

# The Spin

## Spring 2009

A publication for teachers, by teachers

**April 2009**

**Volume 5, Number 2**

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### Welcome to this edition of the SPIN

We bring you this edition as the final segment of the school year begins. In a previous edition, we presented a "Then and Now" motif as a way to look at where we have been and where we are now. I have chosen to take this perspective once again as my final few months as your Local President come and go. I have started to look at the past four years and think of what it has meant and what the future will hold.

In this edition, Ron Rhine presents the second part of his two-part article describing the genesis of our Local. He writes about the labours and efforts it took for several individuals to bring such a diverse group of teachers together under one flag. I am struck by the fact that this endeavour has never really changed. This is still the work of the current Executive in all they do to represent the members of our Local today.

When asked, "Who are the teachers you represent?" I respond that they are Edmonton Public teachers. Defining who you are, and all the different conditions, sites, and grades is too much to be accomplished in one sitting. Someone would be left out. Suffice to say, that what I have learned in these past four years, is that as complex as education is, there are so many very talented people working in an incredible number of situations that one cannot really always see the whole picture.

Over the course of time, I have had the privilege to fulfill several roles in the big picture. In my current role, meeting so many teachers, principals, support staff, custodial and maintenance staff, at times, leaves me speechless. There are so many of us that work to offer the greatest opportunity for our students to succeed.

The path I now travel will find me in a new role with various challenges along the way. I am grateful for the support of my colleagues who have given me this opportunity and I am looking forward to the future.

As always, I will suggest to each of you reading this issue... "Speak up, take part, be heard — it is an invaluable experience." The Local continues to be of service to the teachers of Edmonton Public. However, remember this, all of us together comprise Edmonton Public Teachers Local No. 37. What has your role been? Mine has been to lead for the past four years. What will your role be?

Sometime in the future, I will be able to look back on my career in education and say, "There was a time my colleagues voted for me to represent them." It has been my privilege to serve you and I will continue to do so in the future.

For now, sit back and enjoy this edition, think about your future role in the life of the Local, and remember... the experiences of "Now" are rapidly becoming our personal "Then".

'Til our paths cross again,

**H. Mark Ramsankar**

# There Are Actually “Three” Things That Are Certain In Life

In these times of global cross-sectoral meltdowns we are made to wonder, contrary to the popular proverb, if there really aren't “three” things certain in life. The old adage would contest that “death” and “taxes” take the cake, but I would equally advocate for another element — the element of choice. We still, after all, in part have the freedom to choose our course, possess the ability to affect our paths, and at the very least can hold fast to confidences around respectfully exercising our voice as citizens of the world.

As a society we have learned to “shut up” — be it by choice, or gentle coercion (or better said perhaps “gentle persuasion”). But, as

a culture, it is time we grasp hold of the reality that **when a voice is stifled injustices are perpetuated**. Some may argue that they jolly well can exercise their rights of silence. But, to the demise of the rest of our ear drums, it often seems as if that same camp of “hushers” is the one who equally exercise the right to complain behind the scenes; some of these camp members “standup without substance” while their others “have substance but don't rightly stand up!”

Exercising your “choice to voice” does not, and should not, mean always getting the results you desire. If it did, we wouldn't live in a democracy — albeit a democracy cross its sectors *stained with hidden splinters mirroring bureaucracy, tyranny, authoritarianism, communism, corporatocracy, despotism, dictatorship, kratocracy, and mobocracy/ochlocracy; paired with the well-illed (pardon me —) “well-liked” finger of micromanagement*. I am not by any means suggesting sectors across society move toward meritocracy, as that system equally has flaws, but it would perhaps be ideal, though potentially in part naïve, to hope that a democratic nation could be wholly that — and citizens abiding therein choose to actively participate in the laid out processes for the sake of those processes' continuance. So though you may not get what you want at the end of the day — by standing up for yourself — at least you're not faced with your own worst enemies throughout your days — enemies like “guilt” or “regret” which pave the gateway of your travel along

the road that both leads to a demise of integrity, honor, and true character, and likewise leads to a rise in your future choice to “shut up” and be a graduate from the faculty of “spectatorship”.

