

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

T H E

# bulletin

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Happy  
Holidays



# THE bulletin

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## Up Front from the President

When you talk about the NLTA, do you talk about "the Association"? Or do you say "my Association" or "our Association"? Am I a "union boss", or "the president"? Or am I "your president"?

The language we use to talk about our Association is important to me. The NLTA is important to me. I need you to ask yourself, "Is your Association important to you?"

I've been concerned about our NLTA lately. I've been troubled by what I perceive as a lack of membership engagement for some time. Teachers responding to our request last spring for input into NLTA priorities identified membership engagement as an issue. I know that for many branches attendance at meetings and branch functions is down. Teachers at recent school rep seminars echoed similar concerns. They spoke of apathy, indifference, a lack of involvement, a lack of volunteers, poor attendance at branch meetings and activities. A lack of time – people are just too busy – was often cited as the main culprit.

I don't think we can afford not to be involved. Apathy and indifference are not options and will cost us.

We live in a society increasingly hostile towards unions, where governments and powerful business lobby groups push anti-union legislation. More than ever, your Association needs you, and we need each other to be more involved.

As for the issue of not enough time... consider this. A recent study found that Canadians spend approximately two hours per day online. This is time we've culled out from other activities in our busy lives. It's a question of what is valuable to us.

So, what is valuable to us? Access to sick leave? Protection against the employer arbitrarily extending our school day? The right to due process and to grieve unfair treatment? Access to legal assistance (at no cost) if we face charges related to the performance of our duties? Voluntary (not mandatory) participation in extra-curricular activities and school based committees? A pay scale that reflects our level of education and years of service? All of these rights and more are enshrined in our collective agreement which was negoti-

ated on our behalf by our Association.

If you had to negotiate your contract on your own, would you be able to do better? The fact is if you taught in a private school your salary would be considerably less. Your pension would not be a defined benefit plan and your health plan benefits would offer fewer options when it comes to prescription medicines.

This is why the NLTA must be important in our lives.

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying our Association is perfect; I know our contract has room for improvement. I have heard the frustration that teachers have voiced about our contract and our Association. However, any contract is a living, evolving document shaped by legal interpretations, arbitrations and, most of all, by us. Our input determines what is included and what is not. It is our contract. It belongs to us.

Two important issues are before us this year – our contract and our pension plan. We are in the process of negotiating a new contract, and we are participating in discussions with government regarding the future of our pension plan. We (you) cannot afford to depend on a colleague to tell us what and how to decide.

We must find time to be involved, to attend the meetings and to make sure our voices are heard.

It's important for each of us to be involved to protect what we have and to build on our collective agreement for ourselves and our colleagues. Whatever is negotiated will impact the rest of our teaching career and personal life. If there is a year when we all need to be engaged, this is it.

We can start by getting a copy of our contract and reading it.



Jim



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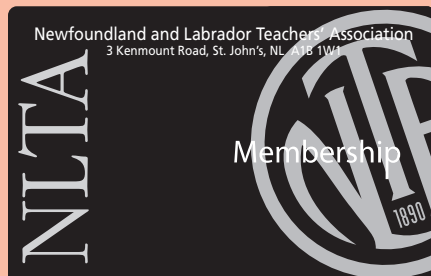
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## NLTA Membership Cards

If you have not yet received your NLTA membership card, please visit the NLTA website at [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca), click on the membership card icon and follow the instructions. Cards will be mailed to the home address we have on file for you. If you have had a recent address change, please update your current address.



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**Note:** You may need your NLTA membership card to access discounts from the NLTA Teacher Discount List which can be found on the NLTA members-only website at [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca).

## CONTENTS

### Features

- 10 Benefits & Economic Services**  
*Retirement Years:  
Changes to Teachers' Pension Plan  
by Perry Downey*
- 13 Personal Property at School**  
*by Stefanie Tuff*
- 16 School Closure and Salary: When are Substitute Teachers Entitled to be Paid?**  
*by Miriam Sheppard*
- 18 Teacher and School Responsibilities When Student Assistants Are Absent**  
*by Steve Brooks*
- 19 Ceremony of Induction**  
*Welcome to the Teaching Profession!  
Welcome to the NLTA!  
by Beverley Park*
- 20 Living Well**  
*Seasonal Affective Disorder:  
A Light Changing Experience  
by Gail Carroll*
- 22 Canadian Teachers' Federation**  
*A Look at a Global Campaign  
Through a Canadian Lens  
by Dianne Woloschuk*
- 24 Health Matters**  
*Canadian Cancer Society-NL:  
Province Wide Tan-Free Grad Challenge  
by Darrell Yetman*
- 26 Media Awareness**  
*Preparing Youth to Deal  
with Hate on the Internet  
by Matthew Johnson*

### Departments

<i>Up Front from the President</i>	2
<i>On Location News</i>	4
<i>In Memoriam</i>	9
<i>Calendar</i>	back cover



PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

# NEWS

## SOUTH EAST BIGHT

### Rooted in Education at St. Anne's School

Students at St. Anne's School in South East Bight participated in many Education Week activities this past October. Students took part in a community Terry Fox Run, created a school family tree and a community name tree, planted trees and explored nature, and visited the Fire Hall.

The students also invited parents and grandparents for a Kitchen Party to talk about education and life in the past. This included traditional tea buns, sweet bread, Purity Syrup and a cup of tea. The evening was completed with an outdoor fire and marshmallow roast with plenty of fireworks.

Michelle Rowsell, a teacher at St. Anne's School, says the students and community of South East Bight raised an awareness of the importance of knowing their roots in a community and among family members. "This interaction enhanced their learning experience and allowed students to further understand the importance of being *Rooted in Education, Growing for the Future.*"



Students at St. Anne's School enjoy Education Week activities.

## MARY'S HARBOUR

### St. Mary's All-Grade share the true meaning of Thanksgiving

For the past nine years students and staff of St. Mary's All-Grade in Mary's Harbour have been sharing their thanks for all they have been blessed with. Each year, groceries and dry goods are brought to school during the last couple of weeks before Thanksgiving break and during the school's Thanksgiving assembly the groceries are blessed. Representatives from Harbourview Manor, an assisted living facility, dropped by to accept the gracious donation from the school. Over the past nine years well over 100 boxes of groceries have been donated to Harbourview Manor.



Kindergarteners Nolan Fifield and Kayleigh Pye chat with Aunt Jessie Clark, a resident at Harbourview Manor.

St. Mary's All-Grade wishes to extend a warm thank you to all students and parents who contributed to this initiative. This year the Grade K-2 students went along to the Manor to bring Thanksgiving wishes to the residents, sing some songs, and spend some time mingling. It was very well received and the students really enjoyed the visit.

## EASTPORT

## Students produce paintings for “Beaches of Eastport Peninsula” art exhibition

As a teacher of Grades 4, 5 and 6 Art last year, Gladys Street received a Learning Partners grant for a project that involved students from K-12 at Holy Cross School in Eastport. Gladys partnered with Alanna Penney, Art teacher at Macdonald Drive Junior High in St John's, for a project called “Beaches of Eastport Peninsula.” This endeavor involved preparing an art exhibition to be displayed at the Annex of the Beaches Heritage Centre in Eastport from June 19 to September 13, 2013 with the focal point of the exhibit being five large paintings (3'x5' acrylic on canvas) of local beaches. Working collaboratively, each of the following groups produced one painting: Grades K-3, Grades 4-5, Grade 6, Grades 7-8, and Grade 9.

To begin preparation, students from K-9 took excursions to various beaches of the peninsula with sketchpads in hand. “They did a great job producing drawings for this part of the exhibit,” commented Ms. Street.

Ms. Penney, a highly skilled Art teacher, spent three days at Holy Cross School. She gave tutorials to K-12 students focusing on how to paint the various aspects of a beach scene (sky, rocks, sand, water, etc.). Students also learned many new techniques such as how to use palette knives to highlight their work. Andrew Poole and his Residential Construction 2201 students assembled five stretchers which were readied for K-9 students to paint.

The “Beaches of Eastport Peninsula” exhibition opened with a reception on June 17. Parents and students were treated to a slide show demonstrating the process of what had been done to prepare the exhibition. In addition to the five large paintings of the beaches, the display included sketches of the beaches, paintings of houses



Holy Cross students work on their paintings for the “Beaches of Eastport Peninsula” exhibit.

and sheds on rock by Grade 9 students, and photographs of the beaches by Art and Design 3200 students.

“Over the summer our Guest Book was signed by visitors from Canada, the USA, Europe and Asia with many compliments to students on the caliber of their work,” said Ms. Street. The five paintings now become part of the permanent art collection of the Beaches Heritage Centre and are available for public viewing in the main foyer.

