



President's Message: Harmony

We frequently hear about teachers attempting to create a proper work-life balance. The phrase seems to suggest that we must somehow balance these – and, for those of you who can still remember when playgrounds had teeter-totters, balance suggests equality. We must somehow do an equal amount of life related activities and work related activities to achieve wellness. It is not specified whether these two must be balanced in terms of quantity or in terms of quality, but balanced they must be. Enter the teacher who spends the entire weekend marking and then skips a family get-together Sunday night to cut out Shamrocks for Monday morning who then feels guilty Monday night about not keeping a proper work-life balance and therefore schedules a Tuesday dinner with her parents which only means she has to stay up until 1:00AM Tuesday night to sort popsicle sticks for Wednesday's bridge building activity. This sort of balance is not the path to wellness. Amy Vetter, in an article for [Inc. Magazine](#), says balance (aka equality) should not be the goal, rather we should work toward work-life harmony. Her argument is that: "harmony implies you're engaged in work and life at the rhythm that makes the most sense for you at any given time." Teachers work in a profession that has many ebbs and flows. There are busy times, there are times, such as the week just past, when we can step back. Life also brings us busy years and years when we have less on our plate. Ms. Vetter, suggests that we can ease the stress of striving for work-life balance by riding these waves and seeking harmony instead. We should not stress the times when work takes over but revel in those challenges – work is part of life. Equally so, we must recognize and seize the times when work slows so that we can celebrate in all the other joys life brings. Have a great April everyone; remember to be well.

ITA AGM: April 25, 4:30PM

"It could have been worse" is how some have reacted to the government wage freeze just announced. And, I suppose, it could have been; but just because it could have been worse, doesn't make it good. The government has made a major incursion into the collective bargaining process and this is cause for concern, especially, if one believes, as many do, that this is the thin edge of the wedge. It is important for all of us to be informed about how our union is working for us and with other unions to protect our rights, and to make sure that this gets no worse. Norm Gould, President of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, will be speaking on this topic at our AGM; please plan to attend.

The second major topic of our AGM will be violence in the workplace. Now that the divisional Workplace Safety and Health Committee is up and running we will be looking to improve both the reporting procedures and divisional responses to violent incidents in the workplace. Come out and hear what has been done so far and where we are going with this important topic. All of us deserve to work in an environment free from harassment and violence, let's start working to get there.

AGM is on Tuesday, April 25, 4:30 PM Stonewall Collegiate Music room.

ITA Executive Elections

Each year we look for willing volunteers to fill the various positions on the ITA Executive and each year some of you step up and help us out. This year is no different. All positions on the Executive are open for election each year. We currently have nominees in all but two of the positions: the position of Professional Development Chair and the newly created Chair of Indigenous Affairs are currently vacant. If you have interest in serving on the Executive in these or any other position, please contact Maria Nickel. More election details will be included in the April 18 newsletter.

PD Survey

Thank you to all of you who answered the recent Workload Survey. Our responses have been submitted to MTS and we will await the results. Surveys inform discussions with government and, locally, with the division. Many of the questions on the MTS Workload Survey were also used on the ITA workload survey; we will be able to track any changes. MTS has now released a PD survey with similar aims. This survey is shorter than the Workload survey and better yet, it's online. You will soon receive an email with a link to the survey. It takes about ten minutes and will provide both MTS and your local Association information on the type of PD in which you would like to participate – and the type you would not. For its brevity, the survey is quite far ranging and asks your interest levels on a number of possible PD topics. There is room for comments to add any additional insights you might have on PD in the division. Please take the time to complete this survey; if our response rate is good, we will be able to use this information in discussions with the division.

WELCOM (from mbteach.org)

Women in Education Leadership Commission (WELCOM) Telephone Townhall Planned for Thursday, April 6th, 2017. This winter WELCOM held focus groups across Manitoba to hear from women members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society about their experiences, their goals, the barriers, and the support in their careers as leaders or aspiring leaders in education. Now, WELCOM is offering women MTS members in every corner of Manitoba the chance to participate in a live townhall. The telephone townhall will be held on Thursday, April 6th at 7:00 PM. Renowned Winnipeg Free Press columnist Jen Zoratti will be guiding the conversation, so be sure to save the date so you can share your perspectives and hear from your female colleagues as they talk about their professional journey. Details about how you can participate will be posted as the date approaches. However only MTS members who have registered on MyProfile will be invited to participate, so make sure that your information is up to date by visiting memberlink.mbteach.org.

ITA AGM

Tuesday, April 25

**4:30PM, Stonewall Collegiate
Music Room**

Agenda

- Elections
- Budget
- Collective Bargaining: getting ready for 2018
- Violence in the Workplace
- Norm Gould: MTS President – The State of the Union