As the global world welcomes and promotes newly rising political celebrities of sorts which advocate “change”, “new paths” and “equity”, perhaps we can step back and take an inner look to see what positive changes we can equally make within bankrupted selves — instead of always taking the “victim stance”. Then, in the spirit of goodwill let us use our new learnings as the platform from which to extend our olive branch of “voice” to our nation's systems. Cross areas of your life, aim to do the right thing in all that you do — **exercise your “choice to voice”**...but then again... the “choice to ‘shut up’ is as well an alternative”. But should the latter be your choice, then do the rest of us a favor — match it with its two mirrors of “putting up” (with what you're served) and nicely said “hushing up”.

Moving toward more of an educational focus, regardless of whether or not you are a “union fan”, be more than cognizant of the fact that you still have a stake in **your** union's course — after all it chiefly works out your collective agreements. **At a time when Local elections approach, exercise your “voice” by taking part in the process — at least “vote”, or better yet, “make an informed vote”.**

— Pauline Francis, PhD

## The Spin, Volume 5, Number 2

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# Latté Again!

I was driving around the other day when I saw a sign for a school open house. “Late French Immersion”, it said, but my eyes were playing tricks on me, and I saw “Latté French Immersion”. I gave my head a shake, and read the sign as I should have, but I couldn’t get rid of the idea of a latté immersion program.

What would that look like? Kids arriving in class, books in one hand, a latté in the other? I like the image. “Bonjour classe. Aujourd’hui, pour commencer, on va visiter le café, comme d’habitude.” What a gentle start to the day. And for many preteens, caffeine is actually a depressant, not a stimulant at all. Welcome to mellow immersion classes. Schools with latté immersion programs would be bursting at the seams, turning away little coffee aficionados. And for those problem kids? What about discipline? How about forcing them to drink decaf, no foam, skim milk?

They’d straighten up right away, without a doubt.

Well, pretty soon there would be copycat schools. No French immersion program? No problem! How about announcing to the passing traffic that latté slips would henceforth be provided to the stragglers who show up late? “Sorry I’m late.” “No problem, dear child. Just head down to the café to get a latté before heading off to class.” But who’d be late anyway? Kids would be breaking down the doors at 7:30, trying to get to school a little early for that first precious taste of education. And the opportunities for corporate hookups? Limitless!

And how about those HLATs? I don’t know about your school, but at mine, the whole staff collaborates on marking the written HLATs. It’s an interesting exercise, and I don’t mind it one bit. But... what would H-LATTÉS involve? Maybe instead of the lame topics,

we could ask kids to write about lattés: a) write an expository essay about how to make a good latté; b) write a letter to Juan Valdez telling him about the Colombian latté you’ve been sipping; or c) write a sonnet to a cup of the finest, beginning with this line: “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways”. Any one of those topics would be anchored in the real-life, everyday experience of our little H-LATTÉ writers.

Best of all, your school could license the latté stand to an outside vendor, who would pay, say, \$.50 a cup for every latté sold. Funding shortfalls and budget constraints would be a thing of the past. Throw in a few organic rainforest chocolates and some carrot cake and we’d have the perfect match for Edmonton’s public schools. Wanna talk? Meet me at S---bucks for a “grande”.

—Gordon Hepburn

## Upcoming Local Events

Global Share Fair — **Wednesday, April 22, 2009**, 4:00–7:00 pm, Auditorium, Barnett House

Family Fun Night — **Saturday, April 25, 2009**, 7:30–10:30 pm, West Edmonton Mall Water Park, \$5.00 per person (2 & under free)

Wills and Estate Planning — **Monday, April 27, 2009**, 7:00 pm, Auditorium, Barnett House

Council of School Representatives’ Meeting — **Wednesday, April 29, 2009**, 6:00 pm, Auditorium, Barnett House

Local Executive Committee Election in Schools — **Wednesday, May 6, 2009**. Ballots to be picked up on **Thursday, May 7, 2009**.