“For me personally, this project was both a challenging and satisfying experience,” concluded Ms. Street. “I learned many new art techniques which I will use in teaching Art this year to Grades 5 and 6. This project gave all teachers involved an opportunity to encourage and enhance student participation in Visual and Cultural Arts.”



Holy Cross students receive some instruction as they prepare to work on their paintings for the “Beaches of Eastport Peninsula” art exhibition.

## ST. JOHN'S

## Mindfulness at School initiative at Gonzaga High School

Beginning in February 2014, Gonzaga High School in St. John's will introduce two groups of students to Mindfulness – “the capacity to be alert and open to life experience as it occurs in a non-reactive, resilient, and compassionate way” (Susan Kaiser Greenland, mindfulness educator and author). Students in a Healthy Living class and an after-school program will learn to develop a range of mindfulness skills. This includes bringing their attention to the present, relating to thoughts non-judgmentally, and using mindfulness tools to deal with stress and difficult emotions.

The Mindfulness at School program is supported by the United Way of Newfoundland & Labrador.

## CHARLOTTETOWN

## CONTACT – a unique learning experience

In August 2013 the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation hosted nearly 100 teachers from Atlantic Canada for CONTACT – the Conference on New Techniques and Classroom Teaching. As the name suggests, it is an opportunity for teachers to network and make contact with their colleagues, to share ideas and stories from the field. Given that the session takes place in August it is also one of the final chances to enjoy summer as you cast your mind to the school year ahead.

The NLTA was well represented by President, James Dinn, along with two teacher presenters, Nicole Kelly and Debbie Turner and delegates from across the island and Labrador. Staff members Beverley Park and George Tucker are part of the organizing group and are also there as participants and support.

CONTACT 2014 will be hosted by the NLTA and held at the Sir Wilfred Grenfell Campus of Memorial University in Corner Brook. Mark your calendar for August 5-8 and watch for the applications in early spring. Every teacher – whether primary, elementary, intermediate or high school, from a large urban school or a small rural area, can enjoy and benefit from this unique learning experience.

We are looking forward to welcoming our colleagues and sharing our province and our profession. If you have questions about CONTACT, email Beverley Park at [bpark@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:bpark@nlta.nl.ca) or call 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 244.



NLTA delegates at CONTACT 2013 in Charlottetown, PEI.

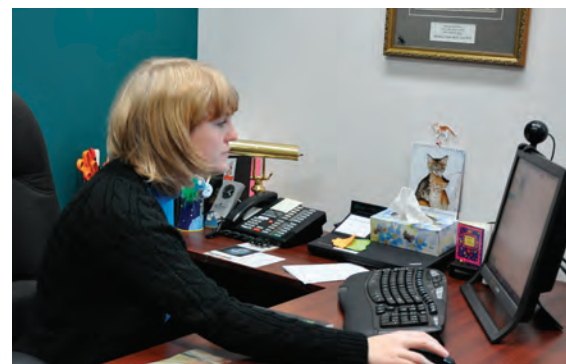
## ST. JOHN'S/UGANDA

## Worlds apart – joined by a common interest... and SKYPE

While this is not an ad for SKYPE, it is an amazing technology which can bring young people who are both literally and figuratively worlds apart together to share their stories. That is what happened on Friday, October 11, the International Day of the Girl Child and the final day of NLTA's Education Week.

Caighlan Smith, a young author from Newfoundland and Labrador read from her new publication, *Hallow Hour*, and answered questions from a group of students in Bulera, Uganda. Despite the challenges of a 6 ½ hour time difference and technology which could fall victim to power shortages, the girls in Bulera were charmed by Caighlan and she was intrigued by them. There was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing to finally make it happen and it was clear that the context Caighlan was writing in was a complete unknown for the girls in Uganda who wanted to know how she was able to actually do it – to write a book, to make her dream a reality.

When faced with these questions, Caighlan commented that the huge "young adult fantasy" market has been developed, essentially, for the privileged western world. But its root is, basically, storytelling. And storytelling has a strong heritage in most world cultures. So, that is how she approached the reading.



Caighlan Smith in St. John's contacts girls in Bulera, Uganda via SKYPE.

From an office in St. John's to a community college in Bulera which hosted the students from a nearby school, the event unfolded, much to everyone's relief and the delight of the Uganda National Teachers Union, particularly Mr. Ayibo Benard, who spent countless hours and was relentless in finding ways to make it happen.





Girls in Uganda watch Caighlan Smith on screen as she reads from her novel.

If you are wondering how it all came about... Caighlan, when she was still in Grade 9 in a local junior high school, heard of a Canadian Teachers' Federation Project that the NLTA was a part of, to assist girls in Africa, specifically Uganda, gain access to schools. She took it upon herself to raise money for the project and to educate her peers on the privileges they take for granted which are pipedreams in other places in the world. Her interest never waned and she continued to raise money and to raise awareness in high school. When her own dream became a reality it was natural that she share it – not only with those in her immediate environment of family and friends, but also with girls in Uganda. Caighlan is now inspiring the very girls who first inspired her.



Girls outside Bulera Community College following their SKYPE call with Caighlan.

## NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

### Submissions sought for Heritage Places Poster Contest

The 2013-14 school year marks the 9th year of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador's (HFNL) Heritage Places Poster Contest.

In every community across Newfoundland and Labrador there are buildings, structures and lands

that hold historical significance. They represent our past and need to be protected for our future. HFNL encourages you to talk to your students about these special places in their community and ask what they mean to them.

The success of the Heritage Places Poster Contest is in no small part thanks to the efforts of teachers.

To enter the contest, students are asked to create a poster of a heritage place in their community and prepare a written statement explaining why it is important.

Prizes include a Nintendo 3DS (primary and elementary), Beats Solo Headphones (junior high and senior high), and a grand prize of an iPad Mini. The overall winner will be featured on the Foundation's 2014 Heritage Day Poster, to be unveiled on Monday, February 17, 2014.

Posters must be received by HFNL by **January 17, 2014**. Contest details and guidelines can be found on HFNL's website at [www.heritagefoundation.ca](http://www.heritagefoundation.ca).

## CANADA

### Submissions sought for My Voice – Our Rights project

My Voice – Our Rights is a national opportunity for students to write lyrics and poems about human rights. To help teachers support their students in this project, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) has developed K-12 lesson plans to introduce the concept of Rights and Articles of the UN Declaration, and to stimulate students' creativity in the writing of lyrics and poems.

Teachers are encouraged to have students submit music videos or spoken word videos. The videos will be showcased not only on Imagineaction's website, they will also grace the 2014 CTF's President's Forum on Equity and Social Justice, in Winnipeg next July, as teacher organizations, educators and human rights activists from across the country gather. These creative productions aim to celebrate the voice of youth and to highlight the pivotal role that education plays in the promotion of human rights.

CTF is looking to subsidize travel and expenses for five teachers, whose classrooms will submit My Voice-Our Rights videos.

Submit your students' final video production before **April 1, 2014**.

For further information visit the Imagineaction website at [www.imagine-action.ca/](http://www.imagine-action.ca/)

# **Caring and Sharing for the Janeway**

A project of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

February 14, 2014

## **Janeway Day 2014**

Every year, Janeway Day in the schools provides an opportunity for students and teachers to help other children. Since 1986 students and teachers have donated more than \$955,000 to the Janeway.

Here's how to participate in Janeway Day 2014:

Ask students and teachers to forego the equivalent of recess monies for one day. That's their donation to the Janeway.

All monies will be forwarded to the Janeway to help the children of Newfoundland and Labrador.





## Forum for Young Canadians

Forum for Young Canadians has been Canada's premier civics education program for students aged 15-19, for 37 years. Each year, Forum brings students to Ottawa for a week of intensive academic adventure, immersing them in the exciting world of national politics and public affairs. Through their participation, youth gain knowledge, skills and contacts to support their involvement in communities across the country. Through the years, this program has remained vital for the continuation of Canada's informed, active citizenship.

Participants in the program spend one week in Ottawa with 100 other young leaders from coast to coast to coast. Their classroom is Parliament Hill and their teachers are Ministers, Members of Parliament, Senators, senior public servants, members of the national media and business leaders.

Students learn about and visit many institutions during their stay including: The Parliament Buildings, The House of Commons, The Senate of Canada, The Library of Parliament, The Memorial Chamber, The Supreme Court of Canada and Rideau Hall. In addition, they learn about Immigration, Canada's role in the world, Elections, Budgets and Committees, through engaging simulations.

Through discussions with today's national leaders and decision-makers, as well as with their peers, students develop their critical thinking and active listening skills. Through simulations and role-playing, Forum participants enhance their leadership skills, team building and public speaking capabilities.

Since the Forum for Young Canadians is an intense program filled with hands-on learning activities, students develop self management, self analysis and project management skills. The objective is that by the end of the program, students have the right tools and capabilities to go back in their community, get engaged, and Be a Voice!

