

# Rielity Check

Louis Riel  
Teachers' Association  
www.lrta.ca

January 2010  
Editor : Deb Barry

**Bonne et Heureuse Année**

**Happy New Year**



Here we are mid-year! The weather is cold and we look forward to longer, warmer days. We anticipate getting outdoors more and feeling healthier. Continue to take care of yourselves . . . Spring will come!

One of the primary functions of the *Rielity Check* is to provide important and relevant information to LRTA members. Articles often focus on issues that have been shared with the Association and are of significant concern to members. Thus, we have included many articles on duty free lunch, prep time, PPDF, teacher rights as outlined in the Collective Agreement and the Labour Relations Act to name a few.

A concern that has been raised too often again this year relates to the use of sick leave (Article 6.00 of the Collective Agreement). As it states in the first line of the article, **sick leave is an entitlement**. That is, it is earned and accumulates at the rate of 20 days per year until the 124 day maximum is achieved. **You do not need to disclose information** to your employer or supervisor about the nature of any medical/dental/vision appointment. You are protected under PHIA (Personal Health Information Act). This information is confidential. Finally, although teachers are responsible for leaving appropriate lesson plans for substitute teachers if they are going to be absent, if you are away ill, you are not responsible for planning for classes on an ongoing basis. You are sick; your job is to get better!

According to the Education Administration Act, section 39(f), ongoing professional development is the responsibility of the teacher. Also, the commitment of the Louis Riel School Division to the Supervision for Growth model further highlights the need to access PD to support the individual's plan. Therefore, a teacher must be free to select Professional Development opportunities that support professional growth appropriate to his/her teaching assignment and the goals of his/her Professional Growth Plan. The PPDF provides funds to support this professional development. Before a teacher applies for funding, the teacher is responsible for notifying his/her administrator of his/her intention to attend an event. **This act of notification is a professional courtesy and does not imply that permission is being sought**. All members must respect the spirit and intent of this guideline.

Much of my job is behind the scenes dealing with confidential information, and to be honest, helping teachers who need my assistance is rewarding beyond measure. The reason I got into Association work was to work on behalf of teachers. So, please call or email if you have any concerns – I'd love to help. Also, if you'd like me to come to a staff meeting or for coffee or for treats, just ask and I'll be there. Some of my best days are when I can visit a school.

Finally, I hope that everyone had a wonderful break and enjoyed this special time with family and friends. I wish each of you the very best in the year to come. Hopefully your resolutions will only grow stronger as the days lengthen.

*Madeline McKenzie*



# Who Are You Listening To?

**Frank Restall Vice-President**

Three months ago, an article in the *Rielity Check* encouraged the Provincial Executive (PX) to extend the contract of the Society's Assistant General Secretary (AGS), Diane Beresford. The idea of a contract extension originated last May at the meeting of the Provincial Council where the nearly 300 delegates in attendance provided a prolonged standing ovation to the suggestion that PX consider extending Diane's contract. Unfortunately, at their meeting of September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, PX chose to overlook the show of support by the 300 delegates and passed a motion to advertise for the position of AGS.

As reported in the last *Rielity Check*, when the PX decision to advertise the AGS position was shared with Society members at the October 24<sup>th</sup> Presidents' Council meeting, many presidents from around the province were displeased. A motion from Presidents' Council to have PX reconsider their decision was soon passed by an approximate 2 to 1 margin. Since one of the rights of the Association President is to "Be the spokesperson for the association" it was obvious that for the second time in less than half a year, members were clear in their support of a contract extension for the AGS.

Unfortunately, the wishes of the membership were overlooked once again. The following was extracted from the minutes of the Provincial Executive meeting of November 12 and 13, 2009

## Motion from Presidents' Council

**The Provincial Executive discussed the motion for reconsideration of the Assistant General Secretary search for January 2010 as passed by Presidents' Council. No change was made and the Executive proceeded with the process to begin the search.**

Many members must now be wondering "If not the membership of the Society, who are you listening to?"



