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PEITF President Bethany MacLeod addresses teachers at the PEITF Annual Convention.



*Photo: 2015 Annual Convention Committee members
L-R: Anne-Marie Rioux, Julie Gagnon*

Aspiring to Inspire

It's hard to believe that in a few short weeks we will be celebrating Christmas and a brand New Year! It has been a busy year so far in my new role as President...which might be a slight understatement! We have seen many changes, and the lingering uncertainty is still difficult for many teachers. Rest assured the Federation will continue to represent teachers during this transition. I have a competent team working hard to ensure your concerns are addressed. I would like to thank especially our professional staff and administrative staff who work tirelessly on your behalf. Hopefully Santa will leave a little extra for them under the tree this year!

I'm certain you will agree that the 2015 Annual Convention was a great success! I'd like to thank the planning committee who worked diligently to create a unique and informative professional development opportunity. The guest speakers were a huge hit and captured this year's theme, "Teaching: Aspire to Inspire." I am certain their inspiring stories resonate with many and helped to remind you of the difference you make every day, in the lives of Island students.

As quoted in **Teachers Change Lives**, *"If you want to be a great educator, you must connect with your pupils and reach them on multiple levels, because the best teachers are committed to their students' well-being both inside and outside the classroom. By forging strong relationships, educators are able to affect virtually every aspect of their students' lives, teaching them the important life lessons that will help them succeed beyond term papers and standardized tests."*

If I may put my parent hat on for a moment, I would like to say that we have many dedicated and compassionate teachers. So far, my children have collectively had approximately 216 teachers (bless their hearts!) during their time in school. I have personally experienced many teachers going the extra mile for my children. Their futures have been planned and laid out because a teacher took the time to help them realize their potential.

There is no doubt that Island teachers are passionate about helping our students achieve success. My visits to Island schools have reiterated the fact that teachers are selfless, and despite

the ever-increasing workload, they work tirelessly every day to educate our youth. However, teachers are being asked to do more and more with less and less. Teachers are mentally exhausted and physically worn down due to the challenging demands of our profession. A 25-year veteran teacher told me that last year she experienced one of the most difficult years of her teaching career due to new program implementation, class composition, and the pressures to meet student needs with fewer resources.

As a priority in my role as President, my goal is to address the realities of our classrooms. Communication is key and I hope that our government will work collaboratively with the Federation and Island teachers to decide what direction our educational system needs to take. If we are to make any advances in education, we need to work together.

Negotiations are still ongoing, but we are hopeful that outcome options will be available soon once we begin the conciliation process. We will continue to fight for the respect that teachers deserve. Respect in pay and respect in working conditions!

I am looking forward to representing Island teachers over the next couple of years. I meant what I said during my convention speech...my door is always open, and I am only a phone call or email away! I hope to visit and tour all your schools over the next few months. I will admit, I have been missing the classroom, but I know that right now, my place is here, representing Island teachers. So continue inspiring students, and I promise to be your strong voice!

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Make sure you take time to relax and enjoy the holiday season with family and friends. Take time for yourself and remember, "Today is a Gift."

Take Care.



Bethany MacLeod
President, PEITF

by Bethany MacLeod

Why not Sing?

Deep breath in...and exhale. Sometimes we need a reminder to take a moment to breathe after the one-two punch of report cards and interviews. This is a time when, on top of regular pursuits, teachers meticulously plan activities, rehearse holiday plays, and organize concerts. During these events, students act, perform, and sing to the delight of students, parents and community members alike. Sometimes, teachers join in on the performances as well for all to sing along!

At the Eastern Area Association day in May, I made the plea for teachers to share with other teachers and the public the many great things that were happening in our schools.

I know teachers are overworked, supports are limited, and trying to meet the needs of every student is overwhelming. What I also know, however, is that teachers across this province are doing great things in spite of the challenges they face. I think this is something to celebrate and sing about.

The Annual Convention theme this year, *Aspire to Inspire*, was rooted in what teachers do to inspire students in their classrooms every day. Island Teachers are planting classroom gardens, planning field trips, providing leadership opportunities for students, teaching citizenship, coaching sports teams, leading band programs, planning the above-mentioned school concerts, and doing so much more to make the school experience more enriching for their students. Far too often, however, the same

old tune is played about PEI's low-test scores, and those good news stories get ignored.