When leaving Forum, the participants have developed or enhanced knowledge and skills that bring their classroom learning to life! Forum offers between 3 to 4 sessions a year and the total cost of travel, accommodations and meals for the week-long experience is \$895. Students can fund raise for this and tax receipts will be provided to those providing financial support. Bursaries are also available to any student who is unable to meet the financial requirements.

Help the upcoming leaders you know to be a voice for our future. Introduce them to Forum! For more information email [forum@forum.ca](mailto:forum@forum.ca) or visit [www.forum.ca](http://www.forum.ca).

### DERM KING, 1949 – 2013

It is with profound sadness that we share with you Derm's passing on April 25, 2013. His five year battle with cancer was heart wrenching and yet inspirational in the way that he faced every day bravely with the utmost dignity.

Born in St. John's, the 'seventh son' of Edward and Eileen King and growing up on Goodview Street, Derm attended St. Patrick's Hall and Brother Rice High. He joined the Irish Christian Brothers in 1966 and studied with them at Iona College, New Rochelle, NY, MUN, and at the University of Guelph, ON where he received his BA (Education).

During his thirty-year teaching career, Derm taught at Roncalli Central High, Avondale and at St. Patrick's Hall, St. John's. Upon completion of his second degree, BA (Math), Derm taught at St. Francis of Assisi (Outer Cove), Immaculate Conception and Holy Family (Paradise), and Gonzaga High School (St. John's).

Derm was a dedicated and involved teacher, whom we are told "gave generously of his time", "made learning fun", and whose influence in the classroom, "lasted far beyond just one year". Derm's extra-curricular involvement included coaching, parent-teacher associations, school treasurer, faculty councils, athletic director, school dances, graduations, science fairs, and drama productions.

Upon retirement from Gonzaga in June 2001, Derm quickly found himself a second career and a second home with Kent Building Supplies where he worked in the Cut Shop. He was very generous with customers and staff alike. Derm worked on Kent sponsored projects with the Girl Guides, Scouts Canada, Vera Perlin and children's seminars. He was the happiest man in his work boots and sporting a tool belt and a cup of coffee!

Derm was a true sports enthusiast – played, coached and armchair viewed them all. His daughters fondly recall that their dad rarely missed any sports event they were involved in. Derm is best remembered for his wonderful smile and being so easy to get along with. He was an empathetic listener whose philosophy, "Do the best you can and can the rest", was practised in his own life and encouraged in the lives of others.

Derm was a loving and generous husband to his wife, Brenda (Beehan), the world's best dad to his daughters, Heather and Alyson, and just a truly remarkable man to everybody.

Derm, we'll love you forever. We'll miss you always.  
(Submitted by Brenda King)



Derm King



## *Retirement Years*

# Changes to Teachers' Pension Plan

by PERRY DOWNEY

When teachers begin to approach their last few years of teaching, they begin to ask questions and to focus attention on their plans and preparations for retirement. As many often say at this stage in their career, “there’s now a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel”. During that period of reflection, individuals begin to discuss their retirement plans with colleagues and begin to have reservations or hear myths about what they need to do in order to retire and what will happen to their benefits after they retire. As a result, several teachers begin contacting the Association to ask questions and to seek clarification and advice in order to dispel many of the myths that they have heard and to have sufficient information to make a personal, but informed decision.

During the last two years of teaching prior to becoming eligible to retire, all teachers in our province are provided an opportunity to attend a fall Pre-Retirement Seminar, sponsored by the NLTA, and receive the most current and up-to-date information regarding the Teachers’ Pension Plan (TPP), the NLTA Group Insurance Program, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Financial and Estate Planning, as well as many suggestions as to how best to prepare for “the golden years” of retirement. During the presentations on the Teachers’ Pension Plan and the Group Insurance Program, teachers are told what they must do in order to retire, the important dates to remember to have various forms, applications, and their resignation letter submitted to their school board, what they can expect will occur from the date they retire up to their 65th birthday, and what will happen to their TPP benefit and their group insurance coverage after they turn 65 years of age. Because most of the changes to pension and group insurance benefits will occur automatically, it is very important that you are aware of the changes and when they will occur in order to better prepare yourself and to make

informed decisions throughout your retirement years. The remainder of this article will focus specifically on what happens to a retired teacher’s pension plan at various stages of his/her retirement life.

### **At the time you retire**

From the day that you retire until you reach the age of 65, most of the benefits that you are entitled to receive from the Teachers’ Pension Plan (TPP) will remain constant. At the time you retire, the accrued value of your teaching service and university years (if applicable) is determined as a percentage and your pension is calculated based on that percentage of your best five year average salary. In addition, at the time you retire, an amount called a “bridge benefit” or an “integration offset factor” is calculated using a specific formula. The amount calculated will have an impact on your TPP when you reach the age of 65. (The bridge benefit and its application will be discussed in detail later.) Also, your income from the Provincial Government is switched from Teacher Payroll to Pension Payroll and if you qualify, i.e., have at least nine or more continuous years of service, you also received your severance pay (if you submitted your application to the Department of Finance, Teacher Payroll).

### **The pre-65 years of retirement...what to expect as a retired teacher**

All the benefits and changes to your TPP that occurred at the time of retirement remain constant during this period of retired living. However, as individuals approach their 60th birthday, many often contact the Association and ask, “When should I apply for my Canada Pension Plan benefit?”

### **Canada Pension Plan Benefit (CPP)**

As early as age 60, a retired teacher can elect to apply for and receive his/her CPP benefits. However, given that “normal retirement” under the CPP is age 65,



effective January 1, 2013, anyone electing to receive their CPP benefits prior to their 65th birthday will have their CPP benefit reduced by 0.54% per month for each month prior to their 65th birthday. If one elects to apply for CPP prior to turning 65, the reduced percentage of the CPP benefit will remain constant for life. For example, if you elect to apply for your CPP at age 60 (i.e., 60 months prior to your 65th birthday), then the value of your CPP will be reduced by 32.4% ( $0.54\% \times 60$  months). Thus, you will be entitled to receive 67.6% of the value of your CPP benefit that you would have received if you had waited until the month following your 65th birthday. The value of your CPP will remain constant at 67.6% for your lifetime, i.e., there is no re-adjustment of your CPP at 65. However, if you decided to wait until you were 65 years old, you would receive the entire value (100%) of your CPP benefit for your lifetime. Likewise, if you elected to wait until you're age 70 to apply for your CPP, effective January 1, 2013, you would have been entitled to receive an additional 38.4% ( $0.64\% \times 60$  months) or 138.4% of the value of your CPP at age 65.

Because many teachers often ask the question: "At what age should I apply for my CPP in order to maximize the total amount of CPP that I would receive during my lifetime?", we have consulted with Service Canada officials and can provide you with some of the facts. The simple answer to this question is: "if one can predict when one is going to die, then it is easy to provide an accurate answer". However, it's not that simple! For example, if two teachers who were the same age, with the same contribution history to CPP, were contemplating at what age they should apply to receive their CPP benefit, and one were to apply for the benefit at age 60 (understanding that the benefit of their CPP would be 67.6% of the amount at age 65) and the other decided to wait until they were 65 (understanding that the value of their CPP benefit would be 100%), it would take approximately 10.5 years for the 65 year old teacher to receive the equivalent amount in CPP benefits, when compared to the teacher who had elected to receive their CPP at age 60 years old, even though the 60 year old only received 67.6% of their CPP benefit. In other words, the total amount of CPP benefits received by these two teachers will be equal when the two teachers are approximately 76 years old. For the majority of teachers, and workers in general, they elect to receive their CPP at age 60 because many comment that they hope to enjoy the money more while they are younger and healthier.

The decision to apply for your Canada Pension Plan benefit is solely yours; however, there are fac-

tors such as one's health and financial situation that you should consider. Also, remember that because CPP benefits are based on each individual's contribution to the CPP during the period from age 18 to 60, non-contributory years or years in which you did not make maximum contributions to CPP can have an impact on the amount of CPP benefit that you are entitled to receive, regardless at what age you decide to apply for it. Because there are other factors that are considered by Service Canada when determining one's CPP benefit, I would suggest that you contact a Service Canada official at 1-800-277-9914 or 1-877-454-4051 in order to determine your own CPP benefit entitlement.

**It is important to note that the Federal Government introduced changes to the Canada Pension Plan legislation and benefits which impacted anyone who was not in receipt of CPP benefits on the date of the various changes. The legislative changes became effective on January 1, 2012, with several changes being implemented over the next couple of years.**

#### **At age 65 and beyond...what to expect as a retired teacher**

##### **1. The "Bridge Benefit" or the "Integration Offset Factor"**

Under the Teachers' Pension Plan (TPP), for all teachers who retire on or after September 1, 1998, all benefits in respect of pensionable service accrued under the TPP are integrated with the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) using an integration offset (reduction) factor of 0.6%. As a result, during the period from the date of retirement to age 65, a "bridge benefit" is paid from the TPP. Essentially, this means that in the month following your 65th birthday, your TPP benefit will be reduced by a specific amount that was calculated at the time you retired and will remain fixed for life.

