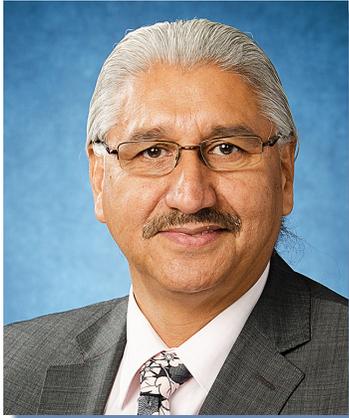


Special Edition

A Newsletter for Specialist Council Executive Members

Volume 3:1 October 2013



Patrick Loyer
Executive Staff Officer,
Professional Development

Change is an inevitable process. In the fall the leaves change to new bright colours and then eventually drop off the branches. Well, this fall there are changes regarding the Specialist Council's factotum. The bright, new change is that Monique Gravel will be replacing me as factotum as I drop off these duties and hand them over to her. You will indeed be in good hands. This change will be immediate, but the plan is for me to offer support to Monique as she transitions into this new role. I have learned much in my year as factotum and, more important, I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting and working with new people. I see the dedication and good work that is put into the specialist councils by so many for the greater good of so many others. I will

not be far away, and I do wish all the best in everything you do for the benefit of teachers and the profession. Keep it up.





Monique Gravel

Executive Staff Officer,
Teacher Welfare/
Professional Development

As Patrick stated, autumn is definitely a time of change and a time of abundance, and I'm sure that many of you starting off the new school year feel that there is an abundance of work to be done. Rest assured that your contributions to specialist councils are greatly appreciated.

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am the new specialist council factotum, a role that was previously held by my exceptional colleagues Patrick Loyer and Andrea Berg. I, too, am an executive staff officer in the Professional Development and Teacher Welfare program areas of the Association. Over the next year, I will be mentored by my colleagues as I transition into my new duties. Specialist councils serve a distinct and valuable service for the Association and its members; I look forward to working with each of you, who are enthusiastic in advancing teacher's professional practice through your particular areas or subjects of expertise.

The Beginning Teachers' Conferences were held in both Edmonton and Calgary, and the level of participation from specialist council members was remarkable. On the Saturday

morning of both conferences, nearly every council was represented. This venue gave councils the opportunity to network with new teachers and promote their council and recruit new members.

On November 4, we will be hosting our annual training session for presidents, editors, webmasters and treasurers (PEWTs). This one-day session will provide council members with the opportunity to discover new advances through media and technology, develop new skills and address any specific concerns related to their council's role, and, of course, network with other councils. This day will mark my first formal engagement with specialist councils, and I rely largely on the assistance of my colleagues, Patrick and Andrea, for their contributions in organizing this day. There is still time to register for this session through surveymonkey.com/s/PEWTS2013. I look forward to meeting you.

Thank you for your time and dedication in promoting your specialist council. Please note that you can contact me with questions, comments or suggestions. I can be reached at 1-800-232-7208 (toll free), directly at 780-447-9449 (Edmonton and area) or by e-mail at monique.gravel@ata.ab.ca.



Memberships Collected at Conference



Cheryl O'Brien
Administrative Officer,
Professional Development

As soon after the conference as possible, it is important for the council to provide the Association with the list of delegate memberships that were collected through conference registration. Because each council is paid a grant each year, and part of the grant calculation is based on membership, it is essential that these memberships are entered into the council membership database each year after conference. Once the information is received at Barnett House, the data is sorted into the appropriate membership category (ie, no-cost, regular, student and subscription) and the no-cost memberships are verified/activated in the system. The paid memberships are then split up by membership category and the fees are

calculated and tallied. The Association then gives the council a breakdown of the paid memberships by category and the total amount that will need to be submitted to Barnett House in order to have the new memberships processed and entered into the system.

Please contact Cheryl O'Brien at cheryl.obrien@ata.ab.ca if your require assistance or have any questions.



Specialist Council Editors—the Power Is Within You



Karen Virag
Supervising Editor, Publications

Specialist council editors have a lot of power. Maybe not enough power to sway the course of provincial elections or the pathway of a pipeline, but they do have the power to decide what goes in their council's publication. In essence, specialist council editors play the role of the acquisitions editor in a publishing house. They receive material from contributors and decide if it will be interesting or relevant to readers. Or sometimes just if it will make them smile. Below is a list of the kinds of material that specialist council editors could consider putting in their publication.

