

# Then & Now

ANGELA BURROUGHS

## **Reflecting on 50 Years**

Marking a major milestone is a rare opportunity to reflect on the history of our union - to take stock of where we have come from and where we are going. As the incumbent president it has been a fascinating experience reflecting on our first 50 years, and something of an emotional roller-coaster.

Surveying the annals has at times been deeply sobering. So many challenges we face now were present at the start and still persist today: fair funding; class sizes; workload; adequate infrastructure in public schools - proper ventilation, air conditioning, and now functioning toilets.

There have been moments of great amusement. I was tickled to see a 1981 ad for the teachers' union club promoting a 'Chicken and Champers' morning, \$5 a head. Then to learn that the introduction of random breath testing in 1988 fuels the demise of the club.

There is much that has been inspiring and a cause for pride in the work our members have done since 1974 and continue to do today. This limited edition magazine embraces the whole gamut.

## **In print and online**

This magazine is not intended to be a comprehensive history. Rather it is much like my survey of the union's archive - selecting items of interest and importance along the way, sometimes delving more deeply, sometimes skimming lightly.

This archival material sits alongside articles by a wide range of people reflecting on their teaching experience in different decades, and the value and importance of being a union member.

There is a notional chronology with a timeline but some articles move back and forth in time. The design and layout of the magazine purposefully lends itself to casual perusal as well as dedicated reading. Feel free to dip in and out and see what catches your attention. The cartoons alone tell a story.

The long form versions of in-depth articles appear on the AEU website in a dedicated 50 years area and appear in shortened form in this print publication.

I trust exploring both parts of the publication, in print and online, will raise your awareness of the persisting challenges our union faces, increase your appreciation of the necessity and value of our union, and sharpen your resolve to be an active member. If you have colleagues who are not members, now is the time to encourage them to join.

Enjoy,

**Angela Burroughs**