

January 18, 2024

President's Message

Doug Still

Welcome to the first edition of *Executive Notes* for 2024. On behalf of my colleagues on the Provincial Executive and our staff, very best wishes to each of you.

Starting last September, *Outreach* moved to a quarterly schedule and is no longer tied to the five Provincial Executive meetings. *Executive Notes* is an additional communications tool which allows us to pass along detailed information very quickly after each meeting. We encourage Chapter Presidents to distribute this material in a way that works for your Chapter so that members have the opportunity to access the information. This document is also posted on our provincial website at sts.sk.ca. Thank you to Chapter Presidents for your engagement in the process of communicating *Executive Notes* to your respective members.

At our meetings held January 8-10, a number of key items of business were dealt with including decisions around Annual General Meetings for 2024 and 2025, as well as the Group Benefits Plan. You will find information relating to these two topics as well as many others in this current edition.

If you have questions or comments about *Executive Notes* please touch base with the office at sts@sts.sk.ca, by phone at (306) 373-3879, your Executive Chapter liaison, or me as Provincial President at socrates@sasktel.net.

50th Anniversary Planning Committee Report

Jane Isinger

1. Update of 50th Anniversary Grants:

- 34 Chapters out of 41 requested grant support to help them celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the STS in 2023.
- Below is a list of the wide variety of the 50th Anniversary activities/events that Chapters organized.
 - Bus Charter Excursion
 - Local Museum Tour and Celebration
 - Chapter Meal and Provision of 50th Anniversary Pins
 - Wine and Cheese Event
 - Luncheon and Speaker
 - Banquet with 50th Anniversary Cake
 - Chapter Reunion and Chapter History Booklet
 - Games Day
 - Dinner and Entertainment
 - Short Video Submissions, Display of History Photos and Celebration of World Teacher Day
 - Catered Meal and Ageism Video Presentation
 - Luncheon and Cake
 - Afternoon Outdoor Activities at Arlington Beach
 - Ethnic Supper and Unveiling of Anniversary Banner



- Provision of One-time Scholarship to a Bachelor of Education Student
 - Treating of Teachers in School Division to a Pizza Lunch
 - Local Guided Tour and Celebration Cake
 - Honouring of Chapter Members Who Retired 25 Years Ago or Longer
 - Design and Distribution of Chapter Information Pamphlet and Treating of Teachers to Coffee and Muffins
 - Anniversary Banquet and History Booklet
 - Afternoon Tea and Evening Cabaret
 - Legion Celebration with Appetizers and Cake
 - Purchase of Benches with 50th Anniversary Logo for Two Schools
- Thank you to all the participating Chapters. Your creativity, enthusiasm and hard work certainly made this year of celebration very special.

2. Committee Continuation:

- It was decided that the Ad Hoc 50th Anniversary Committee will continue until June 30, 2024. This will give the STS office time to finalize the financial statements. A final committee report will be provided at the AGM in May 2024.

ACER-CART Report

Murray Wall

ACER-CART is the national organization and voice of retired teachers in Canada. Unfortunately, we have recently been informed that the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) is withdrawing from ACER-CART. The ACER-CART Executive and Board of Directors are examining implications to ACER-CART and steps needed to ensure ACER-CART remains a vibrant organization and the recognized national voice of retired teachers in Canada.

Information has also been received that RTO may be marketing their Health and Dental Plan to retired teachers outside Ontario. If STS members receive marketing information from the RTO, please contact the STS office. The STS Extended Health Plan is designed by Saskatchewan retired teachers specifically for Saskatchewan retired teachers with our members' needs in mind.

Lastly, Chapter Executives are encouraged to respect their members privacy by not distributing member contact information to any outside individuals or organizations.

Advocacy Committee Report

Huguette Kitchin, Devona Putland

1. **Land Acknowledgement:** Acknowledging traditional Indigenous territories is one way to recognize contemporary and historical Indigenous presence and land rights. Land acknowledgement has been modelled by the Advocacy Committee at the January Executive meeting and will be part of our agenda for all STS Executive meetings and events. Members giving an acknowledgement are encouraged to do personal learning about how to make an acknowledgement and personalize it when possible. If Chapters would like more information about creating a land acknowledgement, the following are links to references that may give you some information:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Territory-Acknowledgements-Information-Booklet.pdf>

<https://www.careaboutclimate.org/blog/five-steps-to-writing-a-land-acknowledgement>

https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

2. **Climate Change:** The Committee is previewing some climate change resources and will then forward those they recommend to the STS office for potential sharing of videos or website links to the membership. This will be discussed again in March.
3. **Truth and Reconciliation:** The Committee continues to explore possible suggestions relating to Truth and Reconciliation for the 2025 AGM.
4. **Election Issues:** The Committee is working on information for membership in anticipation of the fall 2024 Saskatchewan general election. This work will continue at the March meeting.
5. **National Seniors Day and International Day of Older Persons, October 1:** The Committee continues to investigate ideas that can be shared with Chapters in celebrating National Seniors Day and International Day of Older Persons. The discussion will continue at the March meeting.

AGM Committee Report

Huguette Kitchen, Anna Wehrkamp

- The AGM Committee met and is working on finalizing plans for our in-person AGM scheduled for May 7-9, 2024. Chapters are encouraged to begin selecting their Chapter Delegates for the AGM. Additional information will be provided to Chapter Presidents from the STS office at the end of January.
- As in previous years, there will be break-out sessions to discuss resolutions. Interest sessions are being finalized and will be shared in your Delegate packages. In addition, entertainment will be offered on the evening of the banquet.
- Two motions based on recommendations from the AGM Planning Committee were passed at the January Executive Meeting:
 1. The number of Delegates per Chapter to attend the 2024 AGM will be determined by the following formula: two Delegates for the first sixty-five paid members or portion thereof and one Delegate for each additional seventy-five paid members or portion thereof.
 2. The AGM Venue choice for 2025 will be Dakota Dunes.