The appointment of Diane Beresford as a Staff Officer of the Society was announced in early December, 2009.

The appointment of Kirsten Andersson as MTS Assistant General Secretary was announced on January, 4, 2010.

Best wishes to Diane and Kirsten as they begin their new positions.



## Call for Nominations for the 2010-2011 LRTA Executive



The Executive Nominations Chair is calling for nominations to the Louis Riel Teachers' Association Executive for 2010-2011. Nominations will be accepted beginning March 1, 2010. Nomination papers must be accompanied by the signatures of two members and forwarded to Barry Wittevrongel at the LRTA Office at École Varennes.

**What is the LRTA?** The Louis Riel Teachers' Association represents all teachers, substitutes and clinicians in the Louis Riel School Division. The LRTA actively supports the well being of its members through various committees such as Collective Bargaining, Professional Development, Social and Public Relations.

**Who can be an Executive member?** Any member who indicates their willingness to run for election to the Executive (when the call for nominations goes out) can be elected. Candidates may be asked to speak at the Annual General Assembly on April 21<sup>st</sup>. when the election takes place. The Executive for 2010-2011 assumes office on August 1, 2010.

**What will I do if elected?** All Executive members attend monthly Executive and Council meetings. A one day planning workshop is held in October. All Executive members must familiarize themselves with current issues and be willing to serve on committees. Some Executive positions require less of a time commitment than others and may be ideal entry points.

**What is the time commitment for an Executive member?** Executive and Council meet monthly. Meetings last from one to two hours and supper is served. Committees meet according to their mandate and therefore the number of meetings varies from committee to committee.

**What do I get out of it?** Rewards are both extrinsic and intrinsic. Members of the Executive are reimbursed for dependent care, and the opportunities for Professional Development and networking are many. Also members of the Executive play a pivotal role in achieving improved working conditions for their colleagues and they gain an insider's view of the political arena. Executive members know they have helped all of their colleagues by serving their Professional Association.

**And there is more!** You will get to work with a group of dedicated, supportive and fun loving people who will soon become trusted friends.





## SOS Sign Our Subs!



The Louis Riel Teachers' Association has designated February 2010 as "Sign Our Subs" month.

For many years the Louis Riel Teachers' Association (LRTA) and the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) had taken the position that the Association should represent substitute teachers. Finally, in 2006, this was achieved when legislation was changed so that the LRTA was able to negotiate several clauses into the Collective Agreement that benefited substitute teachers.

However, arbitrators have requested evidence that substitutes **want** to be members of Teacher Associations. Therefore the Manitoba Labour Board requires that all associations that wish to continue bargaining on behalf of substitutes to improve their working conditions, sign up these members. A minimum of 60% of all substitutes must sign cards to obtain certification by the Board. Once all substitutes are signed, this evidence will be presented to the Labour Board for certification.

Membership in the LRTA affords substitute teachers inclusion in collective bargaining, access to legal services if needed, as well as services of the local Association and staff officers of MTS.

Therefore, the LRTA has designated February **SOS** (Sign Our Subs) month. When you go to a school, please contact the LRTA Council Rep in the school. S/he will have the card that you must sign. You will need to know your certificate number and your classification for salary purposes when you sign the card. If you are a part time teacher who substitutes in the schools, you, too, must sign a card.

You can also come into the LRTA office at École Varennes and sign a card if you prefer. Please call 929 5782 before you come to ensure someone is there.



**If you are a LRTA substitute member, sign a card in February!**

### Computer Access for Substitute Teachers

We get many calls from substitute teachers regarding computer access when they are in the schools. If the assignment left for the substitute includes accompanying a class to the computer lab, the substitute must ask the principal of the school for the passwords needed to access the system. They are available in the school's office for this purpose.