EDB Peer Support Group — **Monday, May 11, 2009**, 1:00–4:00 pm, Room 140, Barnett House

Substitute Teachers’ General Meeting — **Tuesday, May 12, 2009**, 6:00 pm, Auditorium, Barnett House

Standing Committee Nomination Deadline — **Friday, May 22, 2009**

Financial Planning — **Monday, May 25, 2009**, 7:00 pm, Auditorium, Barnett House

Council of School Representatives’ Meeting — **Wednesday, May 27, 2009**, 6:00 pm, Auditorium, Barnett House

Annual Fun Run/Walk — **Friday, June 5, 2009**, 3:30 pm, Barnett House

Teachers’ Time-Out — **Friday, June 5, 2009**, 4:00–7:00 pm, Cafeteria, Barnett House

EDB Peer Support Group — **Monday, June 8, 2009**, 1:00–4:00 pm, Room 140, Barnett House

Retiring Teachers’ Banquet — **Friday, June 12, 2009**, 6:00 pm, Crowne Plaza Hotel

Local Office Last Operational Day — **Tuesday, June 30, 2009**

Golf Tournament — **Friday, August 28, 2009**, Raven Crest Golf & Country Club

For further information on any of the Local Events please call the Local office (780-455-2164) or check our website [local37.teachers.ab.ca](http://local37.teachers.ab.ca)

## Teachers' Charity Trust Fund

Teachers make a positive difference in our communities through our Local 37 Charity Trust Fund. The Charity Trust Fund through the Donations Committee provides tens of thousands of dollars in support of organizations helping others in our communities. This year, over \$160,000 was given to 36 charitable organizations. As chair of Donations, it was my privilege to represent our members at numerous fundraising events and to present our contribution to these worthy organizations on behalf of the Local 37 Charity Trust Fund. Some of the organizations are well known, for example the Salvation Army, Early Headstart, or the

United Way (as a major part of our District's Power of Five). Others, like CASA, Operation Eyesight, Sign of Hope, while lesser known, also benefit from our support. In the next year, we will have provided the cost (one leg at a time) of a fully trained guide dog for the blind. Through the Local 37 Charity Trust Fund, teachers are well known for supporting the work of those who support our students and their families in their times of need. It is support that these charities rely on and support we are proud to provide. If you would like to join the 450 members of the local who engage the community in this way, it is very easy. All

you need do is to inform Personnel that you would like to donate one half of one percent of your salary (typically \$20-\$30 a month) to the Local 37 Charity Trust Fund. Each year, your contribution will be reported on your T4 and you will have "given at the Office" in support of those who need it most. The fund has been part of our Local for over 35 years and has distributed millions of dollars through the quiet positive support of our teachers. Local 37 teachers making a difference in our community beyond the classrooms. Social action at its finest!

– Nels Olsen

## The Last Cake

A medley of hits from the fifties performed by the junior high band, stirred the crowd. An impromptu choir of elementary students led the assembled in a rendition of the new school song. Congratulatory greetings were conveyed from City Council, the Board of Trustees and senior administration by Karen Liebovici, Sue Huff and Donna Barrett. Visually the crowd was wowed by a powerpoint presentation of cultural and municipal change over the last 50 years, intercut with scenes of school life. And a watercolor rendering of the school, painted by former staff member, Vern Roth was unveiled. Thus, Laurier Heights school community celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Edmonton Public Teachers donated a celebratory anniversary cake to complement the event. In fact, this was the last of the eight cakes that Edmonton teachers contributed to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of district schools.



In the (above) picture, assistant principal, Jacqueline Zelt, principal, Tanja Caley and Quintin Yardley, chair of the Local's anniversary committee display the dessert's sweet message, "Celebrating 50 years of Extraordinary Professional Teaching".

– Quintin Yardley

## “It’s OK, We’re Friends” ... Is it Violence or “Just Kidding”?

I’m a substitute teacher and I visit many schools. In all of the schools there is a jostling in the hallways; however, in some schools the casual bumping becomes deliberate pushing and shoving. Students bounce off lockers, students wrestle, students trade shots, students jump on each other, and students just rush and bump into others. In the classroom this translates into various projectiles soaring through the air, put-downs, scribbling on other students work, pushing books off desks, and hiding other people’s belongings.

