



Message from our SOTA President– Jamie Krutkevich Slight



As the sun sets on my second year as your President, I feel compelled to reflect on what this experience has taught me, both professionally and personally. In some ways, it feels like a decade since I began this job, but in other ways, it feels as if I have barely scratched the surface of what the SOTA President might achieve.

I've learned some difficult lessons over the past two years – I've been proud to represent you and stand shoulder to shoulder as we advocate for what is right and what is best. I've cried tears of pure emotion as you have shown me day after day why we do what we do – why we teach, why we care, why we hurt, and why we come back tomorrow to do it all again. I don't have words to express what kind of energy the support of almost 700 people generates, but it's a powerful force that I never once took for granted. We have had some good days together. But I've also felt frustrated and sad as I have watched our colleagues fall into illness and despair. Teachers who are literally working themselves sick, trying to provide the best possible service to students with inadequate supports in a system that focuses on philosophy instead of reality. I have witnessed the silencing of teacher voice, the erosion of teacher professionalism, and divide and conquer in some of its most insidious forms. Emerging from this, however, like the dawn breaking through, is the rest of us. Those of us who stand up for what we believe, who refuse to be ignored, and who fearlessly go forth because we know that giving up is not an option. We know that together we are better, and that if we want to have the good days, we need to weather the bad ones as a group, with support, with trust, and with fairness.

It is often said that teachers are their own worst enemies, and I can see why. Our days never end, and our students live in our minds. There is no "the office is closed" voicemail like at the doctor's office. There is no "sold" sign on the house indicating the work has been done. There are no locks on the doors, no lights that we can turn out, and no blinds to be drawn. Our list of responsibilities grows and expands, yet we never seem to have the opportunity to stop and ask, "If we do this new thing, what other thing are we going to stop doing?" We do not go to this job, we live this job.

We want to (and do) do wonderful things for kids. We coach teams, we run clubs, we tutor at lunch, before school, after school, we email parents daily, weekly, we phone home to share the positive stories as well as the issues, we search high and low for missing cell phones and iPods, we buy supplies, we buy food, we buy winter clothes, and we do a million other things that I can't even begin to imagine. (Did anyone else notice that actual teaching wasn't even on that list? Because we do that too, along with the requisite planning, prepping, assessing and reporting that goes along with it.) And we do it all because we care and because we want to.

We all offer our support in our own way, because that's how our world works, but what happens when these wonderful things that we do because we care end up being mandated by the employer? Once it's mandated, you don't get to choose anymore – it just is. And the people who started doing these wonderful things for kids with the very best of intentions have now made it so that it is everyone's job – regardless of what the individual teacher would choose for him or herself. So there's the moral conflict – caring about kids does not come at the expense of caring about yourself or your colleagues. Good will cannot be mandated nor can we violate the negotiated provisions of our collective agreement because we think it's good for kids.

Now I want to be clear – I am not suggesting that you stop doing any of the good things you do. We support kids in the best ways we know how because we care and because we want to. That should not change. It is not our fault when the employer takes one person's good idea and mandates it for everyone. It is not our fault when we are asked to "buy" our jobs with a wage freeze so that taxes don't have to go up. It is not our fault when we are pitted against each other on a wedge issue such as block funding or orientation days. But how we respond is in our control and is our responsibility.

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean" (Ryunosuke Satoro).

Many schools have mission statements that read: "Take care of yourself, take care of each other, take care of this place." It's high time we started applying that credo to ourselves as well. Take care of yourself. Take care of your colleagues. Take care of this place: this profession that we love and hold in high regard; this Association that works tirelessly on your behalf; this collective that, working together, can foster greatness.

Inside this Issue:

President's Message	1	Economic Welfare Update	7
SOTA members measure up	2	SOTA Curling Banquet	8
Message from Economic Welfare Chair	3	Long Service Wine and Cheese	9
SOTA Volleyball Social	4	2011-2012 SOTA Executive	10

As your outgoing President, I ask all SOTA members to consider the power we have together as one and to reflect on what we could all do for each other as a collective, cohesive unit. Indeed, it's all I have done throughout my term and the potential of it, quite honestly, leaves me speechless.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I leave you in the exceedingly capable hands of Leslie Deck and I look forward to being back on the front lines with you next year. Have an immensely refreshing summer – rest, relax, and be safe. Take care and be well.

