



and now...your “Local” news!

January 26, 2012

“BUGM” has nothing to do with insects!

A Bargaining Unit General Meeting of our Local will be held on Monday, February 27th at 4:30 pm at Barnett House. Attending the BUGM should be at the top of every teacher's to-do list. Based on concerns raised through 2 surveys, your Economic Policy Committee (EPC) has put together an opening proposal to present to your employer in the upcoming round of negotiations. Influence the direction of negotiations! Make your opinions heard! Exercise your democratic right! Come to the BUGM on February 27th!

\$12,000 available!

Teachers! Are you taking courses in Catholic faith formation? Graduate studies or other post-secondary courses? The Local is offering 12 bursaries (\$1000 each) toward the cost of the course, seminar or conference you are registered in. The application form is found at www.local54.teachers.ab.ca Deadline for receipt of applications is March 16th Draw on March 20th.

PD – VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

During this session you will have hands on training creating and maintaining your Virtual Classroom.
When: Wed, Feb 8th, 4:30 – 6:00
Where: St. Maria Goretti School
Presenter: Sarah Platero – Innovative Technology Mentor
Registration is on a first come first serve basis. E-mail Jan @ jan.bossmmin@ecteachers.ca



Message from our President

Greetings everyone!

When the question is “How are you?”...the answer is invariably...”Good!” Our response might be “I know you are good, but how *are* you”?? This may sound trite but I suggest that it is but one way of having numerous occasions to remind all we encounter of their inherent goodness and worth. As teachers we work and play in a variety of communities and the lives we touch are often lives that are being lived in desperation. Many times we say that we, in our Catholic schools, are counter cultural. Through our work, prayer and teaching we let our kids and parents know that the consumer culture that has stressed so many to their limit is not something everyone has to “buy” into. Our spiritual gurus constantly remind us that ‘we are all going home’ and our job is to assist as many as possible on their way. Fr. Ron Rolheiser uses this as his theme in many of his articles and talks. Amidst all the letters to editors and subtle shots at the separate school system, we, as Catholic teachers, can take solace in being able to speak prophetically about our work as vocation and our role in children’s lives. I had the opportunity to speak to a couple of our politicians recently and engage them into a conversation about the distinctiveness of our system and the significance of being a Catholic teacher. It was very satisfying. The bonus of this kind of talk is that we are not talking of economics in dollars and cents but in true value of human potential and worth. I hope that this kind of preamble could have some of our members begin the discussion of how we see ourselves in this big picture of education in Alberta. The future is ours and hopefully it is our *preferred future*.

Continue to care and be sources of encouragement for each other,
~Sandy

DON'T FORGET! THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2nd at 6:00 p.m.

General Assembly of the Edmonton Catholic Teachers' Local to be followed immediately by our February Council meeting. Ask your school rep about proposed amendments to our constitution. ALL of you, who are teacher members of our Local, have the right to vote on these changes at the General Assembly.

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WINTER BACKPACKS FOR THE HOMELESS

The Mustard Seed Church was so thankful to receive the 150 winter backpacks that you generously put together and brought to our Council meeting on December 20th. These backpacks filled with winter necessities were much appreciated during our mid-January cold snap! Thanks to all of you for helping the most marginalized in our community.

MATERNITY LEAVE INFORMATION SESSION

If you are expecting a baby or planning to start a family, we invite you and a guest to come to our Maternity Leave Information Evening.

Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at 7pm at Barnett House (11010-142 Street) Register by email:

jan.bossmmin@ecteachers.ca.

Sean McGuinness from Human Resource Services will also join us for the Q and A which follows the presentation

TRIVIA CONTEST!!

Maria Lobo (Louis St Laurent) was the winner of last month's \$25 gift card.

This issue's trivia question: *On January 13th, your Local welcomed 2 exchange teachers from Australia who will be teaching in Edmonton Catholic for a year. At which 2 schools are Christine and Stephanie teaching?*

First correct answer in Kathy's inbox will win a \$25 gift card!
kathy.macisaac@ecteachers.ca

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

A recent book by Kegan and Lahey, [Immunity to Change](#), suggests that change--- while extremely difficult---is possible. They have found in their research that 4 characteristics exist where change occurs, especially within organizations. At a recent admin meeting, I was speaking to Phebe Switzer, principal at St Timothy. I was quite taken by her story of success there and how the entire staff has embraced change so quickly and successfully. The write-up below, submitted by Phebe, at my request, is a way of us celebrating the work of our fellow teachers who exemplify these four elements:

- Respect for the importance of the other person's role in producing high-quality outcomes
- Belief in the other's ability and willingness to fulfill his or her formal role responsibilities
- Care about the other professionally and personally
- Consistency between what people say and what they do

Our hats are off to you 😊

At St. Timothy we have embraced 21st Century Learning! It is essential to students that we prepare them for tomorrow by engaging them in their learning. Our staff has looked at the research in learning techniques and innovations in 21st Century Learning. The principal meets with students each week at a leadership meeting and we have heard our students' voices. The students have been integral in the decision making process. We integrated their ideas and concerns with ours, as we conceived of these proposed changes together. As recent research has shown, involving students with the decision making process, giving them choices for demonstrating their learning, and having a less structured environment, enhances children's overall learning experience. We are providing an environment that is based on REGGIO, where students are comfortable and they can choose where they sit. We have couches and tables in each class and the lighting has been dimmed. We are providing choices for students in their learning, where they choose how to demonstrate their understanding. We are providing technology – netbooks, ipads, doc cameras, smart boards, cameras, scanners – for our students to use. Attendance of students has improved---they want to be at school! Discipline problems have decreased significantly! Our students are thriving! The students are led in critical and creative thinking, inquiry, problem-solving and leadership skills. 21st Century Learning is amazing and our students have chosen to write letters to their parents explaining the benefits!



FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS...another New Teacher Mentorship session is coming your way!!

What: [Beginning Teachers PD Extravaganza](#)

Presenters: Paula Borges-Couture, Joanne Snihurowych, Rosyn Marcelo: *Supporting English Language Learners*; Danny Burrell: *Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviours*, and Marv Hackman: *Appropriate Use of Social Media and Technology*.

When: Wednesday, February 1st (8:30am-3:30pm)

Where: Barnett House – Alberta Teachers' Association (11010-142 Street)