

PAATA
Prince Albert and Area Teachers' Association
NEWSLETTER

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October 2007



... from the President's desk

It has certainly been an interesting month. With a tentative agreement to consider, SSL's getting used to their role in the STF, general meeting, new voting procedure, it has been a steep learning curve for a lot of people. Thank you to all the STF School Staff Liaisons who conducted the voting in each of our schools. Because a third party is counting the ballots, it will be several weeks before the results are known. You can check out InfoSource for results. The wait for results is something new for our organization. Please be patient.

In this round of bargaining the STF have worked very hard to make sure that we received information through every step of the bargaining process. InfoSource was that immediate release of information for all members. It's very interesting how much people will try and keep themselves in the loop; checking information out and asking questions of their reps, and, how many wait for the information to be spoon fed to them. As in all organizations, there are members in both categories. There are many ways to keep yourself informed and involved in the Association and the Federation. There are committees to sit on, boards to be advisors on, always a job that needs to be done. Interested volunteers are always welcome. It's easy to sit back and criticize the leaders of our profession. By making our views known as part of the process and not waiting to be part of the fall out, our participation could make the process much more interesting for us. There are several items in this newsletter that will be of interest to many of you; a Pre-retirement seminar is coming up, an opportunity to serve on the Portaplan and Health Plan Board of Trustees is available and a new scholarship opportunity has been made available for teachers interested in resource-based learning. Please have a read and check them out.

We have a section that I am calling Members Miscellaneous Messages (or 3 M). This space is available to be used by any member who has something to buy, trade or sell. We hope that we will be able to regularly show items in this section. It's all up to you. A lot of us have commitments and interests in the community that may or may not have something to do with our school/job connection. It seems that there is really no time when we aren't busy going from meeting to meeting, practice to practice trying to juggle our responsibilities, our family commitments and the thing we just plain enjoy doing. The days can become very hectic and overwhelming. Please know that your colleagues, your association and your friends are there to help and support you. Try taking the time to have conversations with each other about the things that are important to you, share ideas and help prop each other up. If we can't count on each other, who can we turn to when we need a helping hand.

- *Debbie McPherson*



STF Forum on Accountability

We are still looking for 2 people to represent us at this forum. Please contact Debbie if interested. (764-0299)

SASK. RIVERS SCHOOLS

Please complete your teacher surveys and hand them in to your LINC rep by **October 31st.**

Correction & Apologies

In the list of executive there were 2 errors which need to be corrected. Aline Cederwall, Prince Albert Catholic School Division Chair was misspelled and Dan Poirier and Andrea Gareau's names were not included in the list of councilors. My sincerest apologies.

INDUCTION GATHERING

Please join us on October 26, 7:00 p.m. at Holy Cross School for our Induction of new teachers. There will be a \$2.00 admission charge and a cash bar. Hors D'oeuvres will be served. Door prizes will be drawn. Dress is Casual.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE

Wray Wylie Learning Resource Centre Scholarships

AN IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY!

The generosity and vision of the late Wray Wylie have provided teachers with annual opportunity to extend their professional expertise in the area of learning resource centres and resource-based learning.

Scholarships will be awarded each year to Sask teachers who wish to study the management of learning resource centres in schools. Teachers enrolled or enrolling in a program of studies in this area may apply for scholarships of \$4,000 or \$1,000 depending on whether they will be full-time or part-time students in the coming year. Applications have been sent to every school and major educational organizations in Saskatchewan. They can also be downloaded from the STF website at www.stf.sk.ca. **The deadline for applications is December 1st.**

Your school rep should have information regarding the application procedure or call the PAATA office.

STF Portaplan and Members Health Plan Board of Trustees

The STF is inviting applications for a vacant position on the board responsible for the oversight of Portaplan and STF Members Health Plan. The term of appointment is for three years. All appointments are served on a volunteer basis, with reimbursement for travel and sustenance to attend board meetings and board related educational opportunities, according to STF and board policies.

Board members play a vital role in the trusteeship of the benefit Plans. The board has the principle responsibility for fulfillment of the Plan's mission and the legal accountability for its operations. This means that as a group the board is responsible for forming the strategic plan to accomplish the mission, overseeing and evaluating the Plan's success, ensuring financial solvency of Portaplan and STF Members Health Plan and representing and speaking for the interest of Plan members.

The successful candidate will be a participant in the STF Members Health Plan at the time of appointment, have a demonstrable record of leadership, teamwork and lifelong learning; demonstrate outstanding communication and interpersonal skills; possess integrity and a strong sense of ethics; and have the time, interest and willingness to serve.