When confronted, the students excuse their behaviour with, “It’s OK we’re friends.” Sometimes they are friends. Sometimes it’s bullying. Sometimes it’s retaliation. Sometimes it’s just something to do. These behaviours make the school unsafe, physically and psychologically. While there are few injuries, an environment of constant harassment begets harassment. Civility diminishes. The behaviour becomes part of the school culture.

The causes of this behaviour are varied and non-exclusive. Many of the schools where students exhibit more aggressive behaviour are crowded because of the volume of students or design of the building. When this is combined with cultural and social behaviours that emphasize establishing a pecking order, the effect of crowding is exaggerated.

Is this type of low level violence occurring in your school? Look down the hall. How are students treating each other?

Do they make room for each other or do they push to make a space? Do they go around or through? Is pushing isolated or general behaviour? Are students hitting or pushing? Does the rowdiness carry over into the classroom? Is what you see acceptable?

If you think there is too much violence, what can be done about it? First, there needs to be clear and enforced expectations for how students treat each other in class. Second, the school community: teachers, students, support staff, and parents need to agree on how all people are to be treated in the school. Third, appropriate interactions (such as helping with homework, picking up for each other) need to be identified and encouraged.

Because the object is to change school culture, the process needs to involve the whole school. The

entire school community: administrators, teachers, students and parents need to be involved in developing the expectations. The expectations need to be communicated through assemblies and other events, and acceptable behaviour needs to be modelled. If some staff, students, or parents think that trading punches and slapping someone on the back as a high five is OK, the level of violence in the school won’t change.

It is tempting to advocate zero tolerance and I think that position will lead to the most change. However, zero tolerance for the behaviour should be coupled with education to get the students to recognize the problems their behaviour is causing and to engage the students in developing alternate forms of showing friendship and maintaining status.

– Larry Phillips



### Local 37 Annual Golf Tournament

The winning team was incorrectly identified in the fall issue of *Spin*. The winners of the inaugural President’s Cup Trophy are from Highlands School.

## Pasi, PATs, and PISA: A Fable for Our Times

Well! Hello, boys and girls! Would you like to hear an incredible story about dragon-slaying little folk and giants who stride across the world? I have the perfect tale for you!

I want you to imagine a land far off over the sea, where snow and ice and darkness rule the land for half the year, and for the other half, the sun rules the sky both day and night. There are people who live there--crazy people--you might say that they are little folk, because they are few in number. And they have slain Dragons!

One day, boys and girls, one of those people left his country, which is called the Land of the Finns. The Finn who left was called Pasi, and he flew through the air to come to

our little corner of the Great White North, and talk to us. And he told us all about how the Finns had thrown the eggs of the Dragon of High-stakes Standardized Testing into the cold sea, so that they never even hatched. Sadly, we have such a dragon living among us—its name is PAT, and we have let it grow very powerful. But first, let's finish the story about Pasi the Finn.

Pasi said, "In the 1970s Finland was being laid waste by the Great Dragon Recession...the cruelest one Finland had ever known." So all the wise Finns got together to talk about how to bring prosperity and smiles back to their dark land. After much talk they settled on a plan: to have really well-educated people, so that the world would

want to buy Finnish things because they were so clever. All this new gold would drive away the dragon. And it worked! Today people all over the world talk to their friends far away without even shouting, using cell phones made by clever Nokia, which is a Finnish company. And Finland receives much gold.

Now, boys and girls, can you guess the secret to the success of the Finnish way of teaching? Can you? No? ...I knew you would be stumped.

They decided to *trust* their teachers! And to have their students involved in formal instruction for *less* time! And they said that a good education is a *well-rounded* education, so they didn't cut out

*continued on page 7*

### In Plainer English

Dr. Pasi Sahlberg, an international expert on education, was a keynote speaker at this past convention. His message: high-stakes testing, such as the PATs, undermines real learning and achievement. Finland placed well above average in the PISA 2000 tests, did even better in the PISA 2003 tests, and topped the world in the PISA 2006 tests. Finland has neither a topdown national standard curriculum nor standardized tests, nor the "accountability" that standardized tests promote. Teachers, who all have masters degrees, have about three and one-half classroom contact hours per day, and elementary students receive classroom instruction for about 600 hours per year. And yet they've achieved more with less. Canadian PISA results are good,

and Alberta's are the best in the country. But our PISA attainments have fallen in each round (even as high-stakes testing has taken an ever firmer hold). And the US, with its "No Child Left Behind" program, strong focus on "the basics", and very high-stakes state-run testing? Well below average, and falling.