Budget, Finance and Audit Committee Report

Sue Amundrud

The Budget, Finance and Audit Committee had its meeting on January 9, 2024.

- Current membership in the STS stands as 12,218 – up 10 from our last meeting.
- Financial statements reviewed were as of November 30, 2023. As of that date, our yearly revenues to date totalled \$491,341.43 and our corresponding expenses were \$395,184.96. The organization continues to be in a healthy financial position.
- We reviewed the latest draft of the proposed budget for 2024-25. Feedback was provided, and we anticipate finalizing the draft budget for presentation to the AGM at our March Executive meeting.
- ESTI has advised that our office computers are reaching their natural “end of service” time. They will be replaced within the current budget.

- We discussed the positive experience with the grants provided to Chapters for celebrating our 50th Anniversary and raised the idea of creating a Special Project Fund that would allow a similar process for future initiatives. Further discussion will occur.

Governance and Handbook Review Committee Report

Terrl Mitchell

- The Committee met via Zoom November 21, 2023, and in person January 8, 2024.
- The work of the Committee focused on proposed changes to Bylaw 3 and Guideline 5 regarding the distribution of Nominations and Resolutions, Bylaw 4.7 as it relates to Resolution A.11, a review of Bylaw 5 (Meetings), a review of Bylaw 7 (Quorum), and a review of Policy 3 regarding the timing of acceptance of Resolutions and potential changes to Guideline 5.3.1.3.
- Drafts of the revisions as outlined above were presented to the Executive as well as motions to accept the revisions for presentation at the 2024 AGM. All revisions were accepted as presented.
- Changes to Bylaws and Policy will be presented as Resolutions for approval at the 2024 AGM. Any changes to Guidelines are approved by the Executive and will appear in the July 1, 2024, edition of the *STS Policy Handbook*.
- We also discussed the **process for Pre-AGM discussions of draft policies**. It was suggested that information to Bylaw and Policy changes be provided in the form of a chart indicating the original documents, the proposed changes and explanatory notes where necessary.
- A suggestion was also made to include in the AGM report an overview of the work of the Governance and Handbook Review Committee since the formation of the Committee. The date of our next meeting is to be determined.
- Thank you to the members of the Committee who willingly attended extra Zoom meetings and lengthy in-person Committee meetings to prepare these revisions for consideration by our membership.

Group Benefits Committee Report

Sunil Pandlla

Happy New Year everyone! January marks the halfway point through our final year of the current Blue Cross agreement. Both Blue Cross representatives and Elev8 provided a summary update at our January meeting. It has been an interesting year, to say the least, as our financial picture continues to be in positive territory. For November 2023, the health experience had \$125,801.00 surplus and the Dental experienced a deficit of \$40,023.49 for a net combined surplus of \$85,777.99. Since July 1, we have accumulated net excess revenues of \$688,422.83. The Dental portion has now had two consecutive months of deficits due to higher fees and increased claims. As we proceed for the last six months of our existing contract, we anticipate greater usage and costs in the Health portion, therefore, reducing our overall surplus. The Committee will continue to monitor the health of the Plan and keep the membership informed. Currently we have 9,035 members in our Plan.

I know many members have been hearing news regarding the Federal Dental Plan that is beginning to make headlines. At this point there continues to be more questions than answers but we will continue to work with Blue Cross and Elev8 to get a better understanding of how the Federal plan may affect our members as more details are released.

The Negotiating Committee has been meeting to negotiate a new contract effective July 1, 2024. We have taken into account input through resolutions, phone calls, Chapter Presidents' Meeting, along with advice from our Consultants from Elev8 in helping us in our work in the negotiation process for a new contract. At our January meeting, the Executive

approved the recommendations from the Negotiating Committee towards a new contract. Keep in mind we are aware that we must have a Plan that is sustainable, affordable in these times of high inflation, and at the same time meeting the needs of members. More information will be forthcoming as we begin to finalize the details.

I want to remind all members that it is your responsibility to ensure that bills are submitted for health and dental claims in a timely manner. Please make sure that if your health provider is direct billing, the bills are indeed being sent for payment.

If you have any questions regarding the Group Benefits Plan, it is important that you contact the STS office and the staff will assist you with your concerns.

Honorary Life Membership Committee Report

Don Gabel

Nominations for Honorary Life Membership Awards are due March 1, 2024.

Policy and Guidelines for this award are found on page 11 and 21 of the *STS Policy Handbook*.

Please use the rubric when submitting nominations. Presidents received copies of the rubric at the Chapter Presidents' Meeting and it is also available on the STS website - click [here](#) to view.

If you have any questions in regards to an HLM nomination, you can contact me at 306-278-7918.

Recreation Committee Report

Alan Laughlin, Don Gabel

At the January 10 meeting, the Provincial Executive approved the following recreation requests:

1. Curling will be hosted by Saskatoon Chapter and will be held on November 4-6, 2024.
2. Golf will be hosted by the Moosomin Chapter and will be held on June 10-11, 2024.
3. Mah Jongg will be hosted by the Regina Chapter and will be held on May 1-2, 2024.
4. A new event, Wellness Retreat or STS goes to Camp, will be jointly hosted by the Regina Chapter and the Last Mountain Chapter on June 13-14, 2024.

Please refer to the STS website, or follow on the STS Facebook page for more complete details.

Finally, as noted in the *STS Policy Handbook* Guideline 2.2, Chapters are encouraged to secure liability insurance for events that they might be hosting.