**Have an idea for an
ACORN article?**

Contact your ACORN

editor at:

catherine.robertson@sotamb.org



**Elwick
SOTA
members
measure
up!**



See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil!



Limbo time!



Vice President – Economic Welfare Chair



At this year's end, when all teachers are feeling the time/work crunch, approximately 300 Manitoba teachers left their classrooms to meet at the Fairmont for 3 days, to work on behalf of the 15 000 teachers across the province at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Manitoba Teachers' Society.

Over the course of the 3 days I experienced goose bumps – not due to the air conditioning that intermittently turned on with a vengeance – but due to teachers rising up – united in voice and action!

The first show of solidarity – **a resounding standing ovation** – occurred after Mary-Lou Donnelly, Canadian Teachers' Federation President, addressed the delegation highlighting the plight that our colleagues are facing across the country especially our colleagues in Saskatchewan who are locked in a dispute with their government.

The second show of solidarity – **a unanimous vote in favour of the following motion**,

Be it resolved that the Manitoba Teachers' Society adopt the following policy: that the Manitoba Teachers' Society oppose block funding and promote program-based funding of public schools within the province of Manitoba. Be it further resolved that this position be clearly articulated in the annual brief to the Minister of Education.

These acts of solidarity demonstrate that with a collective voice – teachers can be heard!

As we continue to negotiate a contract, we have an individual and collective responsibility to existing clauses that have been hard fought and agreed to by both parties;

- 5 ½ hour instructional day
- guaranteed preparation time
- voluntary participation in extra-curricular activities
- duty-free meal period

With a collective voice – we too can be heard!

Have a relaxing summer holiday! See you in September.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie".

If you have any questions or comments, Leslie can be reached at leslie.deck@sotamb.org or at www.sotamb.org

**“With a
collective
voice– we
too can be
heard!”**



SOTA Volleyball Social



Thanks to Marco Lopes and all the SOTA members who helped to make this event such a success!



Pass, set, spike!



An Elwick and Jewitt show-down!





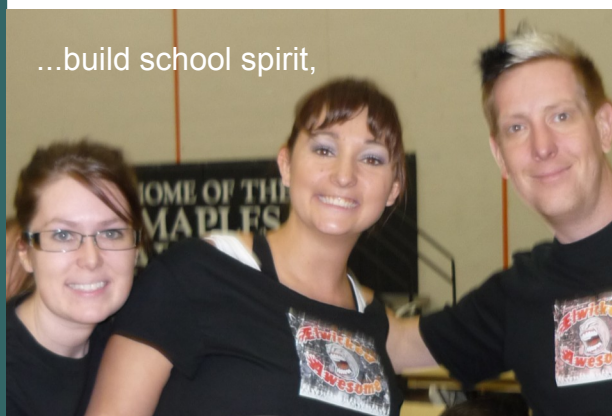
**It was a great evening full
friendly competition,
athleticism, and laughter.
But it wasn't all about the
volleyball. Some people
even found the time to...**



... play musical chairs,



... sing and dance,
or play in the band,



...build school spirit,



...and ...work on
report cards???!?



And the winning team is...



Taking home the hardware!

Recreational Teams:

1. WSP- Volley This
2. EP- Lettuce Win
3. Victory
4. Leila
5. AEW- Wright Stuff
6. RFM- Morrison's Mustangs

Competitive Teams:

1. O.V. Jewitt
2. Leila- Casual Sets
3. WSP- You've Been Served
4. Elwick- Elwicked Awesome
5. Garden City/Maples



Congrats to the winning team from the Competitive Division: MAPLES!



Economic Welfare Update

What's Happening Across Canada

Nova Scotia: (NSTU) – Facing huge budget challenges, with the first ever NDP government in the province trying to balance a budget and making major cuts to education. This has resulted in cuts to permanent teaching positions in several Boards in the province. The NSTU has started a campaign entitled “Kids Not Cuts”. Parents, teachers and students are supporting this campaign. This comes during negotiations for the NSTU public school teachers.

