



## President's Message

Marcela Cabezas



As teachers, we know the various feelings that come with each month of the school year. December carries with it its own unique energy. Feelings of joy and anticipation reign supreme as the countdown to the winter break commences. Practicing of songs can be heard in the halls as winter concert preparations hit a crescendo. Glitter, paint and glue cover desks and classroom floors as stage décor and bulletin board art production go into high gear. Classrooms become even more festively decorated as the celebrations of the season go front and centre in classroom activities and lesson plans. Spirit weeks and comical competitions in the gym take hold. All of this culminates in class parties with a plethora of snacks to share not to mention staff parties to celebrate the holidays and the end of the calendar year.

Vestiges of Decembers past can be found in our schools. Some of these elements are present while others are but a hope for next year. As a grade one teacher recently shared, "This year we have none of what we had in past Decembers. But at least we still have Christmas lights." Lights. And all that they represent.

The pandemic has cast a light on the many inequities that exist in our public education system and within our society. As we head toward a new year, we cannot afford to lose sight of that which still needs our attention to help bring about a more equitable and just society and education system.

The pandemic has also cast a light upon who we are as individuals and our relationship with each other. The pandemic has taught valuable lessons about the importance of nurturing resilience in ourselves by learning to prioritize our wellness and wellbeing, something that does not come naturally to many teachers. Some have learned power in the word "no"

while others learned to only say "yes" to that which brings them joy and fulfillment. Some have discovered that their "teacher voice" can exist well beyond the limits of their classroom walls. They discovered how to use their voice to highlight the challenges facing teachers working in a pandemic as together our voices are stronger. Above all, many of us learned to place greater value in prioritizing human connection both personal and collegial.

There is a lot we lost in the darkness that was 2020, but there is still light. Light which is the hope for brighter and better days to come.

Hope for the return of the day-to-day moments we once took for granted: casual multidirectional strolls through grocery store aisles; visits between children and grandparents where the only risk is grandma spoiling them; taking your students on field trips be they in the community or across the globe; chats with colleagues in the staff room; and PD days with teachers from your entire family of schools.

These are but a few things that come to my mind. I am certain together we could make a better and more robust wish list.

As December 2020 draws to a close, I invite you to engage in a gratitude exercise. Please pause to take stock of what we still have. Light a candle of hope in your heart for what shall return and a hope for what we might become in a more united and caring world.

In closing, I wish you all good health and happiness in 2021 and a restful and very well-deserved winter break.

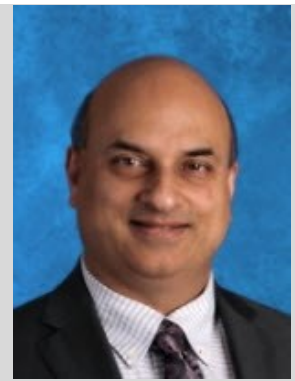
Happy Holidays,

Marcela



# Le coin des

par Sharad Srivastava



## Saviez-vous que les ÉFM offrent deux bourses?

Première bourse : Les ÉFM donnent annuellement un montant de 1 500 \$ (750\$ chacune) au programme de bourses de l'Université de Saint-Boniface afin d'offrir une bourse d'admission au programme de baccalauréat en éducation de l'Université de Saint-Boniface et un prix pour une diplômée ou un diplômé de ce même programme à la collation des grades universitaires.

Deuxième bourse : La bourse sera décernée à un finissant ou à une finissante du baccalauréat en éducation qui a poursuivi ses études en éducation, qui a l'intention d'enseigner en français au Manitoba dans le système scolaire public et qui a démontré un engagement dévoué lors de ses stages et qu'elle/il a démontré un haut niveau d'engagement envers la promotion de la langue et de la culture française.

## Prix de reconnaissance en enseignement

Le prix de reconnaissance en enseignement des ÉFM vise à reconnaître et honorer les enseignantes et les enseignants qui contribuent à la promotion de l'excellence en milieu scolaire; à témoigner de la qualité des enseignantes et enseignants qui oeuvrent dans les écoles et à en sensibiliser le public; à rehausser l'image de l'éducation en général et de l'enseignement en particulier; et à encourager un enseignement créatif, novateur, renouvelé et efficace. La personne ou le groupe récipiendaire recevra 1 000 \$ et sera honoré(e) lors de l'Assemblée générale annuelle des ÉFM le vendredi 30 avril 2021.

