

OUTREACH



To The Superannuated Teachers
of Saskatchewan

President's Report

Sunil Pandila

Hello superannuates across the province and beyond! I hope that each and every one of you (and your families and friends) are safe and healthy. After almost seven months of adjusting to a new way of life, it appeared that maybe we were slowly turning a corner on the current health crisis, but despite a planned and careful approach to reopening the economy and social gatherings, the recent upswing in cases is just a signal that we must continue to be vigilant with trying to get back to a sense of normal.

While COVID-19 has impacted all organizations in some way, the STS Executive has continued to do its work in a digital format. The advantages of technology are obvious, and while there are challenges, Executive members have adapted quickly in being able to use the Zoom platform for STS Executive work.

The STS Executive has met on several occasions since our last in-person meetings in March to give direction, make decisions and carry on with our operations. Our most recent meeting was on Monday, September 21 (to start the new 2020-21 year). One of the most important items was to review the year-end financials for both Operations and Extended Health Funds and go over the audited statements. You will find more information under the

Budget, Finance and Audit and Group Benefits reports.

Since spring, the STS Office has remained closed to the public but the staff has been carrying on with everyday operations. Steps are being taken to reopen the office "by appointment only". More details are contained in this issue.

The Advocacy Committee was busy in the past few months putting together a brief pamphlet to assist members with possible questions to ask candidates in the upcoming provincial election. These starting points for discussion deal with issues which have been identified by older adults across the province through the SSM study and published in their report, "*Strategizing for Positive Aging in Saskatchewan*." The pamphlet was mailed to members and can be found on our website with additional supporting information. We hope you will find this to be a helpful resource.

Many of our Committees have not met during the past few months because a number of activities have been curtailed. For example, the Recreation Committee has not met as all of our recreational events have been cancelled until the end of December. As such, the Committee information you are used to reading in past editions may be very brief in this edition of *Outreach*.

I have enjoyed the phone calls I have received from members and the opportunity to have a discussion or simply talk about STS activities and initiatives. While it is important to keep in touch, it is not the same as visiting Chapters and having the face to face interactions to which I always looked forward! For all Chapters who may be meeting, while following health guidelines, I would love to visit and participate in your meetings. I was glad to hear that some Chapters even had the "To Heck With The Bell" event modified to meet safety guideline, as a way to kick off the new year.

I would like to welcome any new members to the STS who have joined since June 2020. Even though activities at your local Chapter level may be postponed for now, there is an opportunity to keep a connection with education and a new lifestyle. It is well worth the effort for a long and healthy retirement!

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy autumn. Keep active and healthy and enjoy the time outdoors in getting ready for fall as you put away your summer lawn ornaments and prepare for Halloween and beyond!

For more information about any of our programs, initiatives, or how we can support you in your Chapters, please do not hesitate to call the STS Office at 306-373-3879 or visit our website at www.sts.sk.ca. You can also contact me at sunil.pandila@sasktel.net or 306-692-2420.

ACER-CART

Marie LeBlanc-Warick

The ACER-CART website has been inactive as it was being redesigned; hopefully by October 1, 2020, it will be active again.

National Seniors Day was held on October 1, 2020. Please take the opportunity to celebrate seniors and show appreciation for their contributions. Seniors need our support and acknowledgement now more than ever. Make a telephone call; send an email to a senior near to you. See

Employment and Social Development Canada for more suggestions. www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/national-seniors-day.html.

BC Supreme Court Judge Steeves has made his decision in the Brian Day, Cambie Clinic challenge to the Attorney General of BC regarding private clinics also receiving payments for public healthcare. Judge Steeves concluded that duplicate healthcare

would not decrease wait times in the public system and that there is expert evidence that wait times would actually increase. This is a win for the public health care system. However, this case may eventually end up in the Supreme Court of Canada.

As has been the case for the STS Executive, the ACER-CART Executive has been meeting by technological means such as Zoom. Their next meeting will be held in October.

