and does not succeed without the support of the greater community," Carr said.

The province is also currently reviewing the number of school boards in Manitoba. Over the past 50 years, the total number of trustees has decreased by 54 per cent, according to the Manitoba School Boards Association. The association believes further reduction to school boards or administrative costs won't strengthen public education.

"There's no basis for how it's going to save money or improve the lives of students, staff and families," says Manitoba School Boards Association president Alan Campbell. "There's too much time being spent speculating on what education looks like with less school boards. More time needs to be spent on meaningful changes that will benefit student outcomes."

"The most important aspect of local autonomy or local school governance is that when you have a locally-elected school board

WITH THE PROVINCE SIGNALING SCHOOL DIVISION AMALGAMATIONS COULD BE ON THE HORIZON AS PART OF THE K-12 EDUCATION REVIEW, SOME DIVISIONS FEAR IT COULD LEAD TO CHANGES TO UNIQUE PROGRAMMING, SUCH AS THE MET SCHOOLS, OR STRIP THEM OF THEIR LOCAL VOICE.



Grade 11 Maples Met School student Kalkidan Mulugeta says she's interested in pursuing a career in journalism.

with people from the community in which schools reside, you have community perspective directly part of the decision making.”

Lord Selkirk School Division Supt. Michele Polinuk says their trustees are very much a part of the communities they serve.

The Lord Selkirk School Division offers a unique English-Ukrainian Bilingual Program and their Selkirk high school houses various vocational training opportunities as well as an indoor community pool.

“They go to all the concerts and are strong supporters of all the schools,” Polinuk said. “Our trustees are definitely highly engaged and always have been and that’s something to be proud of.”

The Manitoba Teachers’ Society believes local school boards play an important role in the delivery of Kindergarten to Grade 12 public school education when it comes to ensuring responsiveness to local education needs and concerns. The Society supports the continuation of school boards that are governed democratically, locally elected and have the ability to raise revenues for enhancing programs and services.

In regards to school divisions, the Society would support amalgamations if the benefits and improvements were clearly outlined, if there is no loss of service and no decrease in resources to the affected areas and if all savings are reinvested into education.

Local level decision making is just one of the many benefits to having school divisions,

says Seven Oaks Teachers’ Association president Mike Giffen.

“Each division is able to support the families that live and work in each community,” Giffen said. “When we’re faced with challenges we can quickly address them and all the key players would be part of that conversation.”

“One of the biggest supports that members have commented on is how much the division values the importance of relationships between adults and learners. It’s what makes Seven Oaks different from our neighbouring divisions.”

- Mike Giffen, Seven Oaks Teachers’ Association President

Giffen says one of his fears surrounding amalgamation would be losing the professional identity Seven Oaks has built over the years.

“One of the biggest supports that members have commented on is how much the division values the importance of relationships between adults and learners,” he said, adding they provide rich learning opportunities for both teachers

and students. “It’s what makes Seven Oaks different from our neighbouring divisions.”

The most cited report on school division amalgamations is “The Norrie Report,” commissioned by the Conservative government of Gary Filmon in 1994. The report recommended reducing Manitoba’s 57 school divisions to 21. The former government did not adopt this report and instead encouraged school divisions to voluntarily amalgamate.

The Louis Riel School Division is no stranger to voluntary amalgamation. The school division has grown and is now comprised of the former St. Vital, St. Boniface and Norwood School Divisions.

“Our uniqueness is tied to the community we serve,” said Louis Riel School Division Supt. Christian Michalik. “Historically and culturally, French is a part of what makes us unique.”

Currently 36 per cent of their students are enrolled in French immersion, Michalik said.

“That’s something that is very special to us that we nurture,” he said. “It’s a linguistic culture that we’ve been nurturing for some time.”

While the outcome of the education review remains a mystery, Maples Met School principal Ben Carr believes Met Schools could serve as a “made-in-Manitoba success story.”

“It’s a beautiful example of what happens when you treat education ... as everyone’s business.”

MTS saving **time in a box**

STORY BY MIREILLE THERIAULT

On Saturday, October 26th time stopped at The Manitoba Teachers' Society. Or, at least it was packed away for another 25 years. At that meeting of Provincial Council held at McMaster House, those in attendance witnessed a ceremonial re-sealing of the MTS Time capsule.

The reproduction of the type of desk commonly found in a one-room school house had become a common sight after so many years outside the auditorium, but on January 19, 2019 it was opened to reveal a snapshot of the issues, interests and oddities of a generation.

At the October event, Ron Banister who served as President in 1994 when the idea for the time capsule was part of the 75th anniversary, was an honoured guest. It was both fitting and moving to have Mr. Banister read his own letter to current president, James Bedford, emphasizing how much had changed for the better, worse or even come full circle.

Now in 2019, the new submissions from 27 local associations as well as COSL, AEFM, and RTAM included a



wide variety of fun offerings from mugs and pins to T-shirts. Photo collections and press clippings were another popular contribution. Several local presidents took the time to prepare letters to their 'future selves' in which they shared the challenges faced now and their hopes for the future of education in their communities. Other locals shared historical gains, such as

the last grievance to maternity/paternity benefits.

All contributions are appreciated and the Society will be adding a few more items from the 100th celebrations just before the chest is truly sealed. The original submissions have been returned along with the new items in protective packaging to ensure they stand the test of time.

CMHR looking for **student artists**

Student artists are being asked to contribute to an exhibition to be put on next year by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

ARTiculate Our Rights is intended to depict a youthful vision of human rights today and into the future, with interpretation left open to their artistic expression. The projects can be created in any medium except film/video, the CMHR says.

High-quality photographs of the selected submissions will be mounted on large billboard-type signs, to be erected throughout The Forks early next summer in celebration of Manitoba's 150th anniversary as a province. An indoor version of the exhibition will also be

created for display in the Museum's Level 6 Expressions gallery.

Young Manitoba artists aged 13 to 19 are invited to submit individual or group projects to be considered by a jury for selection in the exhibition. In the process, they will increase their own knowledge about human rights issues, develop skills in creativity, communication, critical thinking and advocacy, add to an artistic portfolio and have an opportunity to showcase their work to the public.

To fuel students' imaginations and ignite their passion for a human rights issue, classes and groups are invited to explore the CMHR before and during their art-making process. Grant funding to cover bus and program costs are available for participants.



The call for submission ends Jan. 17, 2020. Information on how to submit can be found at humanrights.ca/exhibition/articulate-our-rights.

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www.teacherslearningcollaboration.ca



"Family" by Christina McKay (2017) of OMAZINBI'IGEG Artist Collective (Children of the Earth High School)

GAKINA ABINOOJIIYAG ALL OF THE CHILDREN
Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC) National Conference



Thursday at Victoria Inn
Evening Reception

Dr. Niigaan Sinclair



Friday at Amber Trails School
Full Day Conference

Monique Gray Smith



Saturday at Victoria Inn
Conference & CAYC AGM

Sonya Ballantyne

This conference is for educators, caregivers, researchers and those interested in the education and care of children. It will reflect contemporary views of children as competent and capable; current research that promotes the well-being of children; and rich and varied practices occurring in childcare centres, schools and educational sites.

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Arlyn Filewich
Department Head, Teacher Welfare

The Manitoba Teachers' Society
Teacher Welfare Department
191 Harcourt Street, Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2

Phone: 204-831-3070 / 1-800-262-8803

Fax: 204-831-3077 / 1-866-799-5784

Email: afilewich@mbteach.org

'Twas the night before
NEW YEAR'S



**PORT
FOL
FO**



BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

WITH OUR YEARLY TIP OF THE HAT TO CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE, 1779-1863

Twas the night before New Year's,
we looked back in thought,
To examine the past year and all that it brought.
The year was electric and touched many souls,
The New Year will show us for whom the bell tolls.

The commissioners were nestled all snug in their beds,
While changes to schools danced in their heads.
They've heard from the teachers, are thinking it through,
Now we wait for the review to make its debut.

And down at the Leg. politicians rose from their slumber,
The premier had called an election in summer.
The bumper in the summer went just as planned,
With Pallister and friends still in command.

He argued against taking any carbon tax,
On climate change the people should just relax.
In fighting global warming, he showed us the way,
With a stroke of his pen, he froze teachers' pay.

Soon after that vote we went back to the polls,
A battle of people and Internet trolls.
The ballots themselves had a certain ring,
Trudeau, May, Scheer, and Jagmeet Singh.

In the end it was Trudeau, sans his black face,
Who came out on top in this moribund race.
His victory for him was bitter sweet,
He now has to work with his new friend Jagmeet.

While the results left many slightly dismayed,
It seemed the whole globe was becoming quite frayed.
More rapid than eagles the issues they came,
It was easy to see them and call them by name.