Pour des plus amples renseignements, veuillez visiter <https://efm-mts.org/>

Visitez les ÉFM à <https://efm-mts.org/> Suivez les ÉFM sur Facebook, Twitter, et Instagram



ÉFMdepartout



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TEACHERS' RETIREMENT  
ALLOWANCES FUND

## Annual Benefits Statements Now Available

Your 2020 annual benefits statement is now available through TRAF's [Online Services](#).

To view your statement, you must register for Online Services. Then, log in to review important information such as when you are eligible to apply for your pension, projected gross monthly pension estimates, your termination benefit and your pre-retirement survivor's benefit. Your annual benefits statement also confirms your beneficiary designation in the event you pass away before your pension begins.

Access your statement by logging in and selecting "My TRAF Documents."

To log in to your Online Services account, you will need your user ID and your password. Use the "Forgot User ID" or "Forgot Password" links or contact TRAF for assistance.

If you would like to view your annual benefits statement in French, go to "Account Profile," "Language Preference" and then select "Français."

Please contact TRAF if you have any questions.

## IN THIS ISSUE

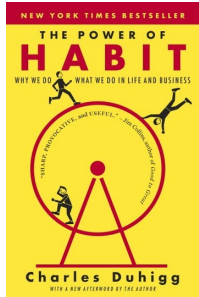
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# A Pandemic Holiday Reading List

Vice President Professional Development  
Jay McGurran



During these times where finding professional development has become somewhat difficult, I thought that I would make a few reading suggestions that may bring you some enlightenment and enjoyment.

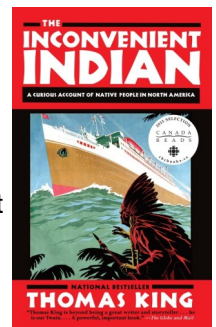


## ***The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* by Charles Duhigg**

If you are at all curious how the human brain develops and maintains habits, both positive and negative, take the time to read this book. It will give you the insight to question why we do the things we do and the ability to recognize how to change our habits over time. I was struck at how accessible and easily understandable the information was presented, throughout an excellent narrative. Well worth your time.

## ***The Inconvenient Indian* by Thomas King**

This book has definitely made the rounds on educational reading lists over the past few years. If it is still sitting on your bookshelf and you have not had momentum to get it started, I would suggest giving it another look. *The Inconvenient Indian* is a poignant account of the effects of colonialism from a truly Indigenous perspective, told with humour and honesty. An absolute must read for every Canadian.



## ***The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*\*k and Everything is F\*\*ked* by Mark Manson**

While the titles of these two books may evoke a nihilistic sense of being, the content is far from it. *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*\*k* and the follow up *Everything is F\*\*ked* do not encourage you to completely give up on everything and everyone. In actuality, these books reinforce the idea that caring is absolutely necessary, just be really thoughtful about what it is you are caring about. If you are a philosophy buff and a fan of foul language, take the time to give these two a read.

If you have any recommendations for professional or personal reading, send a quick synopsis to [pdlrta@shaw.ca](mailto:pdlrta@shaw.ca) and it may be highlighted in the next issue of the Rielity Check. All the best during the upcoming holiday season and be sure to take the time rest and recharge.

Jay McGurran

For any other PPDF related questions, please e-mail me at [pdlrta@shaw.ca](mailto:pdlrta@shaw.ca) or call me at the LRTA office at 204-929-5782.



# Labour bill **threatens** rights

STORY BY SAMANTHA TURENNE

**T**he provincial government has introduced two bills that will change the face of labour relations in Manitoba, for teachers and all union workers.

The first, Bill 16 – The Labour Relations Amendment Act, threatens the destruction of fairness, respect and equity in the labour relations process by stripping unions and workers of basic rights to organize and collective bargain.

For example, this bill lowers the threshold that would trigger a decertification vote, making it easier to decertify workplaces. It would also make it easier for employers to fire striking workers for misconduct.

The majority of clauses in Bill 16 would not affect Manitoba teachers or MTS, since teacher bargaining rights are part of the Public Schools Act.

One clause for concern however is this bill would give The Manitoba Labour Board greater power to remove members from a bargaining unit. MTS would oppose any action to alter the membership of The Society by removing principals, vice-principals, clinicians, etc. from the union.

