

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy 2012!

In light of the New Year and renewed energy after the break, we have included an article written by Adelle Field-Burton, a case manager from the MTS Disability Benefits Plan. She highlights many areas that help us achieve balance and create the capacity for wellness in our lives. We are in the planning stages of providing a workshop on this topic through our Staff Development Centre. Watch for an email update re: SDC workshops - New Offerings for details.



In this issue, Arlyn has written an article looking at the Lunch Period article in our Collective Agreement. I hope that you take time to read and reflect on the issues presented. Lunch hour is a good time to provide the balance you may need in your busy day.

At the January MTS Presidents' meeting, the Assistant Deputy Education Ministers Najdich and AuClair provided an update on the progress of the Provincial Report Card oversight committee and an opportunity for Association Presidents to give feedback. The same oversight committee will oversee the implementation of limiting K-3 class size to 20 students with the initial phases starting in September 2012. Details on both of these government initiatives will be forthcoming over the next few months.

On January 30th, the Province delivered its education funding announcement. At our BACE meeting later that day, the details of this announcement were discussed. There will be an overall 2.2% increase provincially and the tax incentive grants (TIG) will not continue. As PTSD accessed the TIG for the last 3 years, the Division could not increase local taxpayers' school taxes. Any local school tax changes were caused by reassessment. Now the Board will be looking at the 2012-2013 budget within new parameters. Careful consideration will be required in order to maintain and enhance programs as we continue moving toward the three Divisional goals.

Thank you to all who took time out of their very busy schedules to complete our contact time form and provide your current timetable. We would gladly accept any forms and timetables that have not been sent in, as this information helps us to monitor another very important article in our Collective Agreement. In limiting increases in contact time for teachers, we are able to keep preparation time fairly consistent for our members.

As always, feel free to call or email with your questions and concerns.

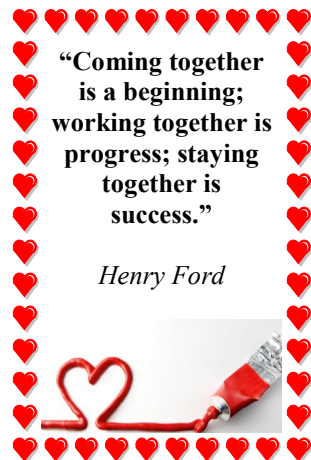
Cathy O'Donnell

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*In
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“Coming together is a beginning; working together is progress; staying together is success.”

Henry Ford

Joint PD Fund Cancellation Procedure

Any cancellation of an approved PD activity must be submitted **in writing** (preferably via email) to the attention of:

Craig Stahlke, Secretary-Treasurer: cstahlke@pembinatrails.ca

and

Lori Gillespie, Secretary to Assistant Superintendent H/R: lgillespie@pembinatrails.ca

Please include the Joint PD approval number and the dollar amount of the approval in the cancellation request.



Your Collective Agreement

Article 5.1

“An uninterrupted lunch period of sixty (60) minutes shall be provided to each teacher in the Division between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.”

5 MYTHS ABOUT LUNCHTIME MEETINGS

1. If a teacher calls the meeting, that makes a lunchtime meeting OK.

It doesn't matter who calls the meeting; if it is a meeting that is administrative in nature, and attendance is mandatory, then it should not be held over the lunch hour.

2. If the school buys lunch, that makes it OK to meet at lunch.

There is no reason to attend a required administrative lunch meeting...including a free lunch. Remember, nothing is ever free and it could lead to the loss of our negotiated uninterrupted meal period.

3. Purely voluntary PD sessions at lunch are inclusive.

Although we offer “voluntary” PD sessions at lunch with purely good intentions, I think we overlook the unwarranted peer pressure that is placed on individual teachers to attend these sessions. Any voluntary PD activities that are offered at lunch should also be offered at another time, so that individuals who like to keep their lunch unstructured are able to do so.

4. You are not a team player if you refuse to attend a lunchtime meeting.

You are in fact the ultimate team player if you refuse to meet at lunch, as you are doing what the big, collective team of teachers has deemed important enough to put into our Collective Agreement.

5. If everyone who needs to meet would rather do it at lunch, then it is OK to meet at lunch.

Any sub-group within the collective cannot choose to ignore the provisions of the Collective Agreement. In addition, meeting under these conditions makes it extremely difficult for any one teacher to say no. We put unnecessary pressure on our colleagues to follow the perceived wishes of the sub-group. What is good in the short run is not necessarily good in the long run. There is too much to lose.

