

President's Newsletter

October 25, 2005

At the General Meeting on October 22, Irene Lanzinger said that whatever decision we made regarding the ending or continuation of the strike, that decision would be the right one. We all know that over 77% of teachers in BC voted to return to work on Monday. I realize that not everybody is happy with that decision and that many teachers returned to work yesterday with a heavy heart. However, I want you to know that we made some definite gains as a result of our protest. We took on a sneering, contemptuous government and ended up having the majority of parents behind us. The most anti-union government in Canada publicly acknowledged that the BC Teachers' Federation is the foremost authority on educational matters. We inspired the labour movement with our audacity, courage, and determination. We awakened the province and made people understand the necessity of checking the authoritarian tendency of this arrogant government. We did not achieve everything, but we won this round and are well on the way to achieving our goals of class size and guarantees of students learning conditions in the School Act, as well as a fair and reasonable salary increase. For all of our commitment and solidarity on the line, I applaud you. You are amazing.

FOOD VOUCHERS

We still have a number of the \$50.00 food vouchers for Overwaitea supplied by the Post Secondary Teachers of Canada. These are free to any of you who may be in a real financial bind because of our job action. Please don't feel that somebody else may need them more than you do. If you are strapped and need this helping hand, come by the NOSTA office or give a note to your staff rep or a colleague to come and pick one up.

ASKEW'S CERTIFICATES

NOSTA purchased \$15,000 worth of Askew's Food Certificates. These can be purchased by all NOSTA members and can be used like cash when you shop at Askew's grocery stores in Salmon Arm, Sicamous, and Armstrong. By purchasing them, you are helping in two ways. First, you are helping us pay back the large dent in our own finances (thank you) and you are helping those in need because we received \$1,050 in free certificates for our purchase. Come by the office to get yours!

Struck Work is Struck Work!

Some teachers are wondering what the plan is for “making up” our missing days. **There is no plan to make up the missing ten days. Struck work is struck work.** You should make whatever arrangements you need to do to cover the curriculum and to prepare for any examinations. Perhaps some lessons can be omitted or curtailed. **If you have missed the deadline for interim reports, it is clearly not required that you should now do them.** School Administrators should be encouraged to make the transition to return to work as easy as possible for teachers. Government exams will be marked, as always, on the bell curve. Thus, no student should suffer any ill effects as a result of our job action.

Please contact the NOSTA office if you have any questions on this topic.

Upcoming Meetings and Pro D. Days

November 7:

NOSTA Executive Meeting
4:15 p.m. (NOSTA Office)

November 14:

School Organized PD Day

November 14 (again):

LRA Meeting
4:15 p.m. (The Hut)

November 16:

Local PD Committee Meeting

Please check your NOSTA calendar for other important meeting dates.

Incremental Deductions?

The government is demanding that school boards in the province deduct all the money for the ten days of our job action from the October pay period. Of course, we have already been deducted three days from our mid-month advance. It is clearly a punitive action that BCTF lawyers say does not have to be followed. I have written a letter to Bruce Hunt asking that the seven remaining struck days be deducted over the next three months. He has already said that he would be following the government’s edict, but in my letter, I explained that many teachers will be in serious financial circumstances if he were to do so. I explained that incremental deductions is a powerful way for senior management and trustees to initiate a form of healing that must occur in the way of our extraordinary job action. I am awaiting his reply.

And Finally

Your executive committee made a commitment to hold some kind of dance or other social event after the strike was concluded. We feel it is essential that NOSTA and CUPE members get together to raise the roof on our unprecedented collective action. This event is still in the works. Please keep your eyes peeled for the announcement. I hope that as many of you as possible can celebrate by attending. Let’s not forget that we have accomplished something truly worth celebrating in the labour history of this province.