The bridge benefit or integration reduction with CPP that will impact one's TPP at age 65 is calculated at the time of retirement as follows:

**Integration Reduction** = [Lesser of the 5-year average pensionable salary or the 3-year average of YMPE at retirement]  $\times$  [No. of years of pensionable service (max. 35 years) since March 31, 1967]  $\times$  [Integration reduction factor of 0.006]

(Note: YMPE refers to the "Yearly Maximum Pensionable Earnings" under the Canada Pension Plan.)

(cont'd. on page 12)

Using the June 2013 value for the 3-year average of YMPE, the calculation for a teacher retiring with 34 years of pensionable service (e.g. 30 worked years and 4 “university” years) would be as follows:

$$\text{Reduction} = \$49,183 \times 34 \times .006 = \$10,033$$

*(Note: This value is calculated at the time of the teacher's retirement under the TPP and remains constant for that teacher for life. It will not inflate between the date of retirement and age 65 or any time thereafter. This value will be deducted from the teacher's annual pension at age 65 on a go forward basis.)*

The following examples will serve to illustrate the effect of the CPP benefit and the integration offset factor on a teacher's level of pension income as of January 1, 2013, assuming that the individual made the maximum contributions to CPP during his/her work life and thus would be entitled to receive the maximum CPP benefit at age 65. The maximum annual CPP benefit at age 65 as of January 1, 2013 was \$12,150.

#### **Example 1: Teacher elects to receive his/her CPP benefit at age 60**

Because of the early election to receive the CPP benefit, the teacher would be entitled to 67.6% of his/her CPP benefit that would normally be payable at age 65. That maximum value at age 60, as of January 1, 2013 was \$8,213 annually (see calculation below). The value of one's CPP increases annually with the average of the “Industrial Aggregate” which is similar to the Consumer Price Index.

Maximum CPP benefit at age 60 (as of 2013) = \$8,213 (67.6% of \$12,150)

This teacher will receive their CPP benefit at age 60, and will continue to receive their teacher pension, until age 65 with no integration reduction applied, i.e., the teacher has a stacked pension for 5 years (TPP + 70% CPP). Therefore, the total CPP benefit (before tax) received over the five-year period from age 60 to 65, using the January 1, 2013 value and ignoring the indexing of CPP and the income tax deduction, is \$41,065 (\$8,213 x 5).

At age 65, the teacher's TPP benefit will be reduced by the integration reduction amount, as calculated above, i.e. integration is applied, and for this example, a reduction of \$10,033. For teachers who retired prior to June 2013, the reduction would be less; for those who retire after June 2013, the reduction will be more because the 3-year YMPE

average value increases on a monthly basis.

In summary, the pension income from the TPP and CPP at the various stages for the teacher who elects to receive his/her CPP at age 60 will be as follows:

Age of retirement to age 60	teacher pension (TPP)
Age 60 to age 65	[TPP] + [67.6% CPP (indexed)]
Age 65 onwards	[(TPP - integration offset (indexed)) + [67.6% CPP (indexed)] + [OAS (indexed)]

#### **Example 2: Teacher elects to wait until age 65 to receive his/ her CPP benefit**

Because the individual has elected to wait until age 65 to receive his/her CPP, they are entitled to receive the full value of the CPP benefit that has accrued. If s/he were entitled to receive the maximum benefit, then the maximum value as of January 1, 2013 would be \$12,150 annually. This value also increases annually with the average of the “Industrial Aggregate”.

At age 65, the TPP benefit is also impacted (reduced) by the integration reduction amount, as calculated above at \$10,033 per annum.

Therefore, in summary, the pension income for the teacher who elected to wait until 65 to receive his/her CPP would be as follows:

Age of retirement to age 65	teacher pension (TPP)
Age 65 onwards	[(TPP - integration offset (indexed)) + [100% CPP (indexed)] + [OAS (indexed)]

In addition to your CPP benefit, under the present federal pension arrangements, Old Age Security (OAS) benefits would also become payable at age 65 to most retired teachers. As of January 1, 2013, the maximum annual OAS benefit was \$6,599.

## **2. Indexing and the Teachers' Pension Plan**

As of September 1, 2002 a formal indexing program was introduced into the TPP for those pension plan members whose benefits are integrated with their CPP benefit at age 65. Unfortunately, many retired teachers are not aware of this benefit. As is discussed in greater detail below, teachers who retired on or after September 1, 1998 who have their TPP benefits integrated with CPP at age 65, will be entitled to



receive the indexing provision applied to their TPP, provided there are sufficient funds available to provide such a benefit.

*(Note: Anyone who retired prior to September 1, 1998 is not affected by integration, nor are they entitled to receive the indexing benefit. These individuals will continue to receive a stacked pension for life, i.e. they will receive both their TPP and CPP, with no reduction in their TPP at age 65.)*

For those who have retired since September 1, 1998, the indexer that each individual teacher is entitled to receive at age 65 is sixty percent (60%) of the annual change in the national Consumer Price Index (CPI), as published by Statistics Canada for the calendar year immediately preceding the anniversary date, to a maximum of 1.2%. The indexing value is applied to the pensions of all pensioners and survivors whose benefits are integrated with CPP and who have attained age 65, as of September 1, 2002. The

indexer is also applied on the anniversary date each year, i.e., on September 1st, if the CPI value is greater than 0%. For example, if the annual CPI is 2%, then the indexer will be 1.2%, however, if annual CPI is 4%, the indexer will only be 1.2% (maximum).

Given the many changes that will occur to a retiree's teacher pension plan benefits during their retirement life, and the changes that are currently being considered by the Federal Government regarding CPP benefits, it is important that you become familiar with the changes at the various age-triggered stages, as noted above. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the NLTA or Pension Division officials for clarification.

*Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.*

## Personal Property at School

by STEFANIE TUFF

What happens if a teacher's personal property is lost or damaged at school? From time to time, this question arises, and it is important for teachers to understand the employer's and their own responsibilities in this regard.

This issue is dealt with in Article 34 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 35 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement). Two types of personal property are identified – “personal effects which the teacher would reasonably have in his/her possession during the normal performance of his/her duty” and “tools, equipment, or other materials” which the teacher has received written permission from the School Board to use in the performance of teaching duties.

Personal effects include items such as clothing, footwear, eyeglasses, purses and briefcases, etc. – the usual things that teachers would be wearing or have with them at school on a regular basis. If, in the performance of his/her duty, a teacher suffers loss of or damage to any such personal effects, he/she may be entitled to monetary compensation, up to a maximum amount of \$325. The amount of compensation will depend upon proof of the value of the item(s) damaged or lost.

The second category of personal property covers items used by teachers in performing their duties. A teacher's own personal resources (books, displays, etc.), equipment, computer, camera, musical instru-

ment, etc. are not personal effects. In order to be protected by the employer from loss of or damage to such items, teachers need to have written authorization from their school board to use them in the course of their teaching duties before bringing the items into the school. Some personal home insurance policies may provide coverage for such items at school; however, this would depend on the particulars of each individual situation and teachers are advised to consult with their insurer and request written confirmation of coverage before taking personal belongings into the workplace.

Any incident of loss or damage to personal effects or other items must be reported in writing to the Director of the School Board (or his/her designate) within five working days of the discovery of the loss or damage. If this deadline is not met, a claim that would otherwise qualify for compensation could be denied. In addition, the School Board is not obliged to compensate a teacher for any loss of or damage to personal property that is caused by the teacher's own negligence.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

*Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.*



The second in a series of NLTA School Rep Seminars took place this past fall to again provide school reps with the information they need to carry out their important roles. Three seminars were held as follows: the Hotel North Two in Goose Bay on October 4 and 5, the Comfort Inn in St. John's on October 18 and 19, and Sinbad's Hotel and Suites in Gander on October 25 and 26. The following are some comments and images from this year's seminars.



Awesome weekend. Learned a lot and feel like I am going back to school as a better school representative. Thanks!



An extremely informative and thoroughly enjoyable seminar. Very thankful for having this opportunity. Would recommend this seminar continue.

This seminar was great for me. A chance for me to interact with Branch Presidents and School Reps in my area.



Very good seminar. Great weekend; definitely worthwhile to attend. Very informative.



So glad that this seminar is available. It was great to have an opportunity to meet other reps and members of my Branch.



Going back to school with new energy. Now the challenge is to motivate the rest of the staff at school. I will certainly try to get the staff more involved with the NLTA.





I enjoyed the experience learning with/from other colleagues. There are benefits to being a part of the “success” of the NLTA and how the “mother ship” navigates to help the membership.



Very dynamic. The working atmosphere of the head office of NLTA is delightful. You are doing a great job. Few adjustments with the communication process.

