



Appalachian Teachers' Association



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It's been an on-again, off-again winter...

...but it looks like it's finally decided (maybe) to make up for lost time! Snow and typical winter cold spells have finally arrived! Sure would be nice to have more cold, SUNNY days, though!

Don't forget the New Teachers' Brew 'n Brag Sessions!

It's a chance for new teachers to network, share successes and challenges, ask questions, and learn a bit more about the union - and the coffee or beer is on us!

January 29 - Richmond
 February 2 - Lennoxville
 February 3 - Cowansville

Get all the details on the ATA website: www.ataunion.org

Reps' Montreal Training Session – Putting the YOU in Union!

ATA's reps got together on the pre-convention day for some timely training. We were lucky to have four excellent speakers. **Jean-Noël Grenier**, an Associate Professor at the Université Laval in Quebec City, is a specialist in labour relations. An engaging speaker, he took his audience through an insightful analysis of the changing role of government and the impact of neoliberalism on unionism and public sector workers. It was a timely presentation given the fact that we are now entering the negotiation phase of our contract renewal. There is no question that educators must educate themselves about the new push in government-union relations.

Those who are interested in pursuing the topic may be interested in purchasing *Dynamic Negotiations: Teacher Labour Relations in Canadian Elementary and Secondary Education*, available from McGill-Queen's University Press at <http://www.mqup.ca/dynamic-negotiations-products-9781553393047.php>



Jean-Noël Grenier & Megan

...continued on page 2



*"The twelve months...
Snowy, Flowy, Blowy,
Showery, Flowery,
Bowery,
Hoppy, Croppy, Droppy,
Breezy, Sneezzy, Freezy."*

- George Ellis

President's Prose



Here it is, a new year.
Make it a great one!

Cheers,
megan

...continued

It was also interesting to realize the degree to which teachers' altruism makes it difficult for them to push for personal gain, even though they know their employers (the government and the school boards) are taking advantage of them.

One of QPAT's Executive Assistants, **Julie Montpetit**, was the second speaker. She spoke about union mobilization during the negotiation period and some of the kinds of actions that might be taken. She also spoke about EVB and showed the QPAT-produced EVB video that featured ETSB schools.

The third speaker was **Olivier Dolbec**, QPAT's negotiator, who took us through the negotiation process. One of the most important things he said was, "Without mobilization there is no negotiation." In other words, it is the mobilization of union members that creates the push for the negotiation process.

The last speaker was QPAT's Executive Director, **Alan Lombard**. Alan spoke about some of the gains to the teaching profession as a result of the mobilization of union members over the years. It is important to remember that much of what we have gained - salary, maternity benefits, short-term disability and so much more is the result of actions, including a two-week strike, by union members.

All in all it was a thoughtful and thought-provoking afternoon! Thank you to all who attended.

QPAT Convention 2014

Convention seemed to be fairly well attended this year, perhaps due to the guest speaker, **Rick Hansen**, who arrived on stage to a prolonged standing ovation from the near-capacity crowd before he had even said so much as hello. Two things really stood out: first, the honour Rick accords teachers and the stories he told of how his own teachers influenced him; and second, that despite the agony, the tears and the despair he has experienced over the years, he has never given up searching for ways to break the barriers that confronted - and still confront - him and others who are disabled. A true humanitarian, he is an amazing man who is a role model and inspiration for all.



The ATA teamed up with QPAAT to offer a workshop on incorporating social justice issues into the curriculum. There were 22 participants, a number of whom were student teachers. The handout was a listing of lesson plans on various topics, including human rights, gender issues, the environment and animal welfare. The handout was later sent to all reps for distribution to teachers. If you have misplaced it and want to refer to it again, you can find it on the ATA website www.ataunion.org

Contact Us

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Have you got a burning question you'd like to ask the School Board?

Why not think about attending a Council of Commissioners' meeting and get your question heard? There are two question periods, one at the beginning of the meeting and one at the end. Here's when they are happening:

January 27
 February 24
 March 24
 April 28
 May 26
 June 23

Let Megan know you're coming - she'll be glad to see you there!