- How-to articles, lesson plans
- Advice columns and FAQs
- Book reviews, lists of recommended resources

- News roundups from locals and regionals
- Messages from members of the council executive
- Profiles of people (for example, award winners, a teacher who has distinguished him- or herself in the community, an interesting guest speaker at the annual conference)
- Top-10 lists
- Updates from the district, Alberta Education
- News from sister or like-minded organizations (for example, Safe and Caring Schools and Communities, Public Interest Alberta)
- Reports on events, such as area conferences, professional development activities, Summer Conference
- Fact-or-fiction column, interesting facts
- Wish lists

Note that some of these items are better suited to newsletters than to journals. That is a decision for you, as editor, to make.

See? Power.



Happy New Year!



Didi Heer

Accountant, Subgroup Services

Summer is but a memory, but I thought that I would take one last chance to reminisce by sharing with you the highlight of my otherwise uneventful summer (or eventful, depending on one's perspective, I suppose). At the invitation of the PD program area of the Association, I had the privilege of presenting to specialist council presidents and conference directors at the 2013 summer conference.

Some truly fascinating morsels that came up that might be of interest to you:

- Financial overview for specialist councils—guiding principles by the 2009 committee to review subgroup surpluses. The outcome of the review was approved at the 2010 ARA.
- Treasurers' reporting responsibilities—to council executives and at annual general meeting

- Treasurers' handbook
- Council reporting responsibilities to the feds—GST and honorarium
- Financial management, surplus requirement and the annual budgeting process
- Financial services to council treasurers made available throughout the year by the Association
- Conference committee reporting responsibilities to the council—conference books are required to be reviewed along with council books for year-end reporting.
- Conference budgeting and accounting—available options to conference treasurers
- Conference budget workbook distributed to conference chairs—includes historical financial data, key budget assumptions for effective budgeting

Now that I've tweaked your interest, I hope to have another kick at the can at the long-awaited 2013 PEWTs events. Boo! Happy Halloween.



Welcome Back to Association Web Managers



Gregory J Romaniuk
Information and
Technology Services

Welcome back to another year for Association Web managers! Amid the hustle and bustle of a new school year, you've taken on the responsibility of maintaining your subgroup website, which can be a challenging adventure. For members who are new to the role of Web manager, here is an overview of the Web service supports that ATA Information and Technology Services (ITS) provides. Association ITS makes available, at no cost to subgroups, Web publishing space using the SharePoint Web infrastructure. If your subgroup uses our centralized services, we are able to provide additional benefits such as a no-cost domain name (using the structure SubGroupName.teachers.ab.ca), professional development

opportunities for Web managers and technical support. The Association-provided Web service allows subgroups the flexibility to publish a website and activate specialized collaboration spaces. Collaboration spaces have flexible access rights: they can be made available to your entire membership or to specific groups, such as your executive members. You can add several straightforward interactive tools to these spaces, including announcement boards, blogs, threaded discussions and shared file space. Access to protected areas is provided by your members' existing ATA Online Services account, which does away with the need to remember yet another account ID and password. Association Web services are hosted in the ATA's own data cloud, which is housed in Alberta, so there is no need to worry that your private documents might be stored in foreign data warehouses.

Last year a number of social media capabilities were added to our webhosting features. Does your subgroup use Twitter? Now you can display your Twitter feed directly on your site homepage. Would you like to display a YouTube video on your site? You can play back YouTube videos from within your Web pages. Would you like your members to get an RSS feed of important items you post? A central feed list is available. As well, we are introducing the capability for subgroups to add a photo carousel, similar to the photo carousel displayed on the front page of the provincial Association Website (www.teachers.ab.ca). Adding a photo carousel and a Twitter feed display to the front page of your site is a straightforward way to manage

new content to help make your site feel both dynamic and fresh.

I'm very interested to hear from our subgroup Web managers and other executive members. Are you interested to start using Association-provided webhosting? Maybe you're already using Association-provided webhosting and would like to start using these

new tools. Perhaps you are new to the role of Web manager and need direction on how to begin. Should you have any questions about Association Web services please don't hesitate to call me (780-447-9415, or toll free 1-800-232-7208 outside of Edmonton) or write (greg.romaniuk@ata.ab.ca). I look forward to speaking with you.



The Value of Site Visits



Leanne Calderwood
Director,
Global Accounts,
HelmsBriscoe

When considering possible venues to host your meeting or conference, one way to make the most informed decision is by visiting prospective sites. Even if you are familiar with a hotel or facility from other events you may have attended there, seeing the hotel or facility through the eyes of a conference organizer helps you map out everything you need and your delegates will need.

Here are some questions to ask when conducting your site visit:

Meeting space

- Where are the general session rooms in relation to elevators and the registration area?
- How about elevator access and stair access?
- Do you require wheelchair accessibility for any of your guests? Are all function spaces accessible?
- Are there adequate washrooms nearby?
- Is there natural light in the meeting spaces?
- Is there a business centre onsite or an office supply store nearby for last-minute conference planner needs?