Good to be here again; great refresher. Did not think I needed it, but once again learned and reminded of things I had forgotten.



Thank you for a wonderful seminar. Your professionalism, preparation and interactive approach was enlightening!



Awesome sessions! Really informative and relaxed atmosphere. Made it a great session!! Loved it!!





## *School Closure and Salary*

# When are Substitute Teachers Entitled to be Paid?

by MIRIAM SHEPPARD

Clause 49.04 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Clause 46.04 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) states: *For salary purposes, substitute teachers shall be deemed to have kept school on any day or part thereof where: (a) the school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act, 1997; or (b) previously contracted substitute services are not required for any other reason(s) and the substitute teacher is not notified prior to reporting for duty at the school that his or her services are not required.*

**Q.** If a substitute teacher is contracted to work at a school on a particular day or for a particular contract period and that school is subsequently closed due to inclement weather, lack of heating, or other similar causes, is the substitute teacher entitled to be paid for the day or days? (Refer to Clause 49.04(a) – Provincial Collective Agreement: Clause 46.04(a) – Labrador West Collective Agreement.)

**A.** Yes. Section 32 of the Schools Act, 1997 states that “a teacher in a school shall, for the purpose of determining payment of salary, be considered to have taught on a day or part of it when

- (a) the teacher having charge of the school closes it because of inclement weather, under a general authority given to him or her orally or in writing by or under the direction of the board;
- (b) the school is closed by order of the minister responsible for health by reason of disease being or threatening to become epidemic;
- (c) the school is closed by the board at any time after opening to enable repairs to be effected;
- (d) the school is declared uninhabitable by the board because of fire, storm, failure of the sewage system or other cause of a similar nature;
- (e) the teacher was unavoidably prevented from

opening the school because of delay in construction of new buildings or the extension, remodelling or renovation of existing buildings and the minister is satisfied that no alternative accommodation was available;

- (f) the school was closed because of lack of heating or for another reason, where, in the opinion of the minister, the closing of the school could not have been avoided by the teacher; or
- (g) the teacher is required to act as a member of the board of arbitration established in accordance with the collective agreement as defined in the *Teachers' Collective Bargaining Act*.”

**Q.** Is a substitute teacher still entitled to receive pay if school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act and the teacher is notified prior to arriving at the school?

**A.** Yes. Substitute teachers, once contracted to work, are entitled to receive pay for any day or part thereof, if school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Act, regardless if they are contacted prior to arriving at the school.

For example, if a substitute teacher is contracted a week in advance to substitute for a teacher who is going to be absent and on the particular day in question the school is closed due to inclement weather or notified in advance that there is going to be a scheduled power outage forcing the school to close (or the school is closed for any other reason as outlined in Section 32), the substitute teacher will still be entitled to be paid for the day, regardless if the substitute is contacted by the school and informed that the school will be closed. The substitute teacher, like any other regular teacher on that staff, is deemed to have kept school on that day or part thereof for the purpose of determining salary.

**Q.** Would a substitute teacher be entitled to receive pay if previously contracted service is cancelled for any other reason other than those listed in Section 32 of the Act and the substitute teacher is notified prior to reporting for duty at the school? (Refer to Clause 49.04(b) – Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 46:04 (b) – Labrador West Collective Agreement.)

**A.** No. If school remains open and the services of the substitute teacher are no longer required and the substitute teacher is notified prior to reporting for duty at the school, the substitute teacher is deemed not to have kept school on that day and thus would not be entitled to be paid. Scenario: A substitute teacher is contracted to work for a teacher who is scheduled to attend a professional development workshop. The day prior to the workshop, the workshop is cancelled and the regular teacher is scheduled to return to work. As long as the substitute teacher is contacted “prior to reporting for duty at the school” he/she would not be entitled to pay. However, if the substitute is not notified prior to reporting for duty, then they are entitled to receive pay for the day in question.

Additional information on these issues can be found in the NLTA Infosheet #13 “Substitute Teacher Membership and Benefits” at [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca). Go to “Publications”, then “I” for Infosheets.

*Miriam Sheppard is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.*

## The Dr. Wayne Nesbit Outstanding Achievement Award

**D**r. Wayne Nesbit was a central figure in Newfoundland and Labrador’s long history with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and he was pivotal to the establishment of special education in this province. In 1973 he started a diploma (which quickly expanded to a full degree) in Special Education in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and taught in the program for 40 years. In his lifetime he earned the respect and admiration of generations of teachers, his colleagues, as well as the many children and families with whom he worked. His contribution to creating and disseminating knowledge was recognized with countless awards, including the President’s Award for Outstanding Teaching (1993) and the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador (2011). His legacy has transformed the provision of service to vulnerable children and their families and has established both an ethic of caring and a caliber of excellence for which our province is strongly recognized with regard to services for children with exceptionalities.

To both honor Dr. Nesbit’s legacy and to encourage a continuation of this commitment to the education of children, this award has been established. It is designed to acknowledge an outstanding contribution to the well-being of exceptional children and youth; innovation of teaching strategies; dedication to the integration of exceptional children; dedication to the creation of positive learning environments; and an ability to inspire students and co-workers.

### Nomination Procedures

Nominees must have a minimum of 25 years of work experience in educating individuals with exceptionalities. People/agencies who are interested in nominating a local educator are asked to complete the attached Nomination Form articulating why they feel the nominee meets the above criteria. Each nomination must be accompanied by three confidential Letters of Support. All nominations will be reviewed by an independent committee. Nomination forms can be found on the NLTA website [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca), under Online Forms and must be received by **January 15, 2014**.

*Co-sponsored by the CEC, NLTA and the Faculty of Education*





# Teacher and School Responsibilities When Student Assistants Are Absent

by STEVE BROOKS

From time to time Administrative Staff in the Benefits and Economic Services (BES) Division will receive calls from teachers requesting information on when the duties normally assigned to student assistants can be assigned to teachers. The NLTA has a detailed policy on this issue found on page BES47 of the NLTA Policy Handbook:

*Where the services of a student assistant would normally be available to assist with the implementation of the student's ISSP in a regular classroom, and when such a service is not available, placement other than in the regular classroom will be arranged unless parents/volunteers are available to perform the functions of the student assistant in the regular classroom. [Nov/27/08] [JC Feb/09] [2009 BGM]*

*Whenever a student assistant is absent due to illness or any other reason, a substitute shall be provided.*

*The duties ordinarily performed by the student assistant shall not be assigned to teachers, other than those working in categorical special education positions, unless in an emergency situation. [Nov/27/08] [JC Feb/09] [2009 BGM]*

*In case of a job action by student assistants, teachers other than those working in categorical special education positions will not carry out those duties ordinarily performed by student assistants and no increase in teachers' assigned duties will occur. [Jan/8-9/99] [1999 BGM][Nov/27/08] [JC Feb/09] [2009 BGM]*

*In any situation where student assistant services, which are ordinarily provided, are not available and the safety of the student(s) cannot be assured, the principal shall have the authority to determine whether it is appropriate for such student(s) to remain in school.*

This is the stated policy of the Association on this matter. That being said, there have been arbitrations and provincial court rulings on this matter which have determined the following:

- i) Prior to involvement of student assistants in the classroom, teachers provided all of the special assistance which special needs students required.
- ii) There is an overlap of work responsibilities, in that student assistants provide support services to and assist the teacher in providing for the implementation of individual program plans for students.

As a result of these findings, a teacher, under certain circumstances, can be required to provide services to students that are normally assigned to student assistants. It is understood that where student assistant services have been provided, the duties of "portering", and "cleaning," are to be assigned to student assistants. If there is a shortage of student assistants on a given day, due to illness or other factors, the employer should reassign the duties of the remaining student assistants on a priority basis to ensure that teachers are able to focus their time and attention on matters of instruction and assessment.

Teachers and administrators requiring more detailed information on this topic should contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Steve Brooks is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA.

# Welcome to the Teaching Profession! Welcome to the NLTA!

by BEVERLEY PARK



In 2005 the NLTA, in collaboration with Memorial University's Faculty of Education, initiated a formal event to welcome graduates from the Faculty of Education into the teaching profession. This ceremony coincides with the students' convocation where they receive their degree and are officially qualified to be a teacher. Over the years we have seen



**Pictured l-r: NLTA Vice-President Dean Ingram, graduate Lulu Mahoney, and Dr Kirk Anderson, Dean of the Faculty of Education.**

hundreds of proud graduates cross the stage to be inducted into the profession. They receive a scroll – an affirmation of their professional responsibility as a teacher – and a pewter pin in the shape of an apple, engraved with their year of convocation. This is presented by the NLTA President (or designate), after which they proceed across the stage to be congratulated by the Dean of the Faculty. In the audience are proud family members and friends who have supported them on their journey to become a teacher.