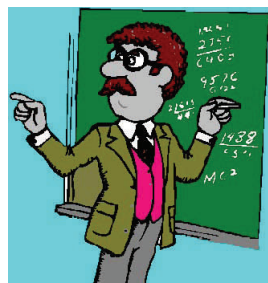
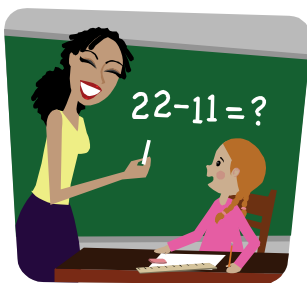
## Substitute Teachers, Our Professional Colleagues

Within our Collective Agreement substitutes have been guaranteed many working conditions achieved through collective bargaining. On top of these conditions, there has been a clear message from the Manitoba Labour Board that substitute teachers should be considered full members of teacher unions and should be shown the same consideration as any other teacher under contract.

What does this mean? It means that under the Code of Professional Practice, substitutes must be treated equally. If issues or concerns arise on the job, they must be shared directly with the substitute teacher first, before one proceeds to a school administrator. So, once again, concerns about the work of a substitute teacher must be discussed directly and privately with the substitute teacher. Concerns that are not resolved between the parties should only then be taken to the school administrator.

In terms of supervision and evaluation, substitute teachers must receive the same considerations that all other teachers receive for a performance review. Employers, not classroom teachers, are responsible for this. Therefore anecdotal evaluations of substitute teachers by other teachers are not legal and engaging in such behaviour is a direct violation of the Code of Professional Practice and the law.

Discussions about the quality of substitute teaching staff should NOT be made by teaching colleagues. If a teacher is “on the sub list”, that teacher is qualified to teach your class in your absence. If there are considerations about the substitute teacher, it is the employer’s responsibility to deal with the problem – not yours. Please remember as you book substitute teachers, they are your colleagues and like you, they earn their living by teaching.



## Birth Announcements



### St. George School

Brent & Allison Atkins welcomed their second son, Luke on Dec. 5/09.

### Clinic Services Unit

Lyla Solomon, with her husband Shane Solomon, has given birth to a son, Koen Zachary Solomon, born January 4, 2010 weighing 5 lbs 3 oz.

**Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary Application  
for courses taken between January 2009-December 2009  
by Robert Gaudes VP Professional Development**

The Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary Committee is accepting applications for bursaries from teachers and administrators to pursue studies related to public school education.

**The Bursary is available to:**

Educators who are *currently* employed in the Louis Riel School Division,  
Educators who are *currently* on leave from the Louis Riel School Division.  
And Educators who have requested a leave from the Louis Riel School Division for educational purposes and who will be *returning to the division*.

**Bursary Criteria:**

- ◆ Tuition at registered universities or colleges (not including such things as parking, dental or medical insurance, or cost of books and supplies) will be considered.
- ◆ Payment is made directly to the individual,
  - After completion of the course(s), and only
  - After funding is approved by the Bursary Committee upon submission of all required information.
  - Bursary applications will not be accepted in two consecutive years. (e.g. 2008 applicants may apply again in 2010)
  - Maximum eligible tuition: \$1500.00

**Applications must include:**

Proof of course completion – Academic Transcript  
Proof that the course(s) fee(s) have been paid – T2202A Certificate

**Application form can be found at [www.lrta.ca](http://www.lrta.ca) under 'Bursaries'.**

**Deadline for submission: Friday, April 23, 2010.**

**Send completed form and all information to:**

Louis Riel Teachers' Association  
Attn. Vice President of Professional Development  
L.R.T.A. Office, 22 Varennes Ave  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2M 0N1



**Process:**

- ◆ Applicants will receive their letter of confirmation from the Bursary Committee. It will indicate the amount of bursary awarded by the committee.
- ◆ A copy of the confirmation letter is sent to the Winnipeg Foundation.
- ◆ A cheque from the Winnipeg Foundation will be mailed directly to the recipient.
- ◆ In February, each applicant will be issued a tax receipt from the Winnipeg Foundation indicating the amount of their award.