Now Chile! now, Turkey! now, Hong Kong and Brexit!
On, Ukraine! on Russia! on, Impeachment and Wexit!
To the top of the news! To the top of the 'net,
It was enough to make even the comatose sweat.

Hurricanes, typhoons and tornadoes they churned,
While California and the Amazon rainforest burned.
While it may have seemed like Apocalypse Now,
There was certainly good news we can't disavow.

There was joy in old England as a Royal gave birth,
And kids led the adults in protecting the earth.
Students were the ones beating the drums,
On climate inaction and controlling of guns.

NASA declared the globe was now greener,
And plastic use dropped to make the sea cleaner.
The Avengers and Lion King were movies to see,
While Argentina declared itself Malaria-free.

Your teachers' union finished its one hundredth year,
The accomplishments made could only bring cheer.
We can only exclaim as the year drifts from sight,
Happy New Year, to all; we can still get it right.



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

COOL FOR THE HOLIDAYS

[GOOGLE ASSISTANT]

[ENSO SILICONE RINGS]

Elegant silicone wedding rings

Wait, "elegant" wedding bands made of silicone? It sounds wacko but they are trending. Big brand names like Enso, Maui, Groove and Knot Theory will run you anywhere from \$20 for a pack of four to \$45 for a single ring. If you ever worry you might lose your wedding band at the bottom of a hotel pool, damage it at the gym or playing with the kids – or that it might one day rip your finger off – you need to check them out. Silicone rings are colourful, stylish and come in all sizes for men and women. And they just may help you avoid 6.5 hours of micro-surgery. (Look up "Jimmy Fallon, ring avulsion" on YouTube).

Order Google Assistant to take notes

If "Ok Google" is your new verbal tick, you'll be glad to know your Google assistant can finally take notes as well as add items to your grocery, work, home, or personal lists. Now these aren't your Google Keep notes, but another beast entirely. Still, it's a welcome new feature – and it's about time. The command is

simply "Ok Google, take a note." You can see all your notes with "Ok Google, show me my notes."

Capture it all without breaking a sweat

The Google Pixel 4 phone is out and it ships with a super-efficient app called Google Recorder that's perfect for instantly transcribing and voice-recording lectures, lessons, any kind of presentation. Until now, the Otter app has been the reigning champ. But Recorder takes the concept a few steps further by recognizing and tagging music, applause and different speakers – and marking them in the transcript. If you have an Android phone, but not the Pixel 4, no worries. You can download an APK at apkmirror.com.

Your wildest Instagram dream comes true

Every grammer's dream is to post to their Instagram feed right from their desktop. This little known set of instructions will have you doing just that. Ready?

- 1) Log into your IG account on Chrome
- 2) Right click in a blank left or right margin, then hit "inspect"
- 3) Hit the mobile icon (2nd from left) at the top of the page of code
- 4) Refresh page (important)

Now work the page just like your mobile. You're welcome!

Inspo and empowerment for women

Our MTS Women in Educational Leadership Forum Facebook group is ALIVE with over 200 members in just two short months. This is a private group where women teachers can talk freely about leadership successes and challenges. The Society's Lia Gervino hosts a popular weekly Facebook Live broadcast that continues to grow audience. With six broadcasts on Brene Browns' Dare to Lead, so far, the group has logged hundreds of comments, posts, shares and reactions. Search for it from your Facebook profile, hit "join", and meet us for inspiration and sharing every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.



LEADERSHIP LEARNING SERIES 2019/2020

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The
Manitoba
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The Leadership Learning Series evolved out of recommendations from the Women in Educational Leadership Commission where access to professional learning was seen as a key factor in addressing the leadership gender gap.

The following workshops focus on providing opportunities to increase self-efficacy, connections to other members, and personal learning goals using flexible in-person and online learning approaches. While the series is focused on members who identify as women, all members are welcome to register and attend.

- **Know Thyself:
Insights Discovery®**
April 21, 2020
- **Online Forum: Women in
Educational Leadership**
Ongoing
- **Leadership and Unionism**
March 16, 2020
- **Leadership: An
Equity Perspective**
TBA
- **Leadership: Personal
and Professional**
January 20, 2020
- **Women in Educational
Leadership Symposium**
March 6, 2020

For details about workshop times, fees, locations, topics, certification, and facilitators:

http://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/pd/PLS_Catalogue_2019_20.pdf

To register through MyProfile Member link:

<https://memberlink.mbteach.org/>

To access information about other workshops offered by MTS:

www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2016/08/14/teacher-led-learning-team/

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