Annual General Meeting

Jane Isinger and Doug Still

The STS Provincial Executive convened a Zoom video conference meeting on August 18, 2020, to further consider a number of options regarding the STS 2020 Annual General Meeting that was scheduled for November 2-4, 2020. Legal advice was also received regarding the various options being considered.

Given the continuing situation surrounding COVID-19, the current Saskatchewan Public Health Directives, as well as the lead time required to plan and prepare for an AGM, the Provincial Executive passed a motion to further postpone the STS 2020 AGM until immediately prior to the 2021 AGM scheduled for May 12-14, 2021.

Resolutions which have been submitted will be put forth at the 2021 AGM. The 2019-20 Provincial Executive will remain in place until this time. The current budget will also remain in place until the next scheduled AGM as well as the STS membership fee of \$30.00 and Chapter rebate of \$8.00 per member plus \$400.00 per Chapter.

The above information was sent out to all Chapter Presidents in a memo dated August 19, 2020. It is our sincere hope that we will see you all at our 2021 AGM. Future planning will be dependent upon the COVID-19 situation and we will keep you informed regarding our decisions.

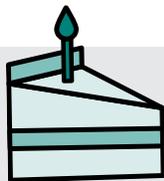
Stay safe and healthy.

The STS Office intends to be open *by appointment only* beginning on October 13, 2020, depending on installation of necessary PPE. In order to protect the health and safety of visitors and staff, we ask that you:

- call (306) 373-3879 to schedule an appointment
- wear a mask as you enter the building at 2311 Arlington Avenue
- use the available hand sanitizer upon entering the office
- wait in the hall if staff is seeing another member
- not enter the office if you are feeling unwell

Thank you for your cooperation!

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Assiniboine Chapter member, **Natalie Rauckman** who celebrated her 90th birthday on July 21, 2020.

Congratulations to Midlakes Chapter member, **Agnes Zeleny** who celebrated her 93rd birthday on May 22, 2020.

Congratulations to Regina Chapter member, **George Exner and his wife, Connie**, who celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on August 20, 2020.

Budget, Finance and Audit

Don Gabel

The Budget, Finance and Audit Committee met with the auditors from Deloitte on September 21, 2020. The Committee reviewed the audited financial statements for the STS Operating Fund and STS Extended Health Plan for the year ending June 30, 2020. We received a clean audit in both cases with no concerns expressed by the auditors.

Our 2019-20 STS Operating Fund had a surplus of \$410,137. This has been an unusual year and the surplus is largely due to impacts from COVID-19 such as minimal AGM

expenses in the current year, reduced *Outreach* expenses due to cancelled issues, reduced office expenses due to delays in technology enhancements, and reduced Executive travel.

The Extended Health and Dental Plan continues to be in a strong financial position with details to be provided in the Group Benefits report. As of June 30, 2020, the Contingency Fund has a balance of \$1,443,965 which represents an increase of \$212,811 from the previous year largely due to earnings in the fund and policy-based transfers.

The budget for the current year will be the last budget approved at the 2019 Annual General Meeting. Our organization continues to be in a strong financial position and the Committee will monitor the current budget as we move through the year.

As of September 21, 2020, our membership was 11,853 which reflects an increase of 142 from last year at this time.

The Committee will review our goals for 2020-21 at our November meeting.

Recreation

Don Gabel and Alan Laughlin



We hope this report finds everyone safe and healthy.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, all recreation activities planned for the fall have been postponed or cancelled.

The decision to postpone or cancel an activity is the responsibility of the Chapter. The STS website will be updated as changes are received by the STS Office. Chapters that were originally to host events that have been cancelled, will be given the first opportunity to host in the upcoming year. Please continue to monitor the STS website for updates as we are aware of recreational event additions or changes. www.sts.sk.ca

Advocacy

Sue Amundrud

Despite the COVID-19 lockdown, the Advocacy Committee has been holding meetings via technology (phone, email and Zoom). Our recent focus was on producing materials that would support STS members who wished to engage in discussion with candidates or colleagues in advance of the upcoming provincial election. The production of an election pamphlet has been undertaken by STS for many previous provincial and federal elections. Topics were generated from STS policy and also from issues that have been identified by affiliates such as Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism and ACER-CART as common for superannuates and older adults. We hope that you will find the pamphlet that was mailed to you and the accompanying one-pagers on the STS website are useful starting points for discussion. www.sts.sk.ca

School Board Elections

Elections for School Boards will be occurring on November 9, 2020. Elected school board members serve an important governance function within Saskatchewan's publicly funded education system. One of the fundamental responsibilities of boards is to bring the voice of the public to publicly funded education. Teachers and superannuates have observed and experienced first hand the successes and challenges within the publicly funded education system and have an important perspective to offer. Please be involved in the school board election process by finding out who your candidates are, having conversations about public education with your neighbors and casting your vote on November 9, 2020.

Transition of STS Executive Secretary



As you read this, the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan is being headed up by longtime educator and public figure Murray Wall as the new Executive Secretary.

Perhaps not so strange on the surface, but consider the fact that at the end of June, Fred Herron stepped aside from the position having held the office for two decades. In fact, until his retirement, Herron was the only Executive Secretary in the STS's history.

As the two men sat in the STS office, Herron pointed to Wall, a former President of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation from 2003 to 2005, with the unwavering belief that "you can see the STS is in good hands right there," Herron said.

Fred Herron (left) has packed up his trusty, venerable briefcase while stepping aside as Executive Director of the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan. His replacement is Murray Wall (right).

Vividly recalling the interview process, Herron said the clincher for him was "when Murray indicated he was a listener, learner and leader—that's exactly what I wanted to hear," Herron confirmed, acknowledging that earlier he had phoned his would-be successor to contemplate applying for the half-time vacancy.

"With his experience and the relationships he has built over the years, Murray is the ideal person for this position," Herron reaffirmed.

Suffice it to say this is a mutual admiration society with Wall maintaining that "it's ideal, and you couldn't ask to step into a better situation with the governance, administration structure and the office staff that is in place. Things are always going to evolve and change, but there isn't anything that I can see where there are any glaring areas that need immediate change."

Wall indicated the transition will be that much easier in that he has had a six-month mentoring period. He praised the STS for having that kind of insight.

"I've tried hard to absorb as much as I could and this is a great opportunity for me to stay involved in education," said Wall, who in addition to a lengthy teaching career, also spent a decade as a senior administrative staff member with the STF.

"The time commitment is about right and the more I thought about this and reflected on it, everything seemed right and there were no kinds of red flags. I know the organization [STS] has a strong reputation and is valued. I've always

been aware of the strong sense of involvement and commitment the STS has demonstrated so I'm looking forward to my involvement," Wall added.

Reflecting back on his time in the position, Herron recalled how things were not quite so rosy when he assumed the role, citing the fact the organization was mired in a very dire financial situation with membership on the decline while premiums were on the rise and the health and dental plan was in need of an overhaul.

The latter was ultimately much improved thanks to the work of a committee of STS and with help from the STF – eventually Saskatchewan Blue Cross became the new provider. Today, Herron said the organization's finances are in an extremely strong financial position with 11,700 members. He noted that among provinces with self-funded plans, the STS is able to provide equal or better coverage with considerably lower premiums than other jurisdictions in the country.

Aside from those more tangible gains made during Herron's tenure, Wall also pointed to the valuable aspects of being an STS member, particularly in terms of the social

aspect and the ability for retired teachers to remain involved.

“Retired teachers will have an opportunity to be involved in the profession and this organization gives them advocacy and a chance to have their voices heard when it comes to issues that are important to them, and when you look at the pre-retirement lifestyle seminars as an example of how this organization helps assist in the transition for some folks. It’s a very vibrant organization.”

Both attributed that in large part to the invaluable work of the three-member administrative office staff.

“I can tell you what has strongly impressed me in the time I’ve been here is how well members’ requests and questions are answered in a thoroughly professional, respectful manner—and believe me we get a lot of calls,” Wall noted.

Herron was equally effusive, adding that “Probably the most important part of making this work is the dedicated people we are lucky enough to have here. From my point of view, that has been just tremendous. Yes, the buck stops here, but in the vast majority of cases I just got out of the way and let the staff do their job because they do it so well.”

While he said it’s just the right time to catch his breath, “I’m going to miss the people, but I’m leaving in peace and I know everything is where it should be.”

If somewhat reluctant to sing his own praises, Herron, always the historian, pointed to one of the many key decisions made by the venerable Dr. Stirling McDowell who was the one who advocated for the STS to have its own Executive Secretary.

“It’s just another example of his contributions and how his hand [McDowell] is still on the history of this organization—and that of the STE,” Herron emphasized.

Sask Bulletin Article dated August 26, 2020 (reprinted with permission)

Group Benefits

Maxine Stinka

The audited financial statement for the STS Extended Health Fund as of June 30, 2020, showed an increase in the assets of the Plan of approximately \$4.2M with all reserves full. This was the second year of the contract with Saskatchewan Blue Cross and the Plan is in a strong financial position.

Bob Wilhelms (Saskatchewan Blue Cross Representative) met with the Committee and reviewed the Health and Dental Experience Report for the STS Benefits Plan as well as the Analysis of Expenses for the 12 months from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. Health revenue was approximately \$10.4M and expenses approximately \$7.8M for a surplus of approximately \$2.5M. Dental revenue was approximately \$6.2M and expenses approximately \$4.6M with a surplus of almost \$1.6M.

The first two months of the third year (July 1, 2020 – August 31, 2020) of the contract with Saskatchewan Blue Cross showed approximately \$1.78M health revenue and approximately \$1.3M expenses for a surplus of approximately \$433,000. Dental revenue over the same period was approximately \$1.07M and expenses approximately \$890,000 for a surplus of approximately \$136,000. Overall surplus for the Benefits Plan for the two months is approximately \$569,000. The surplus is higher than expected due to the effect of COVID-19 as there were fewer member claims for benefits such as paramedical services and regularly scheduled dentist visits. Drug claims remained relatively constant. It is uncertain how the Plan will be impacted going forward.

Plan members will receive more information about the Plan and travel coverages as it becomes available. Members are encouraged to use the Blue Cross mobile app as it provides information regarding drugs covered, prompt adjudication of claims, and online deposit of payment as well as other pertinent information regarding the Plan. At present, Saskatchewan Blue Cross is hoping to open their offices in Regina and Saskatoon for customers on October 13, 2020.

Membership in one or both portions the STS Plan as of October 1, 2020, was 8,359, an increase of 216 from March 1, 2020.

We hope everyone is being careful and keeping healthy.

Please Note:

To make any changes to your group benefits, all requests must be received in writing at the STS Office prior to the 15th of the month in order to be effective the 1st of the following month. Requests can be submitted via email, fax or mail. If you wish to make any changes to your group benefits for January 1, 2021, please send your request before 9:00 a.m. on December 9, 2020.

Blue Cross Mobile App

Now you can submit your claim before you’ve even left the practitioner’s office, which means you will get your money back even faster. The Blue Cross Group Member App gives you the freedom to manage your healthcare benefits while you’re on the go or away from home.

Download it for free today from the App Store or Google Play or see www.sk.bluecross.ca for more information.

Wadena Chapter Member: Katherine Frances Meehan

Submitted by Marvin Mackie

On June 28, 2020, Katherine Meehan, a member of the STS Wadena Chapter, celebrated her 100th birthday. Due to COVID-19, part of the celebration was on Zoom with family and friends attending to wish her a happy day on this momentous occasion. She also enjoyed a drive-pass.

Katherine, affectionately known as Fran, was born in Cupar, Saskatchewan and went to Glenn Murray School for her first year. She then attended Dalrymple School and high school in Cupar.

Fran married Dinnis Meehan and moved to Weyburn where he was stationed as a flying instructor with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. They were later stationed in North Battleford for the duration of the war. After the war, Dinnis got a job teaching at Fox Hills, Saskatchewan. They spent five years there and then moved to Jasmin. After Jasmin the family moved to Leross. Fran was hired by Dr. Spinks as his secretary and worked in the office of the President of the University of Saskatchewan. After a sabbatical the family returned to Leross and then moved to Wadena.

In Wadena, Fran was a homemaker until her youngest child went to school at which time she was hired by the local law office and worked there for twenty-five years. Fran was involved with the local curling club and was a founding member of the local arts council. In addition to this she kept involved with church meetings, parish council and the Catholic Women's League.

When Dinnis passed away in 1969, Fran, as a surviving spouse, was eligible to become a member of the STS. She

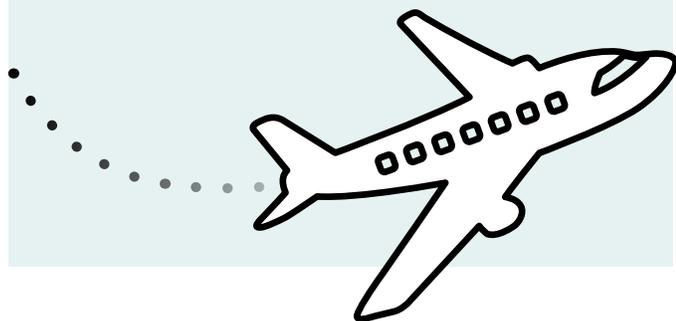


enjoyed her years associated with the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan especially for the friendships that it has fostered. For many years Fran sat on the Program Committee of the Wadena Chapter and helped organize educational speakers and other activities. Well into her 90's, Fran lived in her own home.

Fran faithfully attended meetings and activities of the Wadena Chapter until last year when health concerns prohibited her attendance.

Even now Fran has a great enjoyment of friends and family. She has embraced technology to the point where she FaceTimes on her iPad with her children.

Questions about COVID-19
and your travel plans? See the
Saskatchewan Blue Cross website
(www.sk.bluecross.ca).



Spotlight on Superannuates

Elaine Yeomans, Regina Chapter

Elaine Yeomans celebrated her 90th birthday in August this year. She gets a ride to the Legislative Buildings each day and walks home from there. She has started using walking sticks to keep her momentum going and enjoys this walk in all kinds of weather. Elaine makes a point of attending all STS events and enjoying the social aspects as well as the business meetings.

Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM)

Did you know that the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan is one of the founding members of SSM and continues to have a strong voice at the SSM board table? Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism is a non-profit, volunteer organization that brings together Saskatchewan seniors' organizations to advocate for and contribute to a better quality of life for our province's older adults. Most recently SSM has released a report entitled "Strategizing for Positive Aging in Saskatchewan" that contains research and survey results around issues identified as important to older adults in Saskatchewan. For more information see www.skseniormechanism.ca.

Seasonal allergies in a time of COVID-19

Many of the symptoms of seasonal allergies and COVID-19 are similar. Cough, headache and/or a sore throat are just a few symptoms that belong to both. If you are typically affected by seasonal allergies at this time of year, you likely have a go-to medication you take to improve your symptoms. If this medication does not work on your symptoms as it usually does, in the timeframe it usually does, you should stay home and arrange for a COVID-19 test

by calling HealthLine 811 or your primary healthcare provider.

Other tips for helping with seasonal allergies include reducing your exposure to allergy triggers. This can mean staying indoors on dry, windy days, delegating lawn mowing and other gardening chores to someone else, having a shower after being outdoors and washing those clothes, closing windows at night, using high-efficiency filters in your furnace, and vacuuming often.

COVID-19 Symptoms in Comparison to Seasonal Allergies

SYMPTOMS	COVID-19	ALLERGIES
FEVER AND CHILLS	Common	No
COUGH	Common (Usually dry)	Sometimes
FATIGUE	Sometimes	Sometimes
MUSCLE AND BODY ACHES	Sometimes	No
SORE THROAT	Sometimes	Sometimes
HEADACHES	Sometimes	Sometimes
SHORTNESS OF BREATH	Sometimes	Sometimes
NEW LOSS OF SMELL, TASTE OR APPETITE	Sometimes	No
NAUSEA OR VOMITTING	Sometimes	No
CONGESTION	Sometimes	Sometimes
RUNNY NOSE	Rare	Common
DIARRHEA	Rare	No
ITCHY OR WATERY EYES	No	Common
SNEEZING	No	Common

STS Office Reminders

- Saskatchewan residents who are 65 years or older can apply for the Saskatchewan Seniors' Drug Plan. If you are approved by the Seniors' Drug Plan, you will receive a confirmation letter from the Ministry of Health. STS Group Benefit Planholders who are eligible for the Saskatchewan Seniors' Drug Plan may be eligible for a reduced premium by providing the STS Office with a copy of the Seniors' Drug Plan confirmation letter.

For information on the Saskatchewan Seniors' Drug Plan, please speak with your pharmacist or contact the Seniors' Drug Plan office at 1-800-667-7581. If you live in Regina please call 306-787-3317.

- For any changes to your address and/or Group Benefits coverage, please contact the STS Office directly at 306-373-3879 or sts@sts.sk.ca.
- If you are on a temporary contract and wish to suspend your STS Group Benefits, please contact the STS Office via email prior to the 15th of the month to be effective the 1st of the following month.
- Please make sure that you are using the correct email address for the STS: sts@sts.sk.ca.

From The Editor's Desk

Joyce Hoffman

I know we all feel that this pandemic has been around for way too long and we all hope that life will soon be able to return to a somewhat "normal state". We are pleased to be able to offer this edition of *Outreach* in both electronic and paper form after having cancelled the last issue in spring. We hope you will appreciate receiving this small move towards normalcy.

We would like you to consider receiving your *Outreach* by electronic means, if you haven't already done so. An email to the STS Office requesting this change is all that is required. You would be informed when *Outreach*

is available online, which is usually a week earlier than receiving the paper copy. There are presently 1,919 members receiving *Outreach* online.

We are always looking for submissions to "Spotlight on Superannuates" and "Superannuates Make a Difference". These reports can tell about the successes and/or achievements of individual Superannuates or accomplishments in your STS Chapter. Please send your submissions to the STS Office.

We hope you are all healthy and staying safe during these uncertain times.

STS Executive 2020-21

President/Councillor: Sunil Pandila,
Moose Jaw Chapter

Past-President/Councillor: Maxine Stinka,
Assiniboine Chapter

Vice-President/Councillor: Don Gabel,
Wakaw Chapter

ACER-CART Representative: Marie LeBlanc-Warick,
Wakaw Chapter

Executive Secretary: Murray Wall,
Saskatoon Chapter

Outreach Editor: Joyce Hoffman, Regina Chapter

Councillors:

Sue Amundrud Carrot River Valley
(Melfort & District) Chapter

Joyce Hoffman Regina Chapter

Jane Isinger Saskatoon Chapter

Alan Laughlin The Battlefords and District Chapter

Doug Still Regina Chapter

Members-At-Large:

Diane Marchand South Central Chapter

Lyle Markowski Saskatoon Chapter

Terri Mitchell Yorkton Chapter

Devona Putland Moosomin Chapter

Helen Sukovieff Regina Chapter

Anna Wehrkamp Carrot River Valley
(Melfort & District) Chapter

Adeline Wuschenny Regina Chapter



To control costs, one copy is sent to households where both spouses are members. If this is not satisfactory, please contact the STS Office in Saskatoon.

Please email the STS Office if you wish to receive notification when it is posted on the website instead of receiving a hard copy.
***Outreach* is available online at www.sts.sk.ca.**

Website: www.sts.sk.ca
Phone: 306-373-3879
Email: sts@sts.sk.ca
Fax: 306-242-2538
2311 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2H8
Monday to Friday – 8:30 am to noon

Disclaimer of Content

All reports in *Outreach*, excluding STS Executive reports, represent the information and opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the STS.

Publications Mail Agreement No.40017216
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
STS Office
2311 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2H8