At the recent PEITF Semi-Annual meeting, PEITF Board of Governors talked about issues in our schools. One issue addressed, was that of teacher morale. Teachers, unfortunately, often unfairly wear the results of student standardized testing. These results, and subsequent finger-pointing, combined with the cuts to teaching positions and decreasing supports for students have left teachers feeling frustrated and unappreciated.

During these discussions on morale, a point raised several times was how many great teachers we have in our schools doing wonderful things. Unfortunately, these initiatives often do not make the news cycle. It's time to change that. I believe it's time to turn up the volume and sing about the great things our teachers are doing in Island schools.

There is no group more engaged and invested in students and their academic achievements than teachers, but in general, teachers are humble and don't publicize their exceptional work. They do not go above and beyond because doing so looks good, but because doing so enriches the learning and the lives of their students.

Now is the time to sing about the dedicated teachers and administrators in our buildings. What makes your building great? What events are happening in your school that are not only positive for students academically, but also create a positive experience for the student and school community?

At the Annual Convention, Joe Grondin spoke of teachers being the maestros in their classrooms. I believe these maestros need to be heard by a wider audience than the walls of a classroom or the hallways of the school. Teachers need to sing about the work being done by a colleague or by the collective choir that is the school staff. If we can sing more regularly about the great things that happen in our island schools in spite of the challenges teachers face, we may find that more people join in and sing along about what their child's teacher or their child's school does to enrich the student experience.

Maybe then, those that criticize the work that teachers do in inspiring today's youth will change their tune and sing along.



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Newsletter**

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Member CEPA

by Chad Gallant

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AEELF



RTA CORNER

by Sheridyn MacNeill
President, Retired Teachers' Association


The Christmas season is just around the corner and I want to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a blessed holiday and continued success with your students in 2016.

The PEIRTA have been very busy with our Six Standing Committees taking care of the needs of our over one thousand members on P.E.I. Our Executive has met with Hon. Doug Currie and also with the leader of the Green Party-Mr. Peter Bevan Baker as we have voiced concerns made to our Health Plan.

In June, Vice President Joyce McCardle, Eastern Representative of ACER-CART Jim MacAulay, and myself travelled to Ottawa to meet with the National Retired Teachers' members and Executive that form ACER-CART. They had many informative speakers presenting over the two day conference and letting us know how they are lobbying, sending

letters and meeting whenever possible with Government officials on Seniors needs across the country.

Our Annual Meeting was held November 5th at the Jack Blanchard Center with the guest speaker Calvin Joudrie. He gave us an update on all this happening on P.E.I. concerning Long Term and Community Care. It was information that many of us need to know about as we travel on this journey of life whether for ourselves, our spouse or our parents or other loved ones. Our new Executive for 2016-2018 were elected and installed and will begin their duties in January.

We wish to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very "MERRY CHRISTMAS". We hope that you have some time to relax, reflect and spend time with family and friends. May you feel renewed to continue this wonderful profession you have chosen. Last but not least may you and your students look forward to knowledge and challenges ahead in 2016! 

BOARD OF GOVERNORS Area Coordinators and Assistants 2015-2016

This issue features the teachers who continue to work hard to support and represent your viewpoints and concerns. The members of the Board of Governors give generously of their time to do this work. On behalf of all teachers, accept our thanks for representation, hard work and professionalism.



Marcel Landry
École Évangéline
Coordinator
AEELF



Justine Roy
École-sur-Mer
Assistant Coordinator
AEELF



Sheryll O'Hanley
Morell Cons.
Coordinator
EATA



Sherri Campbell
Morell Cons.
Assistant Coordinator
EATA



Gisèle Smallman
Bloomfield Elem.
Coordinator
WATA



Sharon Anderson
Somerset Elem.
Assistant Coordinator
WATA



Micheline Landry
École-sur-Mer



Manon Leclair
École Évangéline



Jannik Melanson
École La-Belle-Cloche



Robert Cormier
École François-Buote



Tania Simard
École Pierre-Chiasson



Jolene Willis
École Saint-Augustin



Sheila Gaudette
Tignish Elem.