This ceremony could be compared to others in other professions where those who have practised for years and who have formed professional organizations such as the NLTA recognize that those who join their ranks represent a family of professionals who share common interests and common professional knowledge. It says, simply speaking, "You are one of us."

While there have been several such ceremonies

since 2005, this year we are highlighting the Induction event which took place in Corner Brook with the MUN Faculty of Education cohort at the Sir Wilfred Grenfell Campus. The ceremony was held in the newly-opened annex of the campus where students in the Faculty of Education have most of their courses.

This prestigious event was one of the first responsibilities for NLTA staff member Don Ash in his new role as Executive Director of the Association. President James Dinn was represented by Vice-President, Dean Ingram. We were pleased to have the Dean of the Faculty of Education in attendance, Dr. Kirk Anderson. The government of Newfoundland and Labrador was represented by local MHA and former teacher/principal Vaughn Granter.



**Graduate Alisha Rose with her parents at the Induction Ceremony in Corner Brook.**

At the NLTA we are proud of our partnerships which are showcased at events such as this. We are proud of our profession – and, on this occasion, we are most proud of those young men and women who have recognized that this is a most noble of professions and have made the significant decision to join our ranks.

*Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.*



## Seasonal Affective Disorder

# A Light Changing Experience

by GAIL CARROLL

*Bows and flows of angel hair  
And ice-cream castles in the air  
And feather canyons everywhere  
I've looked at clouds that way.*

*But now they only block the sun  
They rain and snow on everyone  
So many things I would have done  
But clouds got in my way...*

(Excerpt from song *Both Sides Now* by Joni Mitchell)



Beautiful long sunny days into the evening become distant memories as the daylight and the weather changes in late fall through the winter months. We see darker, shorter days and more clouds, and for a number of us “clouds” do get in the way as the song goes! The changing light, weather and temperatures can get in the way of our energy levels, sleep and concentration and have a significant impact on our bodies, minds and spirits. We crave sunshine and the good feelings the sun brings our way.

*“As October began, I could hardly drag myself out of bed each morning. My body felt so heavy and tired. Normally I am a morning person, but I have noticed in the past few years that I am really struggling with my energy when the fall season arrives and I struggle just to get through the days, but it seems to resolve itself as the spring approaches and the days become longer again. I questioned if I had some type of depressive disorder, but, the funny thing was that I could think of no reason why I would be depressed.”* (Individual experiencing SAD)

What this person is referring to is Seasonal Affective Disorder, commonly known as SAD. SAD is a seasonal depressive disorder that is more prevalent in Canadian and northern climates where we are most affected by the lack of sun when our daylight hours are shorter with the changing of the seasonal light.

Seasonal Affective Disorder is commonly referred to as the “Winter Blues”. Do you ever think about any of the following questions?

1. Do you dread the long winter nights?
2. Do you crave carbohydrates in the winter and gain

“winter weight”?

3. Do you like to hibernate in the winter?
4. Do you feel exhausted, anxious and/or depressed?
5. Do you crave sunlight?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, please keep reading to learn more.

One in six people or 6% of the general population on average is diagnosed with and/or experiences SAD. Another 20% of the population experience less debilitating symptoms and can be classified generally as “The Winter Blues”.

The symptoms of SAD generally begin to make an appearance between September and November each year and symptoms usually begin to relieve between late March and early May as spring approaches. Seasonal Affective Disorder was first professionally described by Dr. Norman E. Rosenthal and his associates at the National Institute of Mental Health.

Symptoms of SAD can range from mild to severe and can interfere with an individual's ability to function in their daily lives relative to the severity of their symptoms.

SAD symptoms involve changes in:

- **Energy:** feeling more tired than usual but, may not understand why.
- **Mood:** feeling sad, irritable, hopeless, higher sensitivity, bouts of crying and lowered self-esteem for a period of at least 2 weeks in duration.
- **Cognitive Function:** difficulties with memory and concentration. Brain feels sluggish. You are just not as motivated as usual.
- **Anxiety:** feel less able to deal with stress.
- **Immune system:** lowered immune function making you more susceptible to colds and other viruses.
- **Sleep:** sleeping more and/or having the desire to sleep more. Feeling sleepy during the day. Disrupted sleep and/or insomnia.
- **Eating:** a desire to eat foods higher in carbohydrates and calories (comfort foods) resulting in winter weight gain.
- **Socialization:** hibernating and isolating yourself.



The usual age of onset of SAD is 18-50 years of age and in what is referred to as “Winter Blues” the symptoms are less severe. After age 50 the symptoms of SAD and risk of SAD significantly declines, however, research has not yet been able to show the reason(s) for this.

### Why does SAD happen? What causes it?

It is believed that there are two hormones the body produces that are affected by light and our bodies’ natural circadian rhythms. It isn’t fully understood how and why SAD happens, however, current theories showcase the role that sunlight plays in producing the two key hormones that regulate your bodies’ sleep-wake cycles, energy and mood. These two hormones are:

1. **Melatonin** which our bodies manufacture to regulate our sleep-wake cycle. When it is dark (days are shorter) our body makes more melatonin which can make us feel sleepy and lethargic.
2. **Serotonin** which is also made by our bodies and is related to our mood. Exercise and sunshine can increase our serotonin levels. Increasing or higher levels of serotonin help us fight depression.

### What can you do to combat SAD?

- *Recognize the signs and symptoms* and talk to your doctor about your symptoms.
- *Be aware of the light in your life.* Try to increase the amount of time you spend outdoors. Try to take a walk over your lunch break or after work. Increased exposure to sunlight/daylight for even 20-30 minutes a day can be helpful! You can also explore different forms of light therapy. Two favorites in light therapy are the Philips goLite Blu Energy Light which is available locally at Costco and Sears and the Philips Wake-up light which simulates the sunrise and sunset and is also available locally at Costco and Sears. To explore either of these options take a look at [www.philips.ca](http://www.philips.ca) and look at the information and demo on their website through health and beauty products. Ensure that you spend as much time as possible in well-lit spaces throughout the fall and winter months, i.e., keep blinds and curtains opened, arrange furniture so that you are getting the maximum exposure to the light and trim tree branches that may block the light from your home.
- *Pay attention to your diet.* Try to eat good carbs, i.e., rice, pasta and whole grain breads as opposed to eating junk food. Ensure you are getting lots of vitamins, especially magnesium and potassium along with your ABCD vitamins. Eat a good mixture of fruits and vegetables along with nuts and whole grains.

- **Vitamins:** A good multi-vitamin is helpful and a minimum of 1,000 IU of Vitamin D is more helpful. Vitamin D can be purchased in tablets, melting mint strips and liquid drops. Vitamin D is known as the sunshine vitamin and according to the Ministry of Health in British Columbia, many Canadians are Vitamin D deprived because our climates are so different than those of the southern USA. Some interesting and helpful reading on Vitamin D is “The Vitamin D Cure” by James E. Dowd, M.D.

- **Work with it!** Recognize how the changes of seasons affect you and if they do be sure to seek professional advice from your doctor, Employee Assistance Program and/or local mental health resources, i.e., Canadian Mental Health Association. When individuals work with their symptoms and seek professional consultation when needed the symptoms of SAD can be managed whether through artificial light, natural light, exercise, diet, vitamins, anti-depressant medication, talk therapy or a combination of the above.

- **See a counsellor:** Talk therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy can be helpful. Remember to contact your Employee Assistance Program.

- **Others:** Practice stress management. Take good care of yourself. Get out and socialize. Take a trip to a warm, sunny place.

Whatever you choose to do this fall and winter season remember to take good care of you!

*Remember to take care of your body; it's the only place you have to live!* ~ John Rohn

.....  
Gail Carroll is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Gail Carroll (ext. 242) or Judy Beranger (ext. 265).

### References

[www.sad.org.uk](http://www.sad.org.uk)

[www.cmha.ca/mental\\_health/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad](http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad)

[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) (articles referencing seasonal affective disorder)

[www.heretohelp.bc.ca/factsheet/seasonal-affective-disorder](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/factsheet/seasonal-affective-disorder)

### Resources

- For stress management: [www.paulgoldin.com](http://www.paulgoldin.com) (look at the Colormonics program)

- For stress management: [www.irest.us](http://www.irest.us) (for yoga and mindfulness meditation)

- For light therapy: [www.philips.ca](http://www.philips.ca)

- Vitamin D: *The Vitamin D Cure* by James E. Dowd, M.D.

- *Winter Blues: Revised Edition: Everything You Need to Know to Beat Seasonal Affective Disorder* by Norman E. Rosenthal, M.D.