We always need to remember that without the wording in our Collective Agreement, we could be required by our employers to be in our classrooms supervising at lunchtime. I still consider myself young, but I am old enough to remember being assigned supervision in the FRC cafeteria at lunch, as well as having to attend weekly department meetings at lunch. As a working mother, I respect the fact that teachers might find it difficult to meet before or after school, with kids to pick up and activities to get to. However, we may need to make special arrangements for those occasions when a group of professionals need to meet. We have a Collective Agreement provision for lunch. We have a Code of Professional Practice that requires each of us to adhere to the collective agreements negotiated by the professional Organization. That is what each of us is responsible to do! Take a break.... and enjoy your lunch!

If you would like to discuss this article or any other aspect of Collective Bargaining and/or Teacher Welfare, please contact me at pttacb@mts.net or 803-6499.

Arlyn Filewich

Vice President - Professional Development



Why Category 4 ?

Category 4 from the Joint PD Fund provides an opportunity to access release time and professional material support. Teachers can identify an area of need and develop learning communities that work for them. The following summarizes a learning community and the benefits to students and teachers.

*A strong body of research has grown which documents there is improved teaching and learning when using learning communities (LCs). LCs are based on the belief that teachers know best what they need to improve their practice. Improved teacher practice translates into improved student learning. LCs support teachers knowing the **why** of their professional development as they are involved in the creation and implementation of their communities.*

In conclusion, "Professional development cannot be left to chance. Professional development must be planned purposefully and deliberately as part of the workday. Professional development is never the end but rather the beginning of the journey toward learning." (p. 61) "When a school works toward becoming a learning community, all stakeholders are valued, collaboration is the norm, learning occurs naturally, and reflection is fostered through collaborative conversations." (p. 112)

Learning communities are an exciting vehicle for this professional learning.

*Source: Zapeda, Sally. (2008) **Professional Development: What Works?** Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. For ordering information, go to learningforwardstore.org.*

Joint PD Fund Criteria

If there are any **suggestions for changes** to the Joint PD fund criteria, please forward them to your school's PTTA PD rep or to Cathy at pttapresident@mts.net. The criteria are reviewed yearly so that access is fair and equitable to as many members as possible. We aim to have the brochure printed and distributed in June as PD approvals beginning July 1, 2012 are taken from next year's budget.

To close off this issue I would like to share with you that I am currently on a medical leave due to surgery. I am recovering from a hip replacement that will improve my mobility and reduce pain. I am aiming to return to active duty by the end of March. The recovery process is long, but it is a very successful procedure. I will be keeping tabs on goings on and the Executive team will be picking up some of my responsibilities during this time.

Have a great term. See you soon.

Wayne Schultz



ON THE JOB INJURY?

- You must ensure that an accident report is completed. Keep a copy for your records.
- Check your sick days.

Our Collective Agreement, Article 6.5 g) states: "When a teacher suffers an on-job injury and is absent from work as a result of that injury, the Board shall continue to pay the salary of that teacher during such absence limited to the extent of the accumulated sick leave balance at the time of suffering the on-job injury. The period of time absent from work as a consequence of the on-job injury shall be charged against the accumulated sick leave balance."

What does this mean?

This means the Division will match your current sick days and the days absent will be taken from these days before any of your regular accumulated sick days are used. Payroll needs to be advised of this.

Did you know?

- Serious accidents are to be investigated by your school's Workplace, Health and Safety Committee
- Teachers are not covered by Worker's Compensation

BALANCING

An Article by Adelle Field Burton, DBP Case Manager



Kent Avery is an artist who lives in Vancouver and amazes tourists and locals with his ability to balance stones. There are no rods, no glue, just the stones. When asked, "How do you do that?" Kent suggests that it takes enormous focus and the ability to stay in the "now". He chooses the stones carefully, having learned that some fit together better than others. He admits that some days are better than others. As we enter into 2012, we often think about things we could do differently to improve our lives. When I think about Kent's work, I consider how focus and balance are integral parts of our own well-being. How do we get focused? How do we achieve balance?

First of all, I have found that balance is limited by the number of things I am attempting to fit together. In other pictures of Kent's work, the maximum number of stones he balances is about four or five. Now maybe we can manage to balance more than four or five things in our lives but there comes a point where too many things on our plates make it impossible to gain any semblance of balance, no matter how hard we try. Funny how many people continue to persevere through being overburdened even though they have the freedom to choose to do less. Often, the difficult question to answer is, "What do I give up?"

Hard to know what to give up when we have no focus, no clear picture of what is important to us. That's where goal setting comes in – and before you roll your eyes too far into the back of your head, this will not take up much of your time. It took me less than an hour. Les Hewitt, who has literally written the book on focus, "The Power of Focus", suggests setting annual goals in seven areas of life. He reminds us that they should be written down, specific and measurable:

Financial

Total income

Amount of money you want to save / invest during this time and/ or paying down debt

Business / Career – one key goal for the year

Fun time! - Your goal for time off, totally away from work. Record the number of days and remember, you deserve it!