Heidi Lawless
Queen Elizabeth Elem.



Anne Marie Muise
St. Louis Elem.



Barbra Forbes
Three Oaks Sr. High



Mary Hart
M.E. Callaghan Int.



Andy Doran
Ellerslie Elem.



Cindy MacKendrick
Three Oaks Sr. High



Kimberley Williams
Westisle Composite High



Heather Harris
Alberton Elem.



Paul Shepard
Parkside Elem.



Lesley Cousins
Kinkora Reg. High



Kendra Silliker
O'Leary Elem.



Eamon Graham
Kensington Inter.



Kimberley Studer
Elm Street Elem.



Melanie Gallant
Somerset Elem.



Elizabeth Johnston
Miscouche



Stephanie Betts
Athena Cons.



Rory Herget
Bloomfield Elem.



Kelly Gorrill
Hernewood Inter.



Klasina Driscoll
Greenfield Elem.



Mark MacNeill
Summerside Inter.



Paige Ricketts
Substitute Teacher
Representative

Missing Photo: Paul Quinlan
Amherst Cove Cons.



Jill Coffin
Bluefield Sr. High



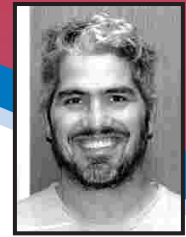
Edwena Arbuckle
Montague Cons.



Jeff Trainor
Englewood Cons.



Alison Kelly-Doyle
L.M. Montgomery Elem.



John Michael Murphy
Birchwood Int.



Amy Dalziel
Sherwood Elem.



Joanne MacNevin
Prince Street Elem.



Jodi Murphy
Charlottetown Rural High



Lori Ronahan
Colonel Gray Sr. High



Jennifer Mutch
East Wiltshire Int.



Linda Gallant
Stonepark Int.



Kurt Duncan
Sherwood Elem.



Darwin Woods
Eliot River Elem.



Lacey Gallant
Spring Park Elem.



Helen Smith-MacPhail
Stonepark Int.



JoAnne Jay
St. Jean Elem.



Elizabeth Crawford
West Royalty Elem.



Lana Mill
Belfast Cons.



Mark Enman
Central Queens Elem.



Michaela Oliver
Morell Cons.



Kelli Seaward
Glen Stewart Primary



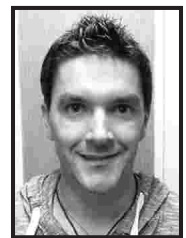
Catherine MacDougall
Charlottetown Rural High



Jillian Power
Montague Reg. High



Noreen Lisi
Cardigan Cons.



Allister Smith
Queen Charlotte Int.



Gillian Veld
Parkdale Elem.



Ryan Casey
Montague Int.



Tracey Evison
West Kent Elem.



Treena Hann
Stratford Elem.



Marion McGaughey
Donagh Regional



Vanda Deighan
West Royalty Elem.



Stephanie Ellsworth-Reid
Westwood Primary



Robert Fitzpatrick
Georgetown Elem.



Melissa MacKinnon
Mount Stewart Cons.



Mark McGillivray
Gulf Shore Cons.



Lori-Dawn Gordon
Morell Reg. High



Clodagh Peverley
Westwood Primary



Christina MacAulay
Souris Cons.



Aletha Coady
Prince Street Elem.



David Kerwin
Glen Stewart Primary



Judy Lamey
English Language
School Board



Jack Headley
Bluefield Sr. High



Ronald Munn
Montague Reg. High



Ghislain Bernard
Dept. of Education
Early Learning and
Culture



Monica Rafuse
English Language
School Board

Missing Photos: Tammy Cann
Southern Kings Cons.
Dale McIsaac
Colonel Gray Sr. High
David Wood
Vernon River Cons.

Kevin Peters
Souris Reg. High
Pamela Kennedy
St. Jean Elem.



Michel Plamondon

Why the Bridge Benefit?

When you receive your pension statement, it states that you are entitled to a lifetime pension and a bridge benefit which is payable from the date of retirement to age 65 only. In this article, I will try to

explain the origin of the bridge benefit.