Quebec: (QPAT) – Although not in negotiations right now, QPAT held a rally on May 14 in front of the Quebec legislature in Quebec City. It was to show support for teachers and education, especially with respect to inclusionary issues, a huge concern in QPAT.

Ontario: (ETFO, OECTA, AEFO) – Facing a possibility of 0% increases in the next round of negotiations. At their AGM in March, OECTA delegates passed a resolution to levy a \$60.00 fee to all members for next year only, which will be used in a campaign to elect an “education friendly legislature”.

Saskatchewan: (STF) – In negotiations right now. Talks have broken down several times. STF has held three job action days to date, where they have withdrawn professional and volunteer services. Since then, teachers have ended their withdrawal of voluntary services with the appointment of a special mediator to resolve the contract dispute.

Alberta: (ATA) - Facing the lay-off of over 1000 teachers province-wide.

What's Happening Provincially:

Three northern associations and one western association ratified their contracts in May. Highlights are;

4 year deal - 2010-2014; 1 ½% in September 2010 and 1 ½ % in March 2011 and 2% the remaining 3 years plus other non-monetary benefits (a number of which SOTA already has i.e. PD fund, prep time clause)

Here in Metro a couple of associations are currently at the table with their boards.

What's Happening in SOTA:

Since SOTA declared impasse at our February 9th meeting with the Board, both parties have named their arbitrator. These two arbitrators are currently in the process of naming the third impartial arbitrator. We will keep you informed of any new developments.



A tasty banquet dinner with all the fixings



A future SOTA curler perhaps...?

**Thanks to
Murray Boyko
and West
Kildonan
Curling Club
for another
great season
of SOTA
curling!**



Now that's the spirit! Check out that homemade curling sweater!



Counting up the 50/50 money for charity.



Long Service Wine and Cheese – May 31st, 2011



25 year MTS members

Thanks to the Wine and Cheese planning committee for all their hard work! A special thanks to the GCCI catering department for the wonderful food!



The happiest group of teachers around!
Best of luck to all our retirees!



25 year SOTA and MTS members



Congratulations to our retirees:

Terry Bilyk	Brian Boychuk	Carman Bradford	Stephen Bubnowicz
Gordon Cameron	Bruce Christie	Tom Clasper	Sharon Corr
Bryan Fetter	Jenny Gee	Brenda Globa	Hal Guest
Ida Hawrylyshen	Barbara Hicks	Gordon Homenick	Ingrid Kennedy
Doris Koroscil	Bruno Malis	Carol Matsumoto	Robert McCormick
Roswitha Nowak	Eunice Pratt	Sandra Speer	Bernadette Schiminowski
Brian Zimmerman	Hilda Zubrycki		



Congratulations to our 25 Years of Service honourees:

Howard Ryant	Kim Kovacs	Brenda Globa	Valerie Williamson
Valery Czarnecki	Sid Rosenbaum	Cathy Ratuski	Larry Bartley
Rick Kraychuk	Marianna Kiva	Laura Veitch	Pat Isaak
Gillian Woodfield	Jeff Anderson	Patti Germann	Jennifer Harrison
Michelle Shukster	Missy Penner	Janet Schindell	Anna Mangano
Donna Borkowski	Melonee Collins	Nan Fewchuk	Cheryl Gaudet
Barbara Huband	Alice McGregor	Tom Melnyk	Fay Pahl
Rowan Smith-McCandless			



SEVEN OAKS TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Thanks to our outgoing SOTA executive members for all their hard work and dedication:

-Jeff Anderson -Marco Lopes
-Rob Holmes -Orah Moss
-Marusia Kulyk -Shannon Plischke

www.sotamb.org



2011-2012 SOTA Executive



President: Leslie Deck
Past President: Jamie Krutkevich Slight
Vice President: Robert La Voie
Secretary: Elisha Dahl
Treasurer: Joyce Nault

Members at large:

-Mike Mann
-Karen Mozdzen
-Catherine Robertson
-Darren Roy
-Derek Sholdice
-Hasmita Trivedi
-Kerri Waldbauer
-Elizabeth Walker