

R.E.T.T.A.

206-1100 Concordia Ave.
Winnipeg, MB
R2K 4B8
Ph: 661-1823
Fax: 661-0172
Email: office@retta.ca
http://www.retta.ca

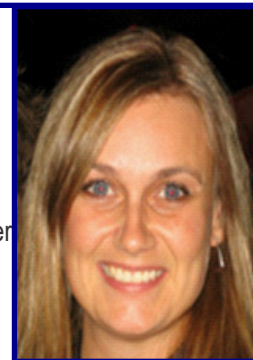


RETTA RECORD

The official newsletter of the River East Transcona Teachers' Association
October 2010

President's Message - Jennifer Schlag

I had the honor of listening to Dr. John Wiens (Dean Faculty of Education- U of M) this past week. I'm sure that many of you have had the experience of listening to his stories or taking in one of his classes. On this occasion, Dr. Wiens shared with his audience the importance of words and their impact on meaning, interpretation and images we create from those words. So as I reflect upon our return to a new school year, I am thinking about the importance of the difference between language and thought. Francis Bacon once said that "Men imagine that their minds have the command of language, but it so often happens that language bears rule over their thoughts". This statement is useful in reminding us that language can hamper not only conversation of thought, but thought itself. Modern research confirms that language and thought are inevitably connected- one is highly dependent upon the other. So when I say, our Association has filed for arbitration, that simple statement can sound like a straight-forward update, resignation, or a threat. So it is very important for us to understand- and be understood-that this is just another step in the process of contract resolution. It does not mean we have given up on rational discourse, conciliation, or formal negotiation- indeed, it is my hope that we can yet go back to those processes. We'll keep you up to date on this important topic. And as I watch the different trends across the Division- I am reminded again how critical it is to ensure that properly certified teachers continue to teach kids. This is not some arrogant or self-interested call to preserve privilege, it is a call back to what lies at the core of our professional identities: standards, training and expertise. These are the reasons we have the finest education system in the world. Investments in children have no comparison with any other investments we can make as a society. This is an issue of vital concern to everyone. Let me belatedly welcome everyone back to our grand enterprise. We will continue to advocate strongly in your interests, for the benefit of all children in our system. Please don't hesitate to contact the office at any time if you have concerns or questions.



Jennifer Schlag

• Taken from the Frame Audit:

Note: The type of FTE teachers is very specific (for example, would not include Administration in this number) and listed in the FRAME annual report. Please give us a call if you have any questions!

River East Transcona	2002-2003	2009-2010
Clinicians	4.25	24.00
Education Assistants (para's)	372.89	464.35
FTE Teachers (Regular)	1113.27	1072.22
Eligible Enrolment (Kid count)	17,828.8	16,097.3

Welcome back to the beginning of what will hopefully be an exciting and prosperous new teaching year. As you may have heard RETTA has formally declared impasse in bargaining with the River East Transcona School Board of Trustees, This means that we are heading down the road to interest arbitration. Interest arbitration is a legislated substitute for a stoppage of work. It is our final dispute resolution mechanism. This means that an impartial arbitrator or board of arbitrators will be appointed to simulate the agreement which could have been reached by both parties prior to reaching impasse. What does this mean for you? It means that we are still operating under the last collective agreement with respect to benefits, wages, and working conditions. Both parties can agree to meet at any time to continue discussions, go for mediation, or await the arbitration settlement.



The arbitration process can be quite lengthy and at this time we do not anticipate hearing dates until late spring.

The Personal Professional Development Fund still has money available. You can check out the guidelines and download the application form at www.retta.ca.

I hope to see you at the RETTA volleyball social on November 5th, 2010!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the RETTA office or contact me via email at jlevesque@retta.ca.

Peace, Friendship, Teaching and Much Much More...

By Jennifer Levesque

I have just returned from an incredible journey thanks to the Canadian Teachers' Federation's (CTF) Project Overseas which is sponsored by the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Since January I have been preparing to lead a team of six Canadian teachers to volunteer in Kissy, Sierra Leone, Africa from July 7th until August 6th, 2010. Our team met in Ottawa for the first time at the beginning of July and even though we had introduced ourselves on email and via teleconference we really began to appreciate each other's talents when we met in person. CTF offers a three day brief but intense orientation to Project Overseas in Ottawa, which this year saw 53 teachers from across the country travel to 12 different host countries to provide in-servicing to teachers in Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia (Mongolia). While working in conjunction with local co-tutors, basic workshops on gender equity, HIV/AIDS, workshop facilitation, and unionism are a common thread of all projects. Our specific in-service in Sierra Leone had two parts; in-servicing in the core subjects of mathematics, language arts, social studies, and environmental studies in two ten-day sessions for a total of 100 primary teachers, and the first phase of a 3-year pilot project on introducing peace education into the curriculum for 23 teachers during a twenty-day session.

Our participants joined us at Hotel 5:10 (named for World Teacher's Day October 5th of each year) in Kissy (just east of Freetown). The hotel was built by the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU) and boasts a state of the art computer training centre. The Canadians were quite impressed that the union provided both food and accommodation at the hotel for every teacher receiving the in-service training. Our participants came from each region of Sierra Leone, the North, South, East and West and some had traveled for more than 10 hours on rough roads to complete either the 10-day core subject in-servicing or the 20-day peace project. This year's in-servicing theme was "Building teacher capacity for quality teaching and learning." While our Sierra Leonean co-tutors provided the context for our workshops, the Canadians brought a wealth of resources that focused on

child-centered teaching techniques (CCTT). Our participants were tasked with creating a fully detailed lesson note (plan) and demonstrating a practice lesson for their students.

It was with great pride that I watched my participants demonstrate a lesson using a CCTT like group work for the first time. Other highlights for me included helping my students create teaching and learning materials for their lessons such as posters and flashcards, watching the sheer delight on the faces of my students as they used a computer for the very first time in their lives to create a word document, getting to know and work with both my amazing Canadian team and Sierra Leone counterparts, sharing information and activities such as hockey at Canada night, dancing and drumming at Sierra Leone night, enjoying a meal of chicken and rice with groundnut soup and fresh salad at Lengekoro Village, visiting Bumbuna waterfall, trying grilled barracuda and playing football with the children at Bureh beach, and the genuine gratitude that was expressed by each and every participant for us simply being there to teach and learn from them.

Upon arrival in Sierra Leone every pre-conceived notion that I had about this beautiful country was dispelled instantaneously. There is an undeniable joy that exudes from every person despite the horrors some have witnessed. It was the capacity of the Sierra Leonean people to be able to forgive each other and continue to work peacefully together to rebuild their nation that impressed me the most. There is an intangible beauty in that which North Americans would be indebted to learn. We were welcomed with open hearts and open arms in every school, village and home that we entered. We came as strangers but we left as friends.

For more information on how you can become involved in Project Overseas, contact Nancy Kerr, Staff Officer of the Manitoba Teachers' Society at 888-7961. Applications for next year's project are due November 1st, 2010.

For more information on how you or your class can get involved in learning more about Sierra Leone check out the school twinning project at <http://www.cdpeace.org>.



Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives
March 18th-21st 2010
By Patricia Douglas

This amazing professional development opportunity took place at the Culinary Institute of America in the town of St Helena in the Napa Valley, California. Faculty from Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health presented current information about diet and nutrition.

We had the opportunity in between lectures, to taste and prepare foods at the Institute's teaching kitchens. Fifteen thousand square feet of stainless steel teaching heaven! I was given the opportunity to work with a chef who had been employed previously at the renowned French Laundry in the nearby town of Rutherford.

As the conference was hosted by Harvard Medical College, the focus was how to teach others to select, purchase and prepare foods to reduce disease risk and replace unhealthy habits. The ultimate goal is a model where hospitals will have teaching kitchens. Wow, just like we have! Participants included mainly doctors and dietitians, from all over the US, a few from Canada even as far away as Australia.

This conference gave me current information about nutrition and wellness in a beautiful setting. I felt fortunate that in our school system we offer Foods and Nutrition programs to our Middle Years students. I learned that in many American schools this is not the case; the programs are mainly Culinary Arts in the senior years. It was an amazing opportunity that will enhance my program at school as well as help me maintain my own wellness. What an excellent professional development opportunity. I came back inspired that I could make a difference in the lives of my students. Because we flew into San Francisco, we were able to take a side trip to Monterey, visit the Aquarium and drive the famous 17 mile drive to Pebble Beach Golf Course. Thank you to the PPDF committee for approving my participation in this event.



Peanut-Orange Crusted Salmon

Yield: 6 portions

6 salmon steak , or one large salmon fillet

Juice of one lemon

Salt and pepper

½ cup White wine

Crust

¾ cup toasted peanuts

¾ cup Panko bread crumbs

Zest of one orange

2 tbsp chopped parsley

2 cloves minced garlic

2 tbsp olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Serve with Green Goddess Dressing and Grilled Summer Squash

- 1. Preheat the oven to 450. Sprinkle the fish with lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.**
- 2. Chop the peanuts fine but not to a powder or paste. Mix the nuts and bread crumbs, orange zest, parsley, garlic and stir in the olive oil. There should be only enough oil so that if you squeeze this mixture tightly in your fist it will hold loosely together. Taste and season the crumbs with salt and pepper to your taste.**
- 3. Sprinkle each salmon steak with 1/6 of the crumb mixture and press it lightly into the fish. Place the fish into a sauté pan , pour the white wine into the bottom of the pan to keep the fish moist as it roasts. Roast the fish in the preheated oven until the topping is golden – about 15 min.**
- 4. Transfer the fish to a plate and serve with your favourite grilled vegetables and a green goddess dressing.**

Source: Culinary Institute of America – St Helena, CA

Green Goddess Dressing

1 shallot

1 clove garlic

2 tbsp white wine vinegar

½ lemon

½ lime

1-2 salt packed anchovies

1ripe avocado

2 tbsp olive oil

½ cup plain yogurt

3 tbsp chopped parsley

2 tbsp chopped tarragon

2 tbsp chopped cilantro

1 tbsp chopped basil

½ tsp chopped thyme

salt and pepper to taste

- 1. Peel and finely chop the shallot and garlic.**
- 2. I use the Magic Bullet, but a food processor would work well. Put in the shallot and garlic add the white wine vinegar, a squeeze of both lemon and lime, the anchovies (which I left out) and chopped avocado. Blend well.**
- 3. Gradually add olive oil and yogurt, and flavour with herbs, season with salt and pepper.**

Source: Culinary Institute of America, St Helena, CA.

Group Benefits Up Date

By: Jason Oliver – RETTA Executive

There are two main updates for members this year:

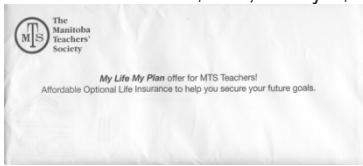
Blue Cross Extended Rates and My life My Plan (Life Insurance)

Blue Cross Extended Health Coverage:

- RETTA members belong to the MTS sponsored Compulsory Plan through Blue Cross
- Rate is going up 9.5% , New Rates of January 1 2011 are 53.95/single, 107.90/family

FOUR REASONS WHY YOU SEE AN INCREASE

1. Claims Experience on physiotherapy / massage, moving from \$500 to **\$700 benefit in 2010**
2. Prescription Drugs - %53 of Claims
 - FYI, Lipitor is in the 1, 2 and 4 spots in top ten drugs used; 8% of total drug claims. Lipitor is a **cholesterol** reducing drug and is coming off patent November 2010, replaced by generics (approx %30 savings), thus our plans drug costs should decrease next claims year.
3. Dispensing Fees – Moved From \$4 to **\$6 benefit in 2010** (Avg Claim \$10.81), the approx cost \$400,000
 - Savings can be made by shopping were the dispensing fee is lower: Costco \$4.46 (membership not required), London Drugs \$7.91, Wal-Mart \$8.53, Sobeys \$8.73. As well try to have your entire prescription filled out completely, all refills, if possible.



4. General Health Inflation – General Health Costs

My life My Plan

This is an optional life Insurance offered to members. You should have received a white envelope (shown above) that had the MTS logo in the upper left hand corner and **My Life My Plan** on the front. It is very important that you open that up and read it. The plan is very good and here are some highlights:

- Sun Life Provider
- \$250,000 each is available to both you and your spouse
- Up to \$50,000 per child under 18 or 25 in school
- If either parent is insured, \$10,000 per child is provided free.
- Up to \$30,000 available to working teachers without insurability proof, from October 1st to November 30th, great for teachers you wouldn't pass a proof of good health.
- Great option for those teachers that are close to retirement who want to have life insurance in retirement. MPSEGLIP is great , however when you come to retire it stops and you have roll it into a private Life Insurance, price can go up considerably.
- Use the insurance for Mortgage Insurance, much better value
- Teachers are considered a “good” risk group therefore that's why we have better rates than most.
- For \$100,000 for a non-smoker at age 40 your annual premium is \$96.00.

If you have any questions or need a new white envelope, feel free to contact the at joliver@retta.ca



RIVER EAST TRANSCONA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Presents



A VOLLEYBALL SOCIAL EVENING



- ✓ Free Admission
- ✓ Meet your colleagues
- ✓ Enter a school team
- ✓ Get out and socialize
- ✓ Dance and have fun

FRIDAY, 05 NOVEMBER 2010

6:30 P.M. – 1:00 A.M.

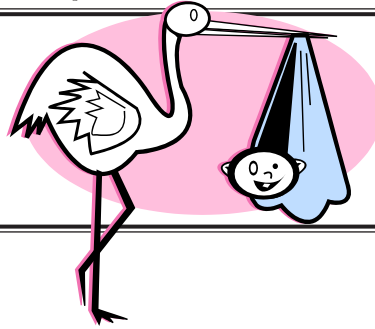
**VALLEY GARDENS COMMUNITY CLUB/
VALLEY GARDENS MIDDLE SCHOOL**



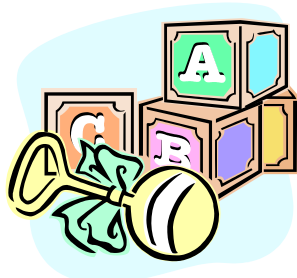
RIVER EAST TRANSCONA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Presents

MATERNITY/ PARENTAL LEAVE



INFORMATION WORKSHOP



- ◆ Maternity/Parental Leave provisions
- ◆ E.I. Benefits
- ◆ E.I. Benefits Top-Up
- ◆ Other Benefit provisions

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2010

MILES MACDONELL LIBRARY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2011

**KILDONAN EAST COLLEGIATE
LIBRARY**

4:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.