This bill also imposes onerous financial rules for financial reporting and disclosure with which MTS would have to comply.

The second, Bill 45 – The Public Schools Amendment and MTS Amendment changes the way that teachers bargain. It moves teachers from the current system of local bargaining to a single-tier model of provincial bargaining.

The Society is supportive of provincial bargaining, and adopted the following bargaining principles into MTS policy at 2011 Provincial Council:

- Teachers remain governed under the Labour Relations Act;
- MTS will bargain directly with the Province of Manitoba (the funder);
- Bargaining must be fair and with an open scope;



**Two bills introduced in the Manitoba Legislature have the ability to change the face of labour relations in Manitoba, for teachers and all union workers.**

- The mechanisms for dispute resolution, whether strike or interest arbitration, must be without limitation;
- The best provisions from existing collective agreements should be the standard for the new contract; and
- The membership of MTS will remain, as it currently exists.

However, this bill incorporates the division's ability to pay into the arbitration process. This impedes the neutrality of an arbitration board. More troubling, this clause is reminiscent of legislation enacted in the 1990s, which undermined teacher collective bargaining.

A critical piece of a fair system of

bargaining is an open, unbiased, independent arbitration process. Since arbitration is the only dispute resolution process available to teachers, it is imperative that this process remains virtuous.

Bill 16 is modeled after previous legislation. Bill C-377 and C-525, two federal bills passed in 2014 by the Tories attacked unions and workers' rights, and were vehemently opposed by every union in the country. The Liberals repealed them in 2017.

At the time of writing Bills 16 and 45 are both at first reading.

# PANDEMIC FATIGUE SUPPORT GROUP

The Pandemic Fatigue Support Group provides a space to share challenges and hardships while exploring ways in which meaning, gratitude, and opportunity can be found.

Activities will focus on:

- Processing loss
- Searching for meaning
- Supporting one another
- Cultivating hope

## WHEN & WHERE

**Zoom, Wednesdays, 7:00 -8:30 PM CST.**

Sessions are on a drop-in basis and do not require continuous attendance.

## WHO

Sessions facilitated by:  
Trevor Lehmann (M.Ed, CCC),  
Curtis Lowton (M.Ed, CCC),  
and guest facilitators

## COST

By donation

## FOR QUESTIONS OR TO REGISTER

Email [info@sharedhope.ca](mailto:info@sharedhope.ca)





# Contest Time!!

Be sure to follow [@preslrta](#) on Twitter for the “My Attitude is Gratitude” contest!

5 days of giveaways January 11-15th.  
2 prizes available each day, one for you and another for your teacher/friend (must be LRTA members).

Tell us why you're grateful for your friend/colleague and tag them in a post using **#myattitudeisgratitude**

You and your friend will be entered into the daily random draw for a chance to win a prize pack for each of you (one entry per person, limited to one prize per person).

**My  
attitude  
is  
gratitude**

## REMINDER

If you have recently changed your name, please contact the LRTA office at 204-929-5782 or [seclrta@shaw.ca](mailto:seclrta@shaw.ca) and have your file updated.

## CONTACT US

**LRTA office**  
204-929-5782

**President**  
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[preslrta@shaw.ca](mailto:preslrta@shaw.ca)

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Jay McGurran  
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All matters will be dealt with in confidence.

Manitoba Teachers' Society  
Can request Staff Officer assistance 204-888-7961.

## Calendar of Events



### LRTA Calendar 2020-2021

#### September

Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup>

Opening Day  
LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting

#### October

Monday, 5<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup>  
Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup>

LRTA New Rep Orientation  
LRTA Executive Meeting  
Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar  
LRTA Council Meeting  
MTS PD Day

#### November

Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
Pension Sustainability Seminar  
LRTA Council Meeting

#### December

Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup>  
Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> through  
Friday, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting  
  
Winter Break

#### January

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting

#### February

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
Pre-Retirement Seminar  
LRTA Council Meeting

#### March

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup>  
Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> through  
Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting  
  
Spring Break

#### April

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup>  
Monday, 26<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting  
Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar  
LRTA Annual General Assembly  
MTS AGM Binder Meeting

#### May

Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> through  
Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Appreciation Dinner  
  
MTS AGM  
LRTA Council Meeting

#### June

Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Retirement Reception  
LRTA Council Meeting