PISA is the Programme for International Student Assessment, developed by the OECD to ask, "Are students well prepared for future challenges? Can they analyze, reason and communicate effectively? Do they have the capacity to continue learning throughout life?" Every three years, PISA surveys 15-year-olds to assess whether students near the end of their

compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in societies with productive, industrial, market-oriented economies.

The OECD is the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Originally a club of all countries that received Marshall Plan aid from the United States, plus the United States and Canada, the OECD has become a group of 30+ member countries who discuss and develop economic and social policy in order to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and living standards in member and nonmember countries. Its members include most of the wealthy, market-economy countries in the world.

# Real Learning First

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has released an exciting and comprehensive document that prepares the ATA (you and me) to challenge the value of the Alberta government's testing, surveying and reporting practices. I hope that I do not have to convince you that current practices can be detrimental to entire school communities. High-stakes testing reported in numbers which do not reflect the context of the school do much to damage the morale of staff, students, and parents alike. What can we learn from such testing when students who do not write are assumed to have earned a zero, and students who do write may have more important things on their minds, like are they getting fed? where will they live tonight? will mom or dad come home?... There are so-called Think Tanks (like the Fraser Institute) that willingly misinterpret test data. The Fraser Institute considers itself capable on this raw data

alone to tell you what the best and worst schools in the province are.

This report, *Real Learning First* has three key messages, which I quote below:

- Teachers do a very professional job of evaluating and reporting student progress.
- The current emphasis on standardized exams and large-scale provincial testing policies do little to address the individual needs of students.
- Relying on standardized testing programs and satisfaction surveys to determine school and school system performance misrepresents the work of teachers and schools.

During the recent round of teachers' conventions in Alberta, the ATA sponsored some high-profile speakers to speak on issues surrounding Real Learning. David Berliner said, "We are witnessing proof of a well-known social science

law which basically says the greater the pressure to perform, the more likely people will corrupt the system to achieve favorable results. I suggest scrapping high-stakes tests and building an accountability system that better measures students' achievements."

Pasi Sahlberg stated, "Teachers change their pedagogies—their ways of teaching—to make sure that pupils are prepared for these tests. And this is at the core of this strong accountability movement we have had around. ...We need to make sure that what we're calling accountability will strengthen and support the good learning that is already going on in schools."

*Real Learning First* discusses the purpose of student evaluation, fairness to students, student achievement, the role of teachers, provincial achievement testing, diploma examination programs, public reporting of provincial test results,

*continued on page 8*

*Pasi PATs and PISA, continued from pg. 6*

the "frills"! And they gave their teachers lots of *time* during the day to plan and work together... Finnish teachers are in the classroom giving lessons about three and a half hours a day! And they **abolished national curricula** (each school sets its own course of studies—now that's real site-based decision making!!).

This may seem amazing, but it's all true. And how do these wise Finns monitor the teachers to make sure they're doing their job? Well, they don't. They trust their teachers to be responsible. And their teachers are very responsible, and do a

very good job. How do we know? Because in round after round of the PISA tests, the Finns do better and better. In fact, Finnish 15-year-olds are the best educated boys and girls in the world, according to the 2006 PISA results.

My grandma used to say that the proof is in the pudding, boys and girls. And this is a PISA pudding. Finnish kids are the best educated in the world, without a national curriculum, without national standardized tests, without spending more and more time on "the basics". There is a northern giant striding through the world

today, and it's a Finnish giant. Meanwhile, many other countries are seeing their PISA results fall from test to test...their great plans for "tough standards" and "accountability" and "no child left behind" are actually diminishing their educational achievements. They're turning into dwarves! Which would you rather be: a giant or a dwarf?

So Pasi said to us, in his quiet, gentle way: "You might want to think about doing away with your PATs". He's quite right, you know: this is a Dragon that needs slaying.