Health and Fitness

Physical

Mental

Spiritual

Consider exercise, nutritional habits, new knowledge, and spiritual awareness

Relationships – what one important relationship will you work on during this year? Family?

Co-worker?

Personal- this is a wide-open choice involving something that gives you personal satisfaction – it might be learning a new skill, planning a vacation, or buying something.

. . . . *continued on page 7*

NOMINATE STUDENTS WITH CARING HEARTS

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is looking for students who exhibit compassion, self-sacrifice, leadership and creativity.

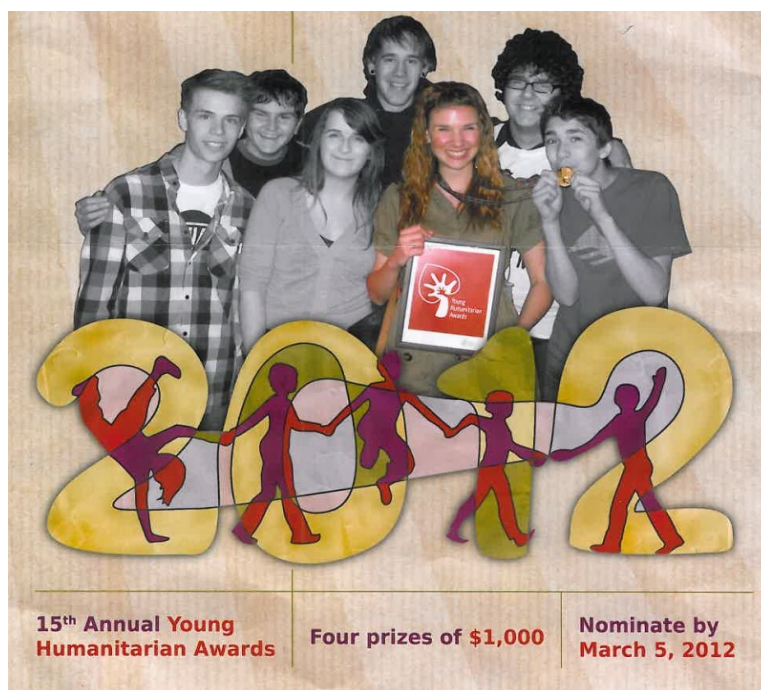
All Manitoba public school students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 are eligible. Last year **two** of the YHA were presented to students in the **Pembina Trails School Division**.

Nomination forms and information can be found at:

mbteach.org/yha/yha.html

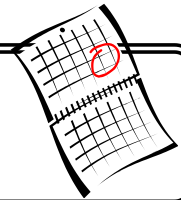
Deadline for nominations is 4:00 p.m., Monday, March 5, 2012.

Three individual students and one student group will be honoured at the 15th Annual Young Humanitarian Awards ceremony at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 30, 2012, at the Manitoba Theatre for Young People.





REMINDERS AND IMPORTANT DATES



UPCOMING SEMINARS

Pre-Retirement Seminar - All Metro Divisions Combined

Information and registration can be accessed through the Manitoba Teachers' Society website at <http://www.mbteach.org/> . **April 28, 2012** - McMaster House

Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar:

The next seminar will be held Wednesday, May 9th from 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. at the PTSD Administration Office, 181 Henlow Bay.

Registration is through the PTSD PD Events calendar at: <http://ptsdpdevents>



PTTA SUBSTITUTE INFORMATION MEETING!

Wednesday, February 15, 2012
from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Staff Development Centre,
Room 104,
6720 Betsworth Ave.

(Westdale School)

RSVP: 896-4857 or ptta@mts.net



PTTA ANNUAL RETIREMENT DINNER

Thursday, June 14, 2012

5:00 p.m. Doors open

6:00 p.m. Dinner

Caboto Centre

More information to follow
in the next Trail Talk!



UPCOMING SCHOOL VISITS

Cathy & Arlyn will be visiting the following schools in the coming months with cookies!



Bonnycastle	February 1, 2012
École Dieppe	February 7, 2012
Pacific Junction	February 15, 2012
River West Park	February 17, 2012
Ralph Maybank	February 22, 2012

École St. Avila	March 1, 2012
Whyte Ridge	March 7, 2012
General Byng	March 15, 2012
École Tuxedo Park	March 19, 2012
École Viscount Alexander	March 21, 2012

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

PTTA Executive Positions for 2012-2013

Vice President Professional Development
Vice President Collective Bargaining
Treasurer
Secretary
Equity and Social Justice
Employee Benefits
Public Relations
Wellness/Social
French Immersion
Member at Large—1 position

The position of President will be in the second year of a two year term.