In 1966, the Government of Canada launched the Canada Pension Plan. At that time it was decided that the CPP and the TSF (Teachers' Superannuation Fund) would be treated as separate entities. The decision to maintain the two plans as separate entities continued until 1972. At that time, the TSF was amended to provide for the integration of the two plans. The idea was to keep the total contributions paid for pension as low as possible while providing teachers with a reasonable pension; part to be paid from the TSF and part to be paid by the CPP. The total to be paid by the two plans would amount to 2% a year for each year of service.

At that time, it was not possible to access CPP until age 65. Thus it was decided that the TSF would pay the full 2% until age 65 and that at age 65, when the CPP started, there would be a reduction in the TSF which would be replaced by the CPP. The net result was that teachers would still be receiving the 2% per year promised. At the time the reduction was known as the CPP offset. Every major teachers' and public service plan in the country adopted this approach.

Over the years, the terminology has changed. Instead of saying that teachers would see a reduction in their pension at age 65, the concept of bridge benefit was introduced. We now say that you receive a lifetime pension and a supplementary payment called the bridge benefit which is only payable until age 65. The net result is the same. At age 65, a teacher receives less money from the TSF.

Earlier in the article, I mentioned that when the TSF and the CPP were integrated, the CPP was not available until age 65. At that time, when teachers retired, they would receive their lifetime pension and the bridge benefit until the age 65. At age

65, the bridge benefit would stop and the CPP would start. In general, the amount received from the CPP would be slightly higher than the amount lost from the cessation of the bridge. As well, the old age security would start so the retirement income of teachers after age 65 was higher than their income before 65.

However, in 1987, CPP changed the age of eligibility. It became possible to access the CPP at age 60. Mind you, it came at a cost. You were charged a penalty of 0.5% a month for every month that you took your pension before 65 or 30% if you started at 60. Since then, the penalty has been increased to 0.6% a month or 36% if you start your CPP at age 60.

Interestingly enough, even though it was now possible to access the CPP 5 years earlier at age 60, there was no change made to the bridge benefit. Fortunately, it did not stop at age 60 but continued to be paid until age 65. Teachers who opted to start their CPP at age 60 received the lifetime pension, the bridge benefit and the reduced CPP during that period.

It should be pointed out that during the pension reforms of the mid nineties, legislation was passed which stopped the bridge at age 60, however, this legislation was reversed two years later and returned the payments of the bridge until age 65.

As far as total income is concerned: If you start receiving your CPP at age 60, your income will be higher between age 60 and age 65 because you are receiving your lifetime pension, the bridge benefit, and the reduced CPP. At age 65, the bridge benefit stops. In the past, the bridge benefit would be replaced by the CPP but it is not the case now because you are already receiving your CPP.

In the past, the Old Age Security would start at age 65 and replace some of the income lost from the cessation of the bridge. However, presently the OAS is gradually being delayed to age 67. Hopefully, the new Liberal Government will keep its promise to return the OAS to age 65.

I hope I have provided some clarification on the concept of the bridge pension. In my next article, I will show how the bridge is calculated. Enjoy the holidays!

by Michel Plamondon

A Thank you from the Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and its advisory committee would like to thank everyone who attended the November 6 open house celebrating the EAP's 25th year of service to the provincial government.

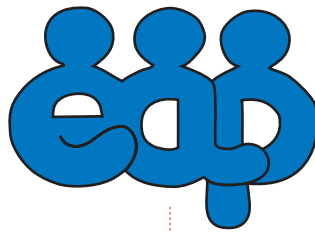
A program is only as good as its people, and all previous EAP managers, staff and advisory committee members deserve a great deal of credit for bringing it this far. Their dedication and commitment has helped build a confidential, competent, and accessible service for employees and their immediate family members.

Thank you to everyone who donated to our door prizes (UPSE, PEITF, PEINU, IUOE, and PSC) and congratulations to the lucky winners: Philip Davis, Tanya Rowell, Anne Nicole, Elaine Hardy, Pam Newcombe, Janet Horne, Leah Eldershaw, Michel Plamondon, Donna Myers, Kim Kempton, Bethany MacLeod, Tanya Tynski, Michelle Harris-Genge, Jenna Clow, Liz Murray, Teresa Ellis, Ed MacAulay and Allan O'Keefe.