— Gordon Hepburn

## Rutherford School Book Writing Project

This story tells how an annual Kindergarten project to rewrite “Rosie’s Walk” became something larger than anyone could have anticipated.

After reading and discussing the story, the Kindergarten students worked together, talking about ways to transform the story using a Halloween theme. A list was compiled of different Halloween characters and settings. Each student wrote their original Halloween version of the story and later, using ‘Microsoft Word’, typed their story into a book format. The pages were photocopied creating a book for each student. The next step was drawing a detailed character sketch of their main character.

The stories and character sketches were delivered to a nearby junior high school. The Grade 8 Art students were challenged to take



the character sketches and create a new character incorporating the main drawing created by their

Kindergarten buddy and adding their own unique ideas to the illustration.

**Real Learning First,**  
*continued from pg. 7*

emerging issues and the role of Alberta Education, educational accountability, and the development of an action plan.

In each section of the report the issue is explained and existing ATA policies are summarized.

Now it is time for us to read this report, to discuss this report with colleagues, to develop our own plans for sharing this enormous issue with parents and with the community in general. Now—while we have some extended labor peace—is the opportunity to organize and mobilize our campaigns. Now is the time to lobby our elected officials for change. If nothing works, we

are ready in 2012 with a powerful bargaining tool as all 62 contracts are being negotiated. To obtain your copy of this document, please contact the Local’s office (780-455-2164). This will allow some grassroots work to begin right away—discussing how to best utilize this resource and how to best run this campaign. Our Local will be developing Local strategies in the months ahead and we would love to hear your suggestions.

You can respond to us in many ways. You can send a memo to the Local Office; you can email the local at [info@edpub.org](mailto:info@edpub.org) or me at [ebutler1@telus.net](mailto:ebutler1@telus.net). You can also write your own letter to the *Spin*. Whatever you do, please get involved. Let’s start the dialogue now.

Together we can make a difference—together we can take control of our own profession! Remember, we are the ones who are trained and experienced in assessment and reporting!

I would like to close with this quote—found on Alfie Kohn’s answering machine:

*“Standardized testing  
is to learning what  
Rain is to parade  
Monkey wrench is to gear  
Cellulite is to thigh  
Pigeon is to window.”*

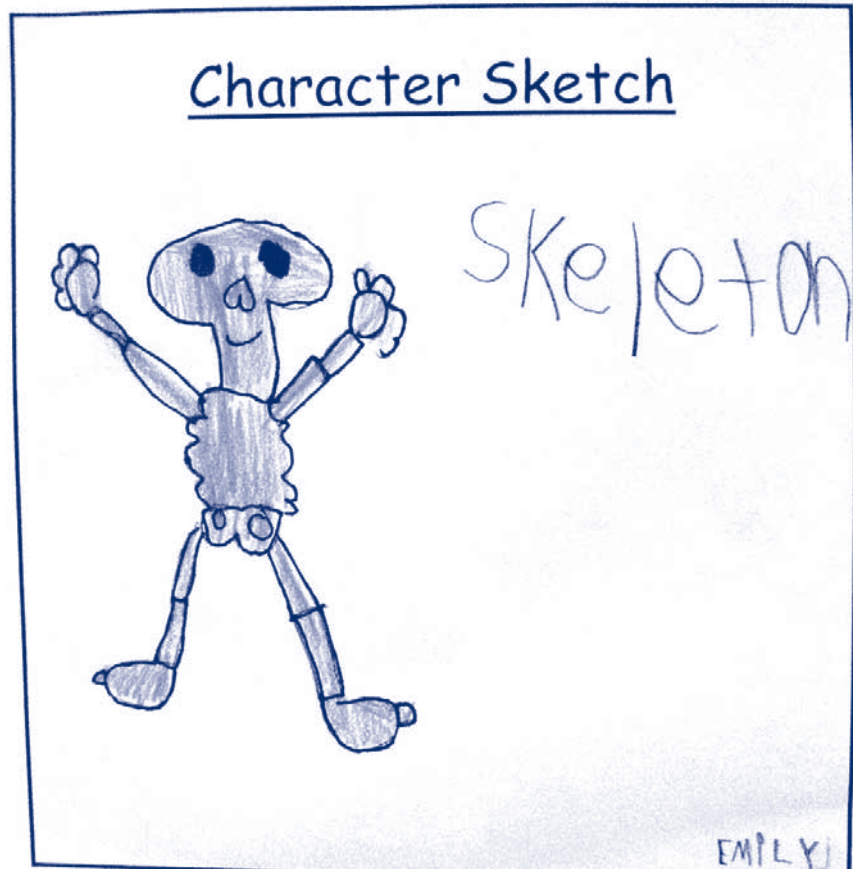
– Ed Butler,  
Vice President  
Political Action