# A Look at a Global Campaign Through a Canadian Lens

by DIANNE WOLOSCHUK

Thirteen years ago, world leaders committed to the goal of providing, by 2015, universal free primary public education to all children around the globe. As that date approaches, achievement of that goal is in question. Though many governments have removed school fees and put significant additional funding into their public education systems, the impacts of the global financial crisis have jeopardized that progress. That is why on Friday, October 4, 2013, in New York, in conjunction with World Teachers' Day, Education International (EI) launched its "Unite for Quality Education" campaign, a year of action that aims to reset the global agenda for children's education in the world and push governments to reset their priorities in favor of children, youth, and a better world for all.

The challenges are daunting. According to the United Nations, 61 million children are not in school around the world – of which 34 million are girls. According to Alice Albright, CEO of the Global Partnership for Education, in addition to government funding cuts, external contributions to support education in developing countries have dropped 17% since 2008. Lack of access is not the only challenge. Many teachers are not qualified, teacher education programs cannot meet the demand, school resources are scarce, and pupil-teacher ratios are very high in developing countries.

At the launch, James Tweheyo, General Secretary of the Uganda National Teachers' Union, reviewed the discouraging statistics from his country. Only 30% of students are finishing secondary school. Pupil-teacher ratios can run as high as 80 to 1 in elementary classrooms and 120 to 1 in secondary classrooms. As many as ten children may need to share a single reading text. Teachers are poorly paid, and morale is often low.

EI's "Unite for Quality Education" campaign is based on the belief that education is a public good and a basic human right. It emphasizes two essential points: that every child in the world should have

access to a quality education, and that teachers and education unions play a vital role in making that happen. Throughout this campaign, EI and its Member organizations will urge inter-governmental agencies, governments, and public education authorities everywhere to put in place the three essential elements of a quality education:

- Universal and free access to qualified teachers;
- Modern teaching tools and resources; and
- Supportive, safe and secure environments for teaching and learning.

At the campaign launch, Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Education, pointed out that, over the past few years, governments have begun to realize that quality education is the key to a prosperous and peaceful future. Young people such as Malala Yousafzai are insisting on the right to a quality education, and teachers around the world are engaged in the struggle to help their students and to promote and defend quality public education.

We can recognize these same developments in Canada. The plight of Aboriginal students in our country has come to be understood as a national emergency. As we heard at the CTF President's Forum in July 2013, Aboriginal students' educational success has been greatly hindered by the impacts and legacy of the residential school system, chronic federal underfunding of First Nations schools, and systemic racial discrimination. Like Malala, Aboriginal youth such as Shannen Koostachin have clamored for an accessible, equitable education that provides healthy, safe, well-resourced learning environments. Further, Aboriginal leaders have insisted on having authority over their children's education to ensure that Aboriginal children have the right to equitable resources which reflected their community's traditions and values.

As teachers, what can we do to support these initiatives?

- Visit the Education International website at [www.unite4education.org](http://www.unite4education.org), read about CTF's Project

Overseas participants' professional development activities in developing countries. Why not share with us your stories of the success of public education in your school and community?

- View EI's short video-trailer on YouTube, "A Day in a Life of a Teacher," and share it with your friends and colleagues.
- Visit the CTF website and read the new publication, *Beyond Shadows: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students' Success* by Dr. Pamela Toulouse, Laurentian University.

Many CTF Member organizations are already engaged in activities designed to promote and defend the quality of the education in their provinces and territories as well as in developing countries through CTF's Project Overseas program. Whether it is advocating for better learning conditions for all students, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, for improved working conditions for teachers, continuous professional development, better curricular support or better school environments and facilities, Member organizations are champions for better quality education, because all of these elements lead to better quality education.

Remember that, when we act together, we are strong, and we do indeed make a difference.

.....  
Dianne Woloschuk is the President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

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## Canadian Cancer Society-NL Province Wide Tan-Free Grad Challenge

by DARRELL YETMAN

The number of cases of melanoma skin cancer is growing more rapidly than any other type of cancer in Canada. While it's no secret that the number of people developing melanoma has long been climbing, one group has had a disproportionately meteoric rise. The international Skin Cancer Foundation states on its web site that women aged 18 to 39 are now eight times more likely to be diagnosed with this potentially deadly skin cancer than they were just 40 years ago. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is the most important risk factor for developing skin cancer. Indoor tanning equipment, such as tanning beds and sun lamps, is a source of UVR and a tan is evidence of skin damage from exposure to UVR. Just like the sun, indoor tanning equipment gives off UVR that can cause melanoma, squamous cell carcinoma, sunburns, premature aging and cataracts. People who tan indoors are 74 percent more likely to develop melanoma, 2.5 times more likely to develop squamous cell carcinoma, and 1.5 times more likely to develop basal cell carcinoma than non-tanners.

With these alarming statistics in mind, the Canadian Cancer Society – Newfoundland and Labrador (CCS-NL) is encouraging all graduating students to get involved in its Province-Wide Tan-Free Grad Challenge. At the time of this writing the Department of Health and Community Services is working to enact a law prohibiting minors from accessing commercial indoor tanning facilities; however, minors will still be legally permitted to practice indoor tanning until the Personal Services Act (Bill 27) is passed.

Throughout the province, CCS-NL is offering free information sessions and Tan-Free Grad Challenge kits to high schools with the double aim of educating youth to the dangers associated with UVR exposure and providing them with knowledge about protection measures that can help them to avoid the

complications of melanoma in the future.

While tanning is a concern for a great many graduating students of Levels III and IV, quite a large number of intermediate school students will tan in preparation for their grad ceremonies as well. All schools with graduating classes this year are encouraged to contact the CCS-NL and get students on board with this potentially life-saving initiative. It fits well as an activity within the school district's comprehensive approach to school health. It is healthy living information that will stay with children and youth for a lifetime.

**“While tanning is a concern for a great many graduating students of Levels III and IV, quite a large number of intermediate school students will tan in preparation for their grad ceremonies as well.”**

Once we receive your school's signed registration form, the Canadian Cancer Society will endeavour to provide your school with information sessions on UVR safety and the Province-Wide Tan-Free Grad Challenge, which are presented by either the Society's professional staff or trained volunteers, depending on availability. Participating schools will be supplied with a kit of materials designed to help in carrying out a successful Tan-Free Grad Challenge. Samples have already been sent to most high schools in the province. If your school has not yet received it, please contact us at the coordinates on the following page.

It is expected that this Challenge will be run largely by committed student leaders with mini-

mal input from teachers, especially in schools with larger student populations. Apart from the initial introduction and a small amount of paperwork and oversight, teachers should find that the Challenge, if it has reasonable success in your school, should not be a large drain on your already-overtaxed energies. It should run for a couple of weeks and the optimal time would be just before the students are making plans for pre-grad tanning. The timing of this may vary depending on the date of the grad. To encourage participation, schools that succeed in signing up a high percentage of students will be eligible for a draw for cash prizes to help with grad expenses. Teachers and administrators should also note that this is not a fund-raising campaign. The materials and information are available completely free of charge from the Canadian Cancer Society, and carrying out the campaign should require no expenditures on the part of the school or students.

An article on the Province-Wide Tan-Free Grad Challenge is featured in the Fall 2013 edition of *Living Healthy News*, a publication of the NL English School Board, and the project is receiving enthusiastic support both at the school board level and in the high schools where it has already been introduced.

The Province-Wide Tan-Free Grad Challenge program is made possible by a grant from the Department of Health and Community Services, Newfoundland and Labrador. Teachers can contact Darrell Yetman at the Canadian Cancer Society – Newfoundland and Labrador Division at 1-888-753-6520, extension 237; or email [dyetman@nl.cancer.ca](mailto:dyetman@nl.cancer.ca) to get more information on the Province-Wide Tan-Free Grad Challenge or to arrange classroom presentations on Sun Safety for all grade levels.

*Darrell Yetman (B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.) is a retired teacher. He is the Sun Safety and Skin Cancer Awareness Coordinator for the Canadian Cancer Society – Newfoundland and Labrador.*

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# Preparing Youth to Deal With Hate on the Internet

by MATTHEW JOHNSON

The Boston Marathon tragedy has raised questions about the role the Internet plays in radicalizing youth and, more generally, how it may be used to perpetuate hatred. In Canada, similar questions are being asked about the radicalization of four London, Ontario students in the wake of last January's attack on an Algerian gas plant. Sadly, just as hate is a fact of life offline, it also exists in the digital world. As Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, put it, "wherever you have contentious kinds of historic issues, or classic hatreds, we're beginning to see it percolate online." With this in mind, it is in our best interest to better understand how hate groups are using networked technologies and those who are most at risk.

Youth – and in particular, young men aged 12-17 – are most likely to commit hate crimes offline, and organized hate groups, both online and offline, consciously try to radicalize young people. Teenagers and young adults are prime targets for hate groups because many are looking for groups or causes that will give them a sense of identity. Identity seeking is a natural part of adolescence but, taken to its extreme, this can provide a toe-hold for hate mongers and hate groups of all kinds are skilled at identifying those youth most likely to be vulnerable to their message. As well as using online tools and environments as a recruiting tool, many groups also spread hate material in the hope of encouraging "lone wolves" who will commit hate crimes without a direct affiliation to any particular group.