Applications must be received by the General Secretary no later than October 31, 2007 at 5 p.m. Letters marked "Application" should include applicant's educational qualifications, related experience and Federation involvement and interest.

For more information about the governance of the STF fiduciary plans visit www.stf.sk.ca

Direct applications to: Lyle Vinish, General Secretary
Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
2317 Arlington Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7J 2H8

Tom's Tall Tales

In 1977 my good friend and fellow teacher Tom Ripko was doing some home renovations when a brick fell from the second floor of his home, striking him directly on the head. The result was a 30 year coma. Miraculously, Tom abruptly awoke from his coma when the Riders recently climbed into first place. Upon awakening, Tom had many questions about the present state of teaching and the teaching profession in Saskatchewan. Here are some of his queries and the responses to them.

Tom: Is it true that Saskatchewan teachers are on two different pension plans?

Answer: Yes. Teachers who began teaching in Saskatchewan before June 30, 1980 are members of the Teacher's Superannuation Plan (TSP). Teachers who began teaching in Saskatchewan after June 30, 1980 are members of the Saskatchewan Teachers Retirement Plan (STRP).

Note: A few teachers voluntarily transferred from the TSP to the STRP.

Tom: How did this ever happen?

Answer: The TSP is a defined benefits (DB) plan. DB plans are excellent for the employee but extremely expensive for the employer. Realizing this, our provincial government in the late 1970's forced an end to DB plans for most government sector groups, including teachers. This resulted in a defined contribution (DC) plan, which later evolved into the present day STRP.

Tom: But aren't both the TSP and the STRP "defined benefits" plans?

Answer: The STRP is a negotiated cost defined benefits plan (NCDB). That is, pensions are indeed paid out according to a formula but the formula may have to be revised in a downward direction if there are insufficient funds in the plan to pay the intended benefit. In the STRP the provincial government has no obligation whatsoever to cover any shortfall in pension benefits. Teachers solely are responsible for maintaining a balance between funds available and benefits.

In contrast, in the TSP the provincial government has the legal obligation to continue paying pension benefits at a guaranteed rate for as long as any member or eligible dependent is entitled to them. Even when the TSP pension fund is fully depleted (and it will soon be) the government will have to come up with revenue from other sources to continue paying TSP benefits. This is the so-called "unfunded liability" which we so often hear about and current projections place it at approximately \$3.2 billion.

Tom: Wow! How else do the two plans differ?

Answer: There are two outstanding differences between the TSP and the STRP. The first major difference is . . .

[Follow Tom's continuing journey in next month's newsletter.]

The information and opinions in this article are strictly those of the author, Randy Krammer, and do not necessarily represent the positions of the STF or the STRP.

3M members
miscellaneous
messages

For Sale

A set of 4 winter tires "Michelin Winter X". Bought new on rims Nov. 2006 (like new). My new car uses 16" tires and these tires are 15". Only have 6000 km on tires. \$550 OBO.
Please phone 764-9141

**Definitely Dancing
Social Dancing Class**

Jive, Latin American, Ballroom, Old Time,
Triple Time Swing, Waltz, Foxtrot.
Sunday Evenings: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
St. John Community School
1453-7th Street East
October 14 to December 2
Register on first night of classes.
Singles welcome. Beginners welcome.
Call: 922-0152 (evenings) for more info.

Pre-Retirement Seminar

Tuesday,
November 20, 2007

7:00 p.m.

Prince Albert
Carlton Comprehensive
High School
Lecture Theatre
Second Floor

**Deadline for
Registration:
October 23, 2007**

We cannot guarantee your personal estimate if registration is received after October 23.



REGISTRATION

Surname _____

Given Names _____

Teaching Cert. No. _____

Social Ins. No. _____

Pension Plan:

- Saskatchewan Teachers Superannuation Plan (TSP)
 Saskatchewan Teachers Retirement Plan (STRP)

Home Address _____

City/Town _____

Postal Code _____

Home Phone No. _____

School Phone No. _____

Partner's Name* _____

Partner's Birth Date* _____

**Please include these in order for pension plan administrators to calculate the upward adjustment option.*

Will your partner be attending? Yes No

To order your estimates, please indicate possible date(s) of retirement:

Mid-year date: _____, 2007 June 30, 2008 Other

Are you receiving an allowance?

Principal Assistant principal Vice-Principal

How many FTEs? _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Return completed form to:

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
Member Services
2317 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2H8
Fax: (306) 374-1122

As a courtesy to colleagues who may have environmental sensitivities, we would ask all participants to assist the Federation in creating a scent-free environment for this meeting.