Our next step was having the Kindergarten students and the Grade 8 students meeting and discussing, through a videoconference, the new and improved character. Using a document camera, the Grade 8 students displayed the new character sketch to the Kindergarten students. The students discussed the character and their vision of what the Kindergarten students had for the character.

The Grade 8 students made changes to the sketches and they were asked to complete a first draft of the sketches, matching the pictures to the Kindergarten story. The first drafts were returned to the Kindergarten students for their approval. Each Kindergarten student was asked to select their favorite page and give a reason why it was selected. They also had to decide on one change they would like to see on one of the pages.

This led to the second successful videoconference. Using the document camera the Kindergarten students talked about their favorite page, and then showed and discussed the page that they would like changed.

The Grade 8 students were now encouraged to do the final copy of the story pages which were later returned to us. With the help of a local publishing company, the stories were photocopied in color and bound, one for each of the Kindergarten and Grade 8 students, plus a copy for our library. The Kindergarten students participated on a fieldtrip to the junior high school to meet their Grade 8 buddies and to present them with their copy of the published story.



The book publishing culminated with an "Author Book Reading and Signing" evening for parents and students. Using the Internet program, "BookFlix," they watched and read aloud the story of "Rosie's

Walk" projected on a big screen. The document camera was used to display each book as the author read their story to the audience. The evening ended in each student signing an autograph page for the parents.

The success of this project was the result of technology, collaboration, parent support, student excitement and the generosity of the community. These books are keepsakes that will be treasured for a lifetime.

– Jacquie Klatt and Terri Notdorft

## Rutherford School Story AISI Project

Rutherford is a small Kindergarten to Grade 6 school. This article describes the impact of technologies on student engagement and learning.

In the 2007-2008 school year, we were faced with a unique challenge. A Kindergarten student who was reading at a Grade 3 level and a high functioning Grade 5 student with Autism were assigned as reading buddies. It quickly became clear that the reading program was not sustaining the students' interest or adequately challenging their reading abilities.

We planned a project for them based on the theme, "Bats." Our main focus was to incorporate technologies as a strategy to actively engage the boys. We shifted the focus from reading to writing and introduced the two students to the 'AlphaSmart' portable word processor. As the two boys began planning and co-writing their story on the 'AlphaSmart', it became immediately evident that the students' time spent working together was going to be very productive and motivating.

A draft of the boys' story was transferred to the computer where they worked to do their own editing in 'Microsoft Word'. They enhanced their final draft by using a 'Paint' program to add illustrations, with the Grade 5 student being able to

teach the Kindergarten student the deeper intricacies of 'Paint'. Their diligent and independent work was later shared with their classmates on the classroom LCD television, using 'Read Please' to enhance the presentation. A published hardcopy of "The Case of the Missing Bat" was displayed for viewing using another form of technology, the classroom document camera.

As the first project wound down, it became evident that another project was necessary to carry the boys until year end. In keeping with the school's recent mode of global technological learning, we challenged the boys with a new project that would ultimately be a celebration of the diversity of students and staff at Rutherford School. Their mission was to

come up with interview questions for staff members and for one student of each grade. After generating the questions they were introduced to the photocopier in order to have a sufficient number of hard copies for each interview. They gathered data and put it into their self-made 'PowerPoint' template. After reviewing the data, the boys selected a digital photograph or clipart picture to best represent the subject's responses. Their 'PowerPoint' consisted of title pages, compiled staff and student responses, and inserted digital photos. The quality of this project was worthy of sharing at the Meet the Teacher Evening.