Consciously or unconsciously, hate groups draw on a number of basic psychological mechanisms to attract and indoctrinate believers. Some of these techniques work to make people more interested in or sympathetic to the group's message, while others are used to make those who are already part of the group more committed. This approach, which inducts someone into the ideology of hate through a series of small steps, is called the *slippery slope* because each progressive step makes the previous ones seem more reasonable and justified. Young people, especially

those who feel adrift or lack emotional support, are particularly vulnerable to hate groups' efforts to provide a surrogate family to their members. Similarly, all forms of hate material use *dehumanization* of enemy groups to make any actions taken against them seem not only justified but necessary.

One of the ways in which hate groups mask the true nature of their message is by presenting it as legitimate political debate – what some scholars have called "reasonable racism." Young people, who are still in the process of learning about political issues and developing critical thinking skills, are particularly vulnerable to these appeals. For that reason, it's important to teach them to recognize the elements that distinguish ideologies of hate from legitimate discourse: the characterization of one or more groups as "the Other," a narrative of victimhood, the appeal to a glorious past, and an appeal to divine or natural sanction.

"The Other," which is dehumanized and portrayed as being simultaneously inferior and threatening, is at the heart of all messages of hate. These groups justify their hatred by portraying themselves as being victimized by the Other; the ultimate example of this is often the accusation that the Other is responsible for the loss of the group's proper place in the world at some time in the past. This place in the world is often justified by either an appeal to religion, in which the group is portrayed as chosen by divine favour, or by a garbled application of biology, anthropology, genetics – even quack sciences, such as phrenology (which studies the relationship between a person's character and the structure of the skull), live on in ideologies of hate.

Although hate groups' messages have not changed over time, the ways in which they reach their audience has. No longer limited to printing flyers and posters or selling self-published books by mail-order, thanks to the Internet hate groups are able to distribute their message to a potential audience of millions. With the easy availability of blogging platforms and simple Web publishing software, hate sites have proliferated to as many as 14,000, according to a 2011 study.



While most hate sites are simple screeds, the more sophisticated ones mimic popular commercial websites with many offering audio-visual material and discussion forums and featuring professional-looking design and graphics. Most of these websites are not aimed at general audiences but rather are used for “narrowcasting” – targeting a specific group with content that is known to resonate with them. Narrowcasting also makes the target feel as though he is part of a community with shared ideals and values. One way hate groups do this is through the media most popular with youth, music and videos. Many teenagers turn to musical genres and subcultures to help define their identities and hate music producers take advantage of this by spreading songs and videos not just on hate sites but on file-sharing sites and mainstream services, such as YouTube and iTunes.

While websites and music can be effective in communicating this style of message, social media is tailor-made for it. The greatest advantage of social media is not that it allows hate groups to reach youth, but that it allows youth to disseminate hate material themselves. The ability of social media to help youth find friends and mentors is key to developing the sense of group identity that’s so important in building sympathy and loyalty.

Perhaps most pernicious are the sites delivering what scholars call *cloaked* hate: these sites, which present themselves as being neutral and educational, communicate a subtle message of hate where their true nature only gradually becomes apparent. To achieve this, cloaked sites put on as many of the trappings of legitimacy as possible – using a dot-org Web address, for example, or having an official-sounding name. We should not underestimate the ability of these sites to misinform young people. A 2003 study reports that when students in a first-year university class were asked to critically evaluate the site martinlutherking.org, a cloaked site created by the hate group Stormwatch, almost none were able to recognize that it was biased or identify the point of view of its author. As well as material produced by organized hate groups, youth also encounter hate in more mainstream settings. Some online environments popular with youth, particularly those that cater to teenage boys, can even be described as *cultures of hate* – communities in which racism, misogyny and other prejudices are normalized.

Fortunately, there are a number of concrete strategies that we can use in preparing youth to recognize and critically engage with hate when they encounter it online. As well as teaching young people to recognize the characteristics of an ideology of hate, we can also teach them to recognize and decode the various per-

suasive techniques hate groups use, such as employing misinformation, denialism and pseudo-science, building group solidarity through appeals to nationalism or religion, casting their members in a hero narrative, using scare tactics, and of course portraying their perceived enemies as a dehumanized Other.

Besides teaching young people critical thinking skills, we can also fight online hate by helping them to develop empathy: this can be done with the whole community as a preventative measure, or as an intervention with youth who are already involved in hate. It’s also important to make people aware of how rare hateful behaviour really is: research has shown that people are more likely to engage in activities like bullying when they believe that many people act this way, and are less likely if they believe that fewer people do. Young people can also be taught how to take positive steps to fight online hate when they encounter it, such as by reporting hate content on social networks or video-sharing sites.

As with so many issues though, teaching kids to deal with online hate means teaching them media and digital literacy skills. Youth have to learn basic principles of media literacy to understand, for instance, that *media are constructions that re-present reality*: the media they encounter online, and in particular the sources they turn to when seeking information, were created by individuals who may well have a particular agenda in mind. Similarly, understanding that *media contain ideological messages* – about values, power and authority – *which have social and political implications* can help young people to understand why a song, video or game may have more impact than they believe. Understanding that *audiences negotiate meaning* can also make clear why what may be an offhand comment or friendly teasing to one person may be deeply hurtful to another. It’s also an introduction to the idea that different groups have had different experiences in history and have different relationships with mainstream society. Teaching youth the key digital literacy skills of *evaluating and authenticating online information* is essential to prepare them to recognize both overt and cloaked hate.

To prevent hate from flourishing we can all play a role in creating cultures of tolerance, respect and empathy for others in our schools and communities. However much we wish it, online hate isn’t going away. It can be a difficult subject for teachers, parents and community leaders to address but it is better that youth learn about it from us – before they learn from someone else.

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Matthew Johnson is Director of Education, MediaSmarts at mediasmarts.ca.



## NLTA Awards 2013-14

Each year your Association honours several of its members with four prestigious awards. Please take a moment to read about them. If you feel that someone within your school qualifies for nomination for one of these awards for the 2013-14 school year, please contact your school representative who will forward the name and information on this person to your branch president or the appropriate special interest council president.

### Special Recognition Award

This award was instituted by Johnson Inc. to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the NLTA. It is presented annually to an active or life member of the Association who, while a teacher in the province, has made a major contribution to the cultural, social and/or community life of Newfoundland and Labrador. The award recognizes contributions in the areas of the arts (music/literature/visual arts), community service, and/or municipal politics. Nominations must come from branches or special interest councils and must be received at the NLTA Office by January 15th.

### Allan Bishop Award

This Award was also established during the NLTA Centennial Year to recognize outstanding service to the NLTA at the provincial level and it is named after former NLTA President and long-time staff member, Allan Bishop. The award is open to any active or life member of the Association, except that current members of the Provincial Executive are ineligible for the award and a provincial past president is ineligible for the award within three years of his/her presidency. Nominations must come from branches or special interest councils and must be received at the NLTA Office by January 15th.

### Bancroft Award

This award, named in honour of James Frederick Bancroft, the first president of the NLTA, was established in 1980 during the 90th anniversary of the Association. The award was established to recognize the outstanding service given to branches by the dedicated and talented teachers whose efforts have helped make the NLTA the strong association it is today. Nominations must come from branches and must be received at the NLTA Office by January 15th.

### Barnes Award

This award was established in 1987 and is named for Dr. Arthur Barnes, a long-time supporter of the Association, who, in 1920, became the first Minister of Education. The award was established to recognize outstanding professional development services provided by teachers at the special interest council level. Nominations must come from special interest councils or branches and must be received at the NLTA Office by January 15th.

***Is There a Potential Winner in your School?***

## NLTA Christmas Hours

**Please be advised  
that the NLTA building  
will be CLOSED from**

**December 23<sup>rd</sup> to  
January 1<sup>st</sup> (inclusive)**

**to allow staff to  
enjoy the holiday season.**



## Dates to Remember

### December 2013

- Dec 5-6 Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
- Dec 13-14 Provincial Executive Meeting
- Dec 19 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

### January 2014

- Jan 15 **Deadline:** 2014 Christmas Card Contest entries
- Jan 15 **Deadline:** Receipt of nominations for Barnes, Bancroft, Allan Bishop and Special Recognition Awards
- Jan 15 **Deadline:** Receipt of nominations for the Dr. Wayne Nesbit Outstanding Achievement Award
- Jan 16 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications
- Jan 31 Provincial Executive Meeting

### February 2014

- Feb 1 Provincial Executive Meeting
- Feb 1 **Deadline:** Applications for Educational Leave – teachers must make prior application to school board
- Feb 14 Janeway Day in the Schools
- Feb 20 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications