

# The WTA NEWS

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## Protecting Your Collective Agreement

by: Dave Najdich, WTA President

Sounds like a rather dull topic, but at many levels it is one of the key functions of the WTA. We have a contract that exists with the WSD and it outlines the salary and working conditions of the membership. One of the critical jobs of the WTA is to ensure that those provisions are followed by our employer.

In the vast majority of cases, the WTA will bring a concern to the attention of the Division; they will review the issue and make corrections to ensure the contract is being followed. When those corrections do not happen, the Association then needs to decide if a grievance should be filed. The grievance process means the WTA's position and that of the Division is presented before a tribunal of three individuals and they determine if the contract has been violated.

### *The 5.5 hour Instructional Day*

The current collective agreement has a provision that outlines the instructional day for members. The provision states:

“20.3 The instructional day, exclusive of the midday intermission, shall be five and one-half (5 1/2) hours or such time as may be determined by the Minister of Education and shall be worked consecutively except where alternative arrangements are agreed to by a representative of the Division, a representative of the Association and the teacher.”

Another contract section requires members to be in the school building fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the instructional day.

For the average teacher, the combination of the two provisions means a teacher needs to be in the building at 8:45 AM and the instructional day starts at 9:00 AM.

### *Elmwood High School and Lengthening of the Day*

A number of years ago, the administration of Elmwood High School decided to take the opening exercises outside of the Instructional Day and place them into the five (5) minutes before the start of the day and have teachers in the building at 8:40 AM. The WTA expressed concern about the lengthening of the day to the Division and that this was a violation of the existing collective agreement. After some discussion, both parties agreed to disagree about the issue. The Association filed a grievance and the matter was brought before an arbitration panel.

The arbitration panel heard the evidence and ruled against the WSD. The panel supported the arguments presented by the WTA and indicated Elmwood had to move opening exercises back into the instructional day.

## *Protecting Your Collective Agreement cont'd.*

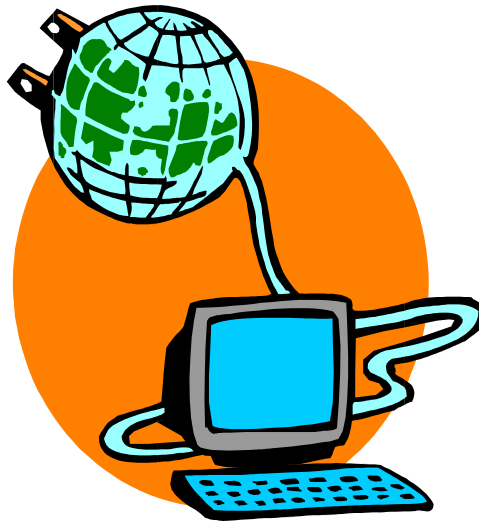
### *A Judicial Review*

The WSD did not agree with the original award brought down by the arbitration panel and indicated they would appeal the decision through the courts. Almost three years later that review took place on September 8th, 2008 before Justice John Scurfield. The WSD's position was that the arbitration board had made an error in their interpretation and the original ruling should be dismissed. The WTA's position was that the arbitration board had correctly interpreted the evidence and the ruling should stand. On October 1st, 2008 Justice Scurfield's ruling was handed down supporting the WTA's position. Opening exercises will remain part of the instructional day.

### *Why it's Important to Grieve*

If one school in the WSD had been allowed to lengthen the day by five (5) minutes this time, what happens when other schools wished to do the same or lengthen the day by ten (10) or fifteen (15) minutes. The instructional day provision took a number of years to address through the collective bargaining process and the provision needs to be protected.

In the bigger picture, the WTA's position is that all of the provisions in the Collective Agreement need to be protected. If this cannot be done through the process of dialogue and consultation with our employer, then the grievance procedure route is the method the Association will use.



Watch for the launch of the WTA's Web Site...coming soon!

## “And With That...Take Care and Make it a Great Day!”

by Joan Fransen, Vice-President

For seven years, those were the words that ended the morning announcements at the two successive schools I taught, a statement made by the same school administrator. What a difference between “Have a Great Day!” and “Make it a Great Day!” If what we do is empower learners isn’t it essential that we all, students and staff alike, recognize our role in creating a great day. Whether you choose to have it done **to you** or whether you **participate** in the outcome is up to you!

As I began to reflect upon past articles I’d written, I was drawn back to the notion of students needing to feel successful a minimum of 70% of the time. Perhaps I’ve twisted it a little bit but the principle is there. Research shows that our interactions need to be much more positive than negative. I believe this extends beyond our relationships with students to include all human connections. Before I go any further, I must humbly admit that I have fallen short in my interactions with colleagues on occasion—but that doesn’t keep me from trying.

Earlier this month, as I wrote a summary report about the Focus Group meetings held last spring, it was interesting to note that, across the board, the greatest frustration expressed by members was in human interactions where members didn’t feel supported. A significant amount of time was spent elaborating on various incidents, as well as making generalizations about commonalities felt by participants. This frustration should cause us some concern.

Having said that, the greatest commonality among members in discussing successful working conditions also involved human interactions. What it comes down to is how do you wish to be perceived? Are you the person who is supportive or the one who frustrates others?

The same administrator that I referenced in the title concluded his Monday Memos with the phrase, “This Week, Make a Difference.” (My apologies if I’ve paraphrased it). I’ve often contemplated what my school memories were and what my students’ school memories will be. Which events or interactions will hold as lifelong memories or experiences? This line of thinking has often driven my convictions in the activities I select in conveying curricular themes to my students. When I reflect on my own school experiences, I think back to my teachers—those I remember fondly, and those, whose actions I don’t wish to repeat. Most of my memories revolve around the theme of human connections. Of course, there are one or two where I recall an admiration for a teacher for the wide body of knowledge they possessed; unfortunately, or perhaps more telling, those memories are vague.

Last year I attended several retirement celebrations. At one in particular, speaker after speaker who gave testimonials of their interactions with the retiree and the difference that person had made in their lives moved me. Stories of concern for students, going the extra mile, taking interest in the lives of staff and students were regaled, one after the other. Each speaker had a personal connection with the retiree and, I venture to say, all would have felt that this person considered them important. I was happy I had attended the celebration and was deeply inspired.

When it comes down to it, we each have the ability to participate in our destiny. Is everything within our control? No, of course not; however, we can view the glass as half full or half empty. How will you be remembered?

“And With That...Take Care and Make It a Great Day!”

## PROPOSALS FOR THE 2008/2009 WTA NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

by: Joan Fransen, WTA Vice-President, Negotiations Chair

According to Council Policy C4 - Collective Agreement, the Negotiations Committee is required to annually "solicit from association members" ideas to be included at the table in the next round of collective bargaining. A draft negotiations package is then to be prepared and submitted to the Executive and Council for their approval later in the school year.

The Negotiations Committee is now looking at ideas for new clauses which might become part of a Collective Agreement. If you or others on staff have ideas, please complete the form provided below and **FAX it to the WTA office - 837-9698 ASAP**. Please note that even if you have submitted an idea last year, it needs to be sent in again to be included for consideration by this year's Negotiations Committee.

***The Idea: What is it you would like to see in the contract?***

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***Rationale: Provide a short explanation to help us better understand your idea.***

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***Your Name/School (Please include a telephone number) The Committee may need to contact you to get clarification or seek information.***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you.

## *What's in a name?*

If you have to speak to staff in the Payroll or Human Resources Departments at the Division or if you have inquiries with Manulife, please take a minute to request the name of the individual on the other end of the line. Sometimes our members encounter problems, or have questions about the information they receive. When this happens, we can better help you resolve your difficulty if we know to whom you've spoken.

### Information Directory

The Winnipeg Teachers' Association Office	-	831-7104
WTA Business Agent, Henry Shyka (Help in dealing with administration, personnel issues, grievances, EI, etc.)	-	888-7961
Legal Assistance Programme—Myers Weinberg LLP (Free 1/2 hour initial consultation and reduced rates for WTA members)	-	942-0501
WTA Counsellors—Keystone Counselling Associates (Ten hours free for WTA members)	-	338-3339
Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF) (Located at The Forks)	-	949-0048
Teacher Certification and Records, Russell Manitoba (Classification and years of teaching experience.)	-	1-800-667-2378

#### Electoral Units not represented at the September 22, 2008

COTE, General Wolfe, J.B. Mitchell, John M. King, Lab Assistants, Luxton, Montrose, Niji Mahkwa, Robert H. Smith, Support Services and William Whyte.



#### *Quote of the Month...*

*The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue to grow as we continue to live.*

- Mortimer Adler

## DENTAL PLAN BENEFITS & COVERAGE

- Plan Covers:
- spouses of eligible contracted teachers/lab assistants
  - dependent child under 18 years of age
  - dependent child under 25 years of age if fulltime student
  - dependent child who was incapacitated for a continuous period beginning before age 18 or while a fulltime student and before age 25
- Annual Deductible: \$15.00 person/\$30.00 family. If both spouses are WTA members the maximum deductible is \$30.00 in a calendar year. (*Note: there will be a deductible holiday for the 2008 calendar year.*)
- Annual Benefit Maximum: Routine and major combined = \$2,000.00 per person  
Orthodontic = \$1000.00 per person (*Note: increase in amount is effective January 1, 2008*)  
Total = \$3000.00 per person

Any Routine or Major Treatment expected to cost over \$300.00 and all Orthodontic treatment must first be submitted to Great-West Life.

### Great-West Life Office Mailing Address:

Winnipeg Benefit Payments  
P.O. Box 3050  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3C 4E5

Phone: **942-3589**

**Plan No. 51001**

The 2007 Dental Fee Guide is in effect.

(*Note: as of January 1st, 2008 the 2008 Dental Fee Guide will be in effect.*)

### Routine - 100% Coverage

- cleaning, bitewing x-ray, fluoride (limit twice in a calendar year)
- oral examinations
- full mouth x-rays (once every 24 months)
- extractions
- fillings
- dental surgery (excluding orthodontic or extensive procedures)
- diagnostic x-ray and lab work
- general anesthesia
- endodontic treatment (root canal)
- periodontal treatment (gum disease)
- treatment for relief of dental pain
- injected medication
- space maintainers (not used for orthodontic purposes)
- consultations - relines, rebases and repairs to existing dentures
- pit and fissure sealants (up to age 19)

### Major - 60% Coverage

- crowns, bridges, implants, dentures, etc .
- replacement of prosthodontics (dentures, etc.) if appliance is at least 5 years old
- procedures involving gold if no reasonable substitute at lower cost could be rendered

### Orthodontic - 50% Coverage

- correction of malocclusions of teeth
- appliances
- observation adjustments
- repairs
- bands
- consultations

*Benefit payments for orthodontic treatment are spread over the treatment period.*

## WTA 2008/2009 Pre-Retirement Seminars

### Applicant Data

First Name	Initial	Last Name
Social Insurance Number: _____ <i>(required to obtain data for you from TRAF)</i>		
Home Address: _____		Postal Code: _____
Home Phone: _____	Work Phone: _____	
Spouse or Partner (Full Name) _____		
His/Her date of birth - Note: this information is required.		_____
		Month - Date - Year
Will your spouse/partner be attending? Yes [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] No [ <input type="checkbox"/> ]		
There is a charge of \$15.00 <i>per attendee</i> for materials, coffee, dinner, etc.		
<b><i>Please indicate below if you have any dietary restrictions or allergies:</i></b>		
Specify type of dietary restriction/allergy: _____		
_____		

### Retirement Seminar Data

The seminars will take place on (please check ONE):

January 20, 2009 [  ]      March 17, 2009 [  ]

at McMaster House Arnett Auditorium, 191 Harcourt Street commencing at 5:00 PM

T.R.A.F. will provide you with a maximum of TWO printouts of retirement information based on possible retirement dates that you designate. Retirement dates may be milestones (e.g. age 65), or specific dates (e.g. June 2011). ***PLEASE NOTE: estimates will not be provided to anyone but the pension plan member.***

Retirement Date #1	Retirement Date #2
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Confirmations will be sent to applicants *approx. 3 weeks prior to the seminar*. Please note that enrollment is limited (maximum of 80). Please apply early.

Cheques are payable to **The Winnipeg Teachers' Association**, payment (\$15.00 per attendee) is due with the application. Mail the application and cheques to the WTA office, 202-2639 Portage Avenue R3J 0P7. **Deadline for applications is ONE MONTH prior to the seminar date.** If you have any questions please contact Glenda Shepherd, 831-7104.