The Tab Campaign Continues

Jonah's tab count is now at just under a whopping 900,000 tabs, 350,000 of which were contributed by the ETSB. Can we help get him to the million mark by March Break? I bet we can! Send your tabs to Gail Klinck at Massey-Vanier. She'll weigh them and send them on.

Committee Highlights

ATA TAC

- ✚ **WOTP** - a chart on the various pathways will soon be available
- ✚ **Word Q** - the difficulties continue, and seem to involve the iPads rather than the computers as the latest computer image includes Word Q. A survey to gather more information about student needs is presently being build.
- ✚ **PLC's** - some schools are well along in the process, some have not started. In addition, it seems that some schools may have misunderstood PLC concepts. Bottom line, it takes time to work things out.

Special Ed (SEBPC)

- ✚ focus on how to track Action Plans
- ✚ planning for a day on Special Needs

QPAT

Mobilization - defining possible actions

Membership Plans (Insurance) - January 1 start for new reimbursement policy - 80% for generic drugs, 68% for brand name (except where no generic exists or a doctor's specific request due to allergy to the filler)

Trending Topics - Concentration Programs, IEP's in Adult/Voc. Ed, PLC's, Merger, Negotiations, Evaluation in Multi-age groupings

Is there a "Wellness" Challenge or Activity going on at your school? We want to know!

Health and wellness are "Big Business" not just for companies hoping to make money from peoples' health concerns, but also for companies seeking to reduce the cost of providing benefits to their employees. At QPAT's Membership Plans Committee there was lots of discussion about how to reduce costs by encouraging teachers to become more active. This made us curious, and we are wondering how many of our schools and centres out there have some kind of organized physical activity for teachers? Is there something going on at your school? If not, are you interested in creating a wellness challenge for your own school - or in throwing a "wellness challenge gauntlet" at another school?

Let's get a conversation going on the ATA's Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Appalachian-Teachers-Association/745103048871031>

Talk to you soon!

Hey Union Gal,

What is in my personal file at the ETSB? How can I know for sure?

Feeling “File” Funny

Dear Funny,

Standard personal information that was requested from you upon engagement would be in your file. Also, any letters of warning, reprimand or suspension would be there. If a teacher receives a letter of warning, reprimand or suspension, the teacher may make written comments he or she feels are relevant to the disciplinary measure and have the comments entered in his or her personal file.

Some further details about these types of letters:

- Every letter of warning placed in the teacher's personal file shall become null and void one hundred (100) workdays after the date on which it is issued unless it is followed by a disciplinary measure on the same subject or a similar subject within that period.
- Every letter of reprimand placed in the teacher's personal file shall become null and void two hundred (200) workdays after the date on which it is issued unless it is followed by a disciplinary measure on the same subject or a similar subject within that period.
- Every letter of suspension placed in the teacher's personal file shall be withdrawn from the said file three hundred (300) workdays after the beginning of the suspension unless it is followed by a disciplinary measure on the same subject or a similar subject within that period.
- Any disciplinary letter that has become null and void shall be returned to the teacher.

You can certainly see your own file.

- Upon prior notification of at least forty-eight (48) hours and at any time during the board's regular office hours, the teacher accompanied or not by a union representative, may consult his or her personal file on the condition that he or she provide proof of his or her identity, if necessary.
- Subject to the same conditions, a union representative, with the teacher's written permission, may consult the teacher's personal file.

Union Gal

The Benefits of Tenure

Tenure is achieved after two full years on a regular contract, that is a contract that is in your own name rather than a replacement contract. While there are some teachers who prefer to remain part-time, most teachers can't wait to attain tenure – and for good reason. Tenure gives a teacher job security. A teacher can be placed on “surplus,” but will not lose his or her job, or at least not for several years. Such a teacher is placed on “availability”, which is being available for teaching tasks set by the school board or school. Such tasks could include supply teaching or developing curriculum materials or providing additional resources to students with special needs – or any other task normally performed by teachers.