Our role as teachers became that of "leading from a distance", and it was exciting to see how both students utilized their existing skills and were able to transfer this to a presentable format. We were extremely impressed that the two students maintained complete engagement throughout both projects and that the boys brought their own creative and unique skills into two successful technology projects. The effective use of technologies resulted in deeper engagement, and ultimately meaningful learning.

– Jacquie Klatt and  
Terri Notdorf



# One Local and Change: Part 2

(continued from the Fall 2008 issue)

*Ron Rhine is a retired teacher from Edmonton Public who served as Executive Secretary of The Alberta Retired Teachers' Association.*

There is today a problem in identifying accurately those leaders with the idea of one local and for the history of several years after its formation. The same can be said for the histories of the Elementary, Junior High and Senior High Locals. Because there was not a Local building, meetings were held in private homes and in Community halls. Records were stored in the spare rooms, the garages and the basements of Executive or Committee members. As the years went by those people moved, some several times; and since seldom if ever did anyone inquire of their contents those records were discarded or lost. With hindsight, it is a sad fact. History is history and a record should be kept, at least of the main events. Some records were kept for a long time. Those that Phil Cox, who was the first Executive Secretary, had were likely kept completely until he died. The first President was Frank somebody and he died three years after amalgamation. Ron Rhine, Jean Scott, the McLaughlin sisters, Walter Hughes, Glyn Roberts, Kingsley Dean and others also probably had records that have long since faded away. Today we regret the loss.

Know that the creation of one Local resulted in a more rapid development of the professional teacher and that the kinds and quality of education which students and teachers are receiving today are far superior. The work that teachers and administrators have done to improve matters for teachers

and students are also factors as well. The Education Faculties, the improved facilities, the travels of teachers and students, and the recent electronic developments have made a difference too.

Specific credits should be given to some Administrators who have quietly fought to help their staff members. For example, there was a rule, which likely still exists, that a married couple could not teach in the same school. One Halloween, two staff members in one school married and reported it to their compatriots. Central Office heard about that and advised the Principal that one of the two would have to move. The Principal objected to losing a good teacher and refused to advise them of a move. He told Central Office to forget it, that if there was not a problem before the marriage there was now less reason for a concern, that if necessary he would go to the Trustees at a Board meeting to protest.

The result was that the two were allowed to stay but if one moved to another school the other could not go to the same school. There are likely similar stories of which you and I are not aware but principals have often quietly fought a battle for a teacher or staff. More than one problem has been settled in a rational and quiet way. Sometimes the Executive Secretary (now called Executive Assistant) or the other Assistant has done the same thing, fought a quiet battle and won, sometimes with Central Office, sometimes with a parent, and sometimes a squabble between two teachers. Another avenue of solutions to difficult matters has been the Liaison Meetings between the Local Executive and the School



Board. Issues have been settled quietly and gracefully that might have exploded if there had been any publicity.

Our one-Local design has grown and changed but it has really worked exceedingly well. Thank God—and thanks to the people who made it happen every year.

If you are unhappy about the way your organization does things, get busy, join one of the busier committees, get known and then run for the Presidency or some other prominent position on the Executive. Get into a position where you can present your proposed improvements and get the support of others. At the very least, take it to Council. Maybe they will back you if your idea appeals to them. My challenge is to improve the organization but you must do it by committing yourself to some effort. Good luck to all of you. And thank you.

— Ron L. Rhine

**Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37**

# **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Scramble Charity Golf Tournament**

**Friday, August 28, 2009  
Tee-off begins at 1:30 pm**

**Raven Crest Golf & Country Club  
North on Victoria Trail, turn East on 153 Avenue,  
follow road for 1.5 km, course is on the right**

**\$70.00 per person includes green fees (18 holes),  
steak BBQ dinner, golf cart and prizes.**

**Registration and fee deadline:  
Friday, June 26, 2009**

**Additional information is available by calling  
the Local's office (780-455-2164) or on the website  
([local37.teachers.ab.ca](http://local37.teachers.ab.ca)).**

**All proceeds go to the Canadian Mental Health Association.**