If you are interested in sitting on the Executive, email Karen Wiebe, karenwiebe@mac.com with your name and the position you are interested in before April 15th. As per PTTA By-Law 4.01 c, the nominees for PTTA Executive must be distributed to the membership on or before April 15th. Following this, other candidates may be nominated by April 22nd with 10 signatures of PTTA members. A slate of candidates must be presented to Council in April. Where there are two or more candidates for any position, an election must be held between May 7th and May 16th.

. . . . continued from page 4, Balancing article

Contribution – What are you going to give back to society? It could be a financial contribution, your time, or simply helping someone out by being a willing listener.

So when we look at our goals and consider all the stones we are trying to balance, it becomes easier to determine which things fit with what is important to us. Now we can't always let go of everything that doesn't fit, but we can let go of some, making it easier to balance our lives. And when we get asked to do something extra, it becomes clearer whether or not we should take it on.

On January 1, I attended a program of my chosen form of spiritual practice and one of my fellow practitioners shared a message she saw on the way to the program. On her drive there, she saw a huge billboard. The only thing it said is this – "DO LESS.....SLOWLY".

Wishing you all a well-balanced 2012...

Adelle Field Burton

Visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPXhRUV7TWM&feature=email> to see an eight-minute production on Kent's work

Visit: <http://www.thepoweroffocus.ca> for more information on Les Hewitt's work on focus.



Trail Talk is published under the auspices of the Pembina Trails Teachers' Association. PTTA is a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Submissions for 2011—2012 newsletters should be sent to ptta@mts.net

**Pembina Trails Teachers' Association
2011-2012 Executive**

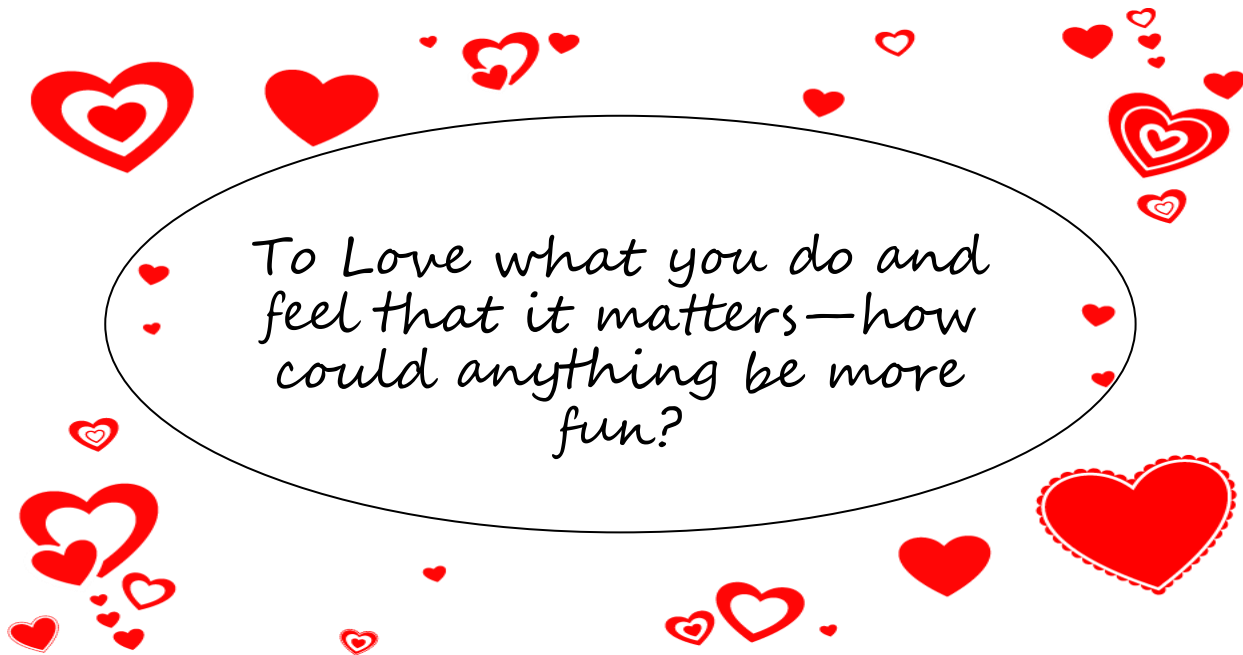
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Public Relations
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French Immersion
Wellness/Social
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Past President

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Fort Richmond
Pacific Junction
Pacific Junction
Bonnycastle
General Byng
Bairdmore
Bonnycastle

Chapman
Van Wallegghem
Fort Richmond



*To Love what you do and
feel that it matters—how
could anything be more
fun?*