In the first three years of availability the teacher will receive at least 90% of his or her salary. In the 4th and 5th year the teacher will receive at least 85% and in the 6th year at least 80%.

A further benefit is that a tenured teacher who resigns from one school board to be hired at another takes his or her tenure with him (or her!).

In our school board, there have only been two teachers on availability in more than 30 years, and never for any length of time, but it's always nice to know there are answers to some of those “what if” questions!

If you are unaware of the Employee Assistance Program, here is some basic information. Unfortunately the French version of this poster is unavailable. The phone number for service in French is 1-800-361-5676. For further information, you can contact Human Resources at the Board.



EAP: Counselling Services

*Struggling with a relationship issue or personal concern?
Feeling anxious or stressed?*

The Shepell·fgi EAP can provide expert, professional support, at no cost to you



ACCESS MADE SIMPLE

Your EAP is a **confidential** support service that can help you solve a wide range of problems and challenges in your life, at no cost to you.

Call the EAP Care Access Centre **toll-free, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week** so that you can access support for your problem or concern, when you need it.

Your call will be answered by a caring professional who can help you **choose a support option** that best suits your needs and learning style. If you are experiencing a crisis situation, you can speak to a counsellor right away.

Shepell·fgi counsellors are experienced **Masters level professionals** who will understand your concern and guide you to resolution.

A VARIETY OF COUNSELLING OPTIONS

In-Person Counselling is our traditional session format, ideal for families or couples who need interaction

Telephonic Counselling is convenient and ideal for time-restricted or travelling individuals

E-Counselling via email exchange with a Counsellor is best suited for those most comfortable with written communication. It is also ideal for travelling individuals, providing support anywhere

Video Counselling offers virtual face-to-face support, in the convenience and comfort of your home

First Chat provides instant support with a Counsellor online, via workhealthlife.com

Text-based, self-directed **Health and Wellness Resources** can also be delivered directly to you

Call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for immediate, confidential help:

1 800 387-4765
TTY Service: 1 877 338-0275

Or, visit online resources: www.workhealthlife.com
and **E-counselling:** www.shepellfgi.com/ecounselling

Teacher Fundraising Efforts



Mélanie Gilbert and her Licensed Practical Nursing students at the Lennoxville Voc. Ed. Centre are fundraising for a **humanitarian mission** in the **Dominican Republic** in **June 2015**. They are working with Me to We (www.metowe.com), a social justice organization that works in a number of areas including the education of women and children, sanitation, agriculture and health care. The students will be working on the ground with people from the village.

You can support their venture in two ways.

- You can make a donation and receive a tax receipt – contact Mélanie directly.
- You can by gift cards from Fundscript.com, an organization that helps groups fundraise. Here's how it works: you buy a gift card, choosing from over 100 retailers, and the retailer(s) donate a certain percentage, usually from 3 to 5%, of the price of your gift card to the organization that's doing the fundraising. Visit fundscript.com to see all the retailers involved.

Email Mélanie at gilbertm@ped.etsb.qc.ca to find out more or to order gift cards. She places an order each Monday and she will deliver the cards via inter-school mail.

Are you involved in a fundraising or humanitarian effort? If you would like some publicity, email your information to Gail Klinck at gailfalconerklinck@gmail.com. We'll put your info on the ATA website and in the next newsletter.

Links of Interest

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|---------------------------|--|----------------|
| • QPAT | www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca | 1-800-361-9870 |
| • Parental Insurance Plan | www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca | 1-888-610-7727 |
| • Quebec Pension Plan | www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca | 1-800-463-5185 |
| • CARRA | www.carra.gouv.qc.ca | 1-800-463-5533 |
| • MELS | www.meq.gouv.qc.ca | 1-866-747-6626 |
| • Industrial Alliance | www.inalco.com | 1-800-363-3540 |
| • Strathcona Credit Union | | 1-888-350-5111 |

Have a great start to the New Year!