## Frequently asked Questions Regarding Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and Confidentiality

### What is confidentiality?

Confidentiality is our obligation to not disclose willingly any information obtained in confidence. Teachers may give information only to authorized personnel or agencies directly concerned with the student's welfare. In terms of letters of reference, it is good practice to address letters to the students themselves and they may then share the letter with potential employers at their discretion. Make sure that you check with your principal or supervisor before releasing any information that may be considered of a confidential nature. Get permission to release information in writing/email.

### What does our MTS Code of Professional Conduct say?

Our MTS Code of Professional Conduct states: A teacher respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give the information only to authorized personnel or agencies directly concerned with the student's welfare.

### What information is confidential?

Confidential information may include:

- Disclosures of physical, mental or emotional abuse
- Family problems
- Substance abuse
- Criminal behaviour
- Sexual activity
- Suicidal thinking



### Raw notes recorded by a teacher – whose property are they?

Raw notes recorded by a teacher in any form are property of the Division. Parents, legal guardians, pupils of age of majority (18) and a court order can request to see these raw notes. Be careful that these notes are factual and not subjective. This information must be kept for 10 years. However if a summary is made from the raw notes, the raw notes can be shredded.

### What is the age of majority?

Once a student has reached the age of 18, parents no longer have the right to access information concerning their child's progress. The Division has a form on which the student gives consent, allowing parents to continue receiving this information at age of majority.

### How careful do I need to be when talking about students?

Very careful! Conversation must be done in private. The copy room, staffroom, hallway and any public place are not acceptable venues to discuss a student.

### How careful do I need to be when talking with parents about situations that also involve other students?

All discussions with parents should be limited to their child only. Names of other children should not be used.

### Are emails considered official written documents?

Yes. Be careful what you say as under FIPPA they are considered official written documents.

### How should I send group emails to parents?

You should blind cc parents' email addresses when emailing a group of parents. This way you will not be sharing other parents' email addresses.

### Should I have a FACEBOOK account?

Be very careful if you do. Never comment or discuss anything that pertains to your employer, classroom, job or peers.



## Acting Sustainably, Living Peacefully A new educational resource

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) has officially launched a new resource to support teachers. *Acting Sustainably, Living Peacefully* develops the link between peace and the environment, two key concepts in citizenship education.

According to CTF President Mary-Lou Donnelly, "Teachers will have an innovative tool to engage students in a discussion on crucial issues for the future of our planet." *Acting Sustainably, Living Peacefully* is actually one of the first initiatives that bridges the gap between these two interrelated elements.

The first part of this document proposes guidelines on understanding the link between peace and the environment that will show that the absence of peace is intricately intertwined with detrimental effects on the environment. The environment can also be a source of conflicts and challenge peace and stability.

"Students in our schools are already concerned about environmental issues. Conflicts throughout the world, which are obviously less present in their everyday lives in Canada, also threaten however the future of humanity. Youth need to be aware now of the challenges the next decades will bring and this is what *Acting Sustainably, Living Peacefully* is all about," adds Ms. Donnelly.

This document includes activities that explore solutions both at the international and regional levels to achieve harmony and balance between peace and the environment.

*Acting Sustainably, Living Peacefully* was launched on December 4 in Fredericton as part of a symposium on the environment organized by the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick (AEFNB).

### Manitoba Teachers' Society Workshops for 2009-2010

#### **The 3Rs of a Successful School Counselling Program - Part I**

February 18-19, 2010

School Counsellors' Certificate

#### **The Seven Sacred Teachings: Aboriginal Ways of Knowing - Part II**

March 4-5, 2010

Administrators' Certificate - Personnel

#### **Strategies for Exceptional Teachers**

March 19, 2010

#### **Making it Work! Services for English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students in Manitoba Schools - Part II**

April 29-30, 2010

Administrators' Certificate - Instruction and Special Education Certificate





## Canada Earns an ‘A’ Grade for Results in Education and Skills



Ottawa, January 6 —Canada earns top marks for its Education and Skills performance, according to the Conference Board’s How Canada Performs comparison with 16 other developed countries.