On behalf of the staff of the Employee Assistance Program, thank you again.



EAP advisory committee members gather at the November 6 open house for EAP's 25th anniversary, including (left to right): Patrick MacFadyen, PEITF; Bethany MacLeod, PEITF; Bonnie Deighan, EAP; Stacey Hutchinson-Maund, EAP; Minister Allen Roach, minister responsible for the PSC; Mona O'Shea, PEINU; Janet MacDonald, EAP; Linda Arsenault, EAP; Tanya Tynski, HPEI; and Glen Doyle, PSC. Not present for the photo were Teresa Ellis, CUPE Health; Carolyn DesRoches, IUOE; Blair Weeks, UPSE; Robert Coughlin, CUPE Education; and Paula Annear, ELSB



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fax to 902-368-5737 or e-mail to eap@gov.pe.ca

Our web site is
www.gov.pe.ca/psc/eap



Annual Convention Planning Committee and PEITF President recording Annual Convention podcast.

CONTACT 2015 in St. John, New Brunswick: On August 4th-7th educators from across Atlantic Canada joined together on the UNBSJ campus in Saint John, New Brunswick to take part in the Conference on New Techniques and Classroom Teaching or CONTACT. Over the course of the four days, participants explored the evolving requirements of the teaching profession and the challenges of today's classroom under the theme "Waves of Change – Oceans of Opportunity!"

CONTACT is an annual conference that is sponsored by the four Atlantic Provincial Teacher Organizations. Next year's conference will be hosted by the NSTU at St. FX in Antigonish on August 2nd-5th. Mark your Calendars!



Bethany MacLeod visits students from Michelle Pineau-Campbell's class at Alberton Elementary.

PEITF President visits Bloomfield Elementary.



DSS 2015 – Sackville, New Brunswick

"In 15 years I have attended many sessions, I honestly believe this will do more to benefit me professionally than any I have ever taken before."

Developing Successful Schools is a conference that takes place annually on the Mount Allison Campus. DSS 2016 will take place July 4th-7th – mark your calendar and stay tuned for more details!

- DSS Participants



From July 6th-9th, an exceptional group of educational leaders from across Atlantic Canada converged on the campus of Mount Allison University in Sackville to learn together under the direction of John Clarke on the topic of Cognitive Coaching for Educational Leaders.

Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary



Shaun MacCormac

Although Christmas is a time for traditions, I am going to forgo one that was passed along to me by my predecessors. I usually write a Dear Santa letter for many people in this newsletter, but this year I have decided to concentrate on teachers. By “teachers”, I mean classroom teachers, administrators, itinerant teachers, Department Consultant teachers, Board-based Consultant teachers, ... you get the picture.

In hindsight, I'm sure many of us wonder at this time of the school year why we would ever get ourselves into such a crazy thing as the public education system. The answer comes pretty quickly to me as I think back – I had NO idea it would be like this.

If you're a proponent of Malcolm Gladwell's book “Outliers” than you believe it takes 10,000 hours to master something. Maybe you're closer to believing a Princeton University study that says in education you only need 4% of that amount of time (for those of you mathematically challenged, that would be 400 hours). Either way, we all know that the people who make the decisions in education seem to change everything every 40 hours, or so it seems. Teachers never seem to get time to master

any new idea that comes into education. That can be extremely frustrating and creates a lot of work as things constantly change on you.

I could go on, as you know, but that is not the intent of this article. This article is simply to recognize the wild world you work in and to send you some words of encouragement.

Work is work. It is important work that you do, and you should take it seriously, but it is work. Work cannot smile. Work cannot hug you or say kind words. It cannot wag its tail or purr. It cannot offer words of encouragement. It does not say “I love you.” It is work.

I hope that you can leave it behind for a while over the holidays and concentrate on all the people and pets that bring you happiness, joy and warmth. I also hope that you can be kind to one another. No one understands what you do everyday more than each of you. The easiest desire to support a teacher should come from another teacher.

Merry Christmas, and happy holidays.

by Shaun MacCormac



Happy Holidays

from all of us at the

PEI Teachers' Federation



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