Pre- or post-conference and after-hours mingling

- Are there places for people to do some after-hours networking and socializing? Is there a nice lobby bar? Nearby restaurants and pubs?
- Have you included a hospitality suite in your event space?
- Is there a pool/spa/fitness centre on site?
- Are there nearby tourist attractions?

Guest rooms

- Do the rooms have coffee makers?
- Is there wired or wireless internet? How much does it cost?
- Has the hotel put into place any green initiatives in place (eg, towel-saving program)?

Travel and location

- Where are most of the attendees coming from?
- If the hotel or facility is not in a major centre, how do attendees get there?
- Is the hotel or facility located near major highways or airports? Is there parking? Free or paid?
- What are the nearest airports and highways?

If you have partnered with HelmsBriscoe on your event, we will organize site visits for you and accompany you on your visit, and ensure that all your questions are answered before you make any decisions or recommendations for your group.

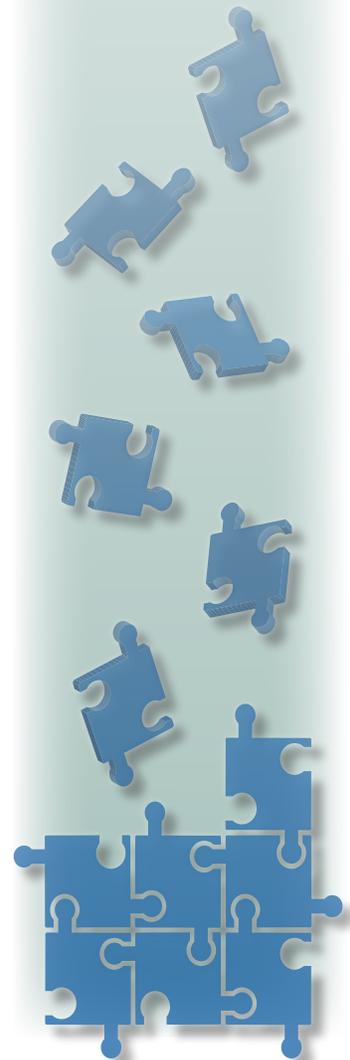
Enjoy the fall season, and all the best at your upcoming conferences!

Leanne Calderwood, CMP
Director, Global Accounts
HelmsBriscoe
lcalderwood@helmsbriscoe.com

HelmsBriscoe helps specialist councils find and contract with hotels that will suit their needs for their conferences and meetings.

Beginning Teachers Conferences

The annual Beginning Teachers' Conferences were held at the Fantasyland Hotel, in Edmonton, on September 26–28, and at the Westin Hotel in Calgary, on October 3–5, with more than 800 beginning teachers from across the province attending the events. Specialist council volunteers staffed 21 booths and facilitated nearly 40 curriculum presentations. During the weekend, many beginning teachers were introduced to specialist council executives and members and gained valuable insight as to specialist councils' role as a PD provider. Several councils increased their membership through workshop presentations and networking at the booths. Teachers' conventions throughout February and March will give councils another opportunity to recruit new members. Thank you to all those that came out to support their councils and contributed to the prize draw during Saturday's lunch hour. Your dedication is outstanding.



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Please contact Karen Virag,
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from this newsletter.
She can be reached at
karen.virag@ata.ab.ca.

Submissions for this
newsletter should
be sent to
monique.gravel@ata.ab.ca.

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Important Dates

Please note the following important upcoming activities and deadlines:

Fall 2013: Councils with fall conferences and annual general meetings must provide an updated list of executive members to the Association and must advise of any changes made to membership fees. Councils must also submit information to the Association about how many memberships were sold at the conference.

October 2013: Following receipt of each council's annual report, the Association determines the council grant and advises councils as to the amount.

November 2013: All councils receive a base grant of \$7,500 and a per-member grant based on membership as of August 31, 2012.

November 15, 2013—Strategic Planning Grant deadline: Each year, the Association offers its subgroups—locals, specialist councils and convention associations—matching grants of up to \$2,000 each to offset the costs of organizing strategic planning retreats to discuss their plans and set long-term goals. Applications will be considered in two rounds. The first deadline is **September 15**, following which five councils will be chosen to receive grants. The second deadline is **November 15**, following which five additional councils will be selected. Go to www.teachers.ab.ca and click on For Members/Grants, Awards and Scholarships for more information.

November 29–30, 2013: Fall Regional Professional Development Area Conference is held in Edmonton. All specialist council presidents or designates are invited to attend. Extra delegates may attend at the council's expense. Please check the website regularly for registration information.

December 31, 2013: Councils must provide information to the Association on honoraria and expenses paid to conference presenters and/or council executive members for the 2012 calendar year. Names, addresses, SINS (where applicable) and amounts are required.