The updated Education and Skills rankings, published today, give Canada an “A” grade, an improvement from last year’s “B” result. Canada remains second to Finland in overall Education and Skills outcomes, but closed the gap with the leader by improving substantially on two key indicators:

Between 2006 and 2007, the proportion of Canada’s working-age population that graduated from high-school increased by a full percentage point (from 85.6 per cent to 86.6 per cent). The top performer on this indicator, the United States, only increased its proportion by 0.1 percentage point (from 87.8 per cent to 87.9 per cent).

Canada’s proportion of graduates from science, math, computer science and engineering disciplines significantly improved. While it still earns only a ‘C’ grade on this indicator, it is an improvement from last year’s “D”.

“Compared to its peer countries, Canada is an exceptional performer in the classroom,” said Brenda Lafleur, Director, How Canada Performs. “Canada’s strength is in delivering a high-quality education to people between the ages of 5 and 25 with comparatively modest spending. Canada obtains “A” or “B” grades on 13 of the 15 Education and Skills indicators.”

However, some weaknesses remain in Canada’s results. Canada gets a “D” grade on the indicator measuring Ph.D. graduates, and its performance on this indicator has deteriorated significantly over time. The leading country on this indicator, Sweden, has three and a half times Canada’s Ph.D. graduation rate. Canada’s relatively poor ranking has implications for the country’s ability to improve innovation, productivity, and competitiveness.

In addition, Canada needs to focus on improving access to education and skills outside the traditional school system, in areas such as workplace training programs. Canada should also be concerned about its adult literacy rate, since an estimated 7 million adults (42 per cent of the adult population) have a low level of literacy. Conference Board research indicates that people with low literacy skills are more likely to do poorly during economic downturns and may not be well-prepared to adjust to a changing labour market.

How Canada Performs: A Report Card on Canada is the Conference Board’s annual benchmarking analysis, which the Board has conducted since 1996. The Conference Board assesses Canada’s performance against leading countries in the domains of Economy, Health, Society, Innovation, Environment, and Education and Skills.

**LRTA Pre-Retirement Information Seminar**  
**Wednesday, February 10, 2010**  
**4:30 PM**  
**Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre**



## Dates to Remember

February 10, 2010

March 12 - 14, 2010

March 19, 2010

March 19 - 21, 2010

April 21, 2010

April 29, 2010

May 26-29, 2010

June 17, 2010

Pre-Retirement Information Seminar

LRTA Ski Trip

"Rock On" Social

MTS Bonspiel hosted by LRTA

LRTA Annual General Assembly

LRTA Appreciation Dinner

MTS AGM

LRTA Retirement Reception



### The Fine Print

This trip is open to all MTS members and their guests. A \$50.00 non-refundable deposit is now being accepted. The Bus will be filled on a first-come basis. Full payment due by February 12th, 2010. Registration forms are available from your MTS rep. For more information or to receive a registration form, contact by email only - Brad Mechvedik - brad.mechvedik@lrad.net or Carla Allen carla.allen@lrad.net.

The Really Fine Print:  
No refunds will be given after February 12th, 2010. (ski/board rentals extra).  
Due to the instability of real costs and the U.S. dollar, the quoted prices may be subject to addition fees or surcharges.

# Super Hero's

8TH ANNUAL LOUIS RIEL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION SKI / SNOWBOARD TRIP

### Prices:

Quad - \$229

Triple - \$249

Double - \$299

### Price includes:

2 nights hotel at the Americinn

2 day lift ticket

2 deluxe continental breakfasts

Transportation

Pizza and beverages on bus

**Giants Ridge** Virginia, MN. March 12-14, 2010