

President's Newsletter

September 6, 2005

Welcome Back! I hope you had a relaxing summer and are ready for a very eventful fall. Your executive committee feels rested and able to tackle the huge job that awaits us. Some of us attended the annual BCTF Summer Conference at UBC and felt gratified at the solidarity of the hundreds of our fellow teachers who also attended. There is a spirit of high resolve and commitment throughout the province that will stand us in good stead. Those who attended the conference from Local 83 are as follows:

Steve Naylor, President
Lynda Nicholson, L.R.
Sharon Mitchell, Bargaining
Gwen Beach, Pro. D.

Heather McDonald, Social Justice
Julia Body, TOC Representative
Merv Krull, Health and Safety

I look forward to working with these people and the rest of the executive. And by the way, we do not yet have a first vice-president. Is anybody interested?

Special RA Calls for Strike Vote

On Monday, August 22, a special R.A. was held at UBC. Delegates passed a motion that calls for a province wide strike vote to be held this September. The president of the BCTF will announce the provincial results on September 23.

In Local 83, the vote will take place on **September 21 and 22** in all worksites and the NOSTA office. NOSTA members are asked to make this the largest strike vote in our history. There is nothing we cannot do when we work together.

BCPSEA's Tabled Positions

The "bargaining" position of the employers' association is a series of take away articles. BCPSEA wants to decide on the suitability of leaves for local presidents and other union workers. In other words, if they can't find a suitable replacement, the leave is not granted. In addition, they want to cap our sick days to 200 maximum and make us use a full sick day even if we only use a half a day. They are offering a 0% increase through the 2006/07 year. These are just a few of their proposals. They call this bargaining?

What about the Wright Report?

It is not yet the law, but if it is, we can expect such features as these:

No right to bargain class size

No right to strike

The elimination of school boards

No more early retirement plans

Permanent ability-to-pay doctrine for teachers, unlike other workers

This proposal makes satire obsolete. Several school boards have written letters to the government asking that the Wright report not be implemented. The letter from the Richmond School Board contains the following sentence: "In the absence of the right to strike teachers feel compelled to take job action within the existing legislation that maintains core instruction but in the end is equally, or more disruptive to district morale, community support and student experiences." Our board has yet to write such a letter.

Notice of General Meeting

There will be an important general Meeting on Wednesday, September 7 to discuss the upcoming strike vote.

Please plan to attend this vital meeting. And bring a friend as well.

Don't Forget

**Wednesday, September 7,
4: 15 p.m. at the Shuswap
Theatre**

Speaking of Salaries

In other jurisdictions, teachers' wages vary considerably. However, the following maximum salaries in these Canadian centres are of interