

President's Message - Dean Elliott

I trust that everyone had a relaxing "Spring Break" and is well rested for the final push to the end of the school year. There are a couple of events that I would like to highlight today. Firstly, congratulations are in order for our negotiations team led by Scott Miller, with Erin Williams, Michael Ferchuk, and Heather Paul as supporting cast. Together with Judy Balabas and Bobbie Ethier from MTS, they have successfully negotiated an "agreement in committee" that was passed unanimously at our last executive meeting. What this means is that the FTA executive feel that the agreement is a significant enough improvement in salaries and benefits to take it to the membership for the ratification vote. You, the membership, decide on the package as a whole whether to accept or reject the contract. That ratification vote coincides with our own FTA executive election on May 1st.

You will recall that around this time last year the membership voted on chang-

ing the FTA constitution to do away with a single representative from the ten districts and move to a two member representation for each area in the Division. This will align FTA executive representation with the Division organization of schools into areas. The total number of executive members would remain the same at ten but the opportunity to be familiar with your representative would be increased from contact at area wide in-servicing, Frontier Games events and so on. Last year's elections proceeded under the old constitution as did representation for this year. Next year's executive will be under the new constitution of two representatives from each area. I will leave it to the Chief Returning Officer to report on the results of the nomination process, but suffice it to say that we will have an election this year.

I would like to thank all of those that completed our own FTA safety sur-

vey and the MTS workload survey. Edie Turner is working on compiling the results of the safety survey and comparing them with past years. This information is shared with the Division and they are very interested in how teachers regard their safety in schools and communities. Unfortunately the response to the workload survey was not terrific. I received a high percentage of forms that did not have your membership number on them. It appears that MTS will be using that number frequently in the future for such things as on-line surveys. Ensure that you know your number or how to get it.

I wish everyone a successful end to their school year. Remember if you have a concern please contact your FTA executive representative. Contact information is always located on the back of The Voice which is located on-line at www.frontiteacher.ca

May 1st, 2007
Let YOUR Voice Be Heard!
VOTE!

Important Dates:

April 30th - Resignation deadline if you were hired **AFTER** Dec. 18th, 2004

May 1st - FTA Elections and Ratification
Vote for Collective Agreement

May 31st - Resignation deadline if you were hired **BEFORE** Dec. 18th, 2004.

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FTA ELECTION - Candidates for President-Designate



Wendell Head

Why vote for me? Well, because I believe the FTA has a very important role to play in protecting the rights of teachers, keeping them informed of important policies, and improving working conditions right across the board. And because I speak up for what I believe in.

OK, but can I speak up about the issues and concerns facing our teachers? Absolutely! I have been with the Division for many years now. I know what it's like to teach in both an isolated, fly-in commu-

nity, and the biggest school in the Division. As such I am aware of the concerns and priorities of our membership, and can address many of them from first-hand experience.

Have I had any experience on the Executive? Yes. Since 2005, I have served on the Executive as both Public Relations Chair and Vice-President. In these roles, I have published *The Voice*, begun work on the FTA website, and have served on the Liaison Committee, which meets with the Chief Superintendent to address the

concerns of all our members.

So what's the bottom line? Do you want a President who is going to represent your best interests? Do you want someone who is going to address your concerns, and not be afraid to stand up for your rights? Do you want a President who will affect positive change? If you answered "Yes" to these questions, then you already know what the bottom line is in this election - and you should vote for me!!



Scott Miller

I have lived in Gillam for the last 25 years, making me a "lifer." I came from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia (home of the Bluenose) to the "Great White North." Married with 2 children, the north has been good to me. After years in middle & high school, I became a teaching administrator - making me a PVP "Playing Vice-Principal." Sorry for those who believe I should take my position more seriously, I just can't do it. Life without humor is just not life. For many years the FTA were faceless and

nameless people, who protected me and gave me raises. I was busy with other things like family. In my spare time I studied medieval and Canadian history and started making medieval armour. One of those hobbies I still continue, like reading, sailing and weightlifting.

As my children grew, I became older and was elected to the FTA. Notice I did not say "wiser." I soon became the Collective Bargaining Chair. If you want to decide if you want to vote for me, study the last

three collective agreements. Our teachers are amongst the highest paid in the province. My committee and I have created collective agreements that all members can be proud of.

I have always tried to do the best for teachers - to protect their rights and increase allowances and pay. It is now time for a change. So for a change of life elect me as your **President Designate**, I will become your **"Black Knight!"**



Larrie Head

I have been employed with Frontier on and off for the past 20 years. I am originally from Sherridon, Manitoba and have held many different positions throughout the Division. My first experience in education was as a local chairperson then as an Educational Assistant. Education was a love that I found great value in and so I went on to the University of Brandon and obtained my Bachelor of Education Degree. Since then I have been working on the other end of the spec-

trum of education as a teacher. I have taught grades 2-11 in my career at several schools, including: Cold Lake School, Cranberry Portage Elementary, Earl Oxford Middle School, Gods Lake Narrows First Nation, Norway House, Pine Creek First Nation, Duck Bay School, Shamattawa First Nations, and Mountain View School in Barrows.

Currently my wife Mary (who is also an educator) and I are teaching at Norway House at the Helen Betty Osborne

School. Together we have raised our seven children and enjoyed a great career in teaching. I feel that my experience has given me an invaluable knowledge that would be an asset to the Frontier Teachers Association Team. Currently I hold the Professional Development Chair in FTA. I would like to gain more responsibility and experience representing the Frontier Teachers Membership at the FTA table now and in the future.

The New Collective Bargaining Agreement-in-Committee

By Scott Miller

By now, most of you have heard that we have a new Collective Agreement that is up for a ratification vote on May 1st, 2007. The new agreement would be effective July 1st, 2006 to June 30th, 2009, and we believe we have received everything we were going to receive from the Division. With binding arbitration the only alternative, we opted for an Agreement-in-Committee, as we all agreed that arbitration would not likely result in any real improvements.

On March 17th, 2007, the Agreement-in-Committee was presented to the FTA executive, who must agree with it before it can be taken to the membership for a vote. After several questions the executive accepted the Agreement-in-Committee. This was not a "rubber stamp," as the Executive probed the issues and wanted to know why we achieved certain items but not others. For example, it was questioned why administrators received larger percentage increases on bonuses. These increases were placed in the agreement because the board wanted to pay their administrators more. Another major issue of concern was that there was no new time off for teachers - no increase in Compassionate Leave, Fam-

ily Medical Leave or Personal Leave. As far as the board is concerned, teachers take far too much time away from their jobs, and would not agree to any such increases. It became a question of whether or not we broke the deal on this issue. It was extremely unlikely that arbitration would change this, so we chose not to break the deal.

The final step in the process is for you the membership to except or reject this agreement-in-committee. The information should be sent to you through the schools after Spring Break. The vote will take place the first school day in May when you will also be voting for your FTA executive. If you reject this agreement-in-committee, a new Collective Bargaining Committee will be struck and we will start negotiations anew. If you accept it, the FTA President and members of the board will sign the new agreement and back-pay will be issued, hopefully by the end of May or the beginning of June.

There are many tentative changes to the Collective Agreement, and you are advised to read through it carefully before voting. If you have any questions, ask any member of the FTA Executive for an explanation. Meanwhile, the main

points are as follows:

- Increase in salary of 3% per year for 3 years (placing us amongst the highest paid teachers in Manitoba);
- Improved salary and benefits for substitute teachers;
- Increases for consultants and coordinators;
- Increases in Isolation Allowance, ranging from 3% - 5% depending upon community;
- Peonan Point added to list for Isolation Allowance;
- New short-term disability plan (with minimal deductions from pay);
- Total accumulated sick days bumped from 120 to 124.

This agreement may be compared to the Thompson Agreement, but remember Frontier is not Thompson. Thompson teachers were willing to work to rule for a year and to talk to every com-



Scott Miller
Collective Bargaining Chair

mittee in town to get their board changed. They gave up weekends and evenings to press their issues to the public. How many teachers in the FTA could say they would do the same? Remember we still have teachers that do Lunch Duty. So if you are making this comparison, ask yourself how far you would be willing to go? Then ask how far your colleagues would be willing to go?

So please vote for the new agreement-in-committee.

CBA Negotiations Committee Includes:

Scott Miller
Erin Williams

Heather Paul
Michael Ferchuk

Let YOUR Voice be Heard!

The Voice

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FTA LOGO WINNER

Congratulations to Terry Stover, who created the winning entry for the FTA Logo Contest! Terry's Logo features a Bear and represents many qualities of the Frontier Teachers' Association and its members. Look for it in upcoming issues of The Voice! As Terry is a member of the FTA Executive, he did not accept the \$100 prize, but instead donated it to the Teacher Spotlight.

MTS Conference Diversity, Democracy, Dignity FREE REGISTRATION!!

The FTA is providing FOUR FREE registrations to the MTS Conference "Diversity, Democracy, Dignity" being held in Winnipeg on April 26th and 27th. The FTA members whose registration will be paid are:

- **Jacqueline Nogier**, Snow Lake
- **Monica Elliott**, Cormorant
- **Yvonne Fenner**, Cormorant
- **David Milley**, Area 2

The Division will cover the salary and sub costs of the four winners so they can attend the Conference. Travel and accommodations are the responsibility of the winners.

FTA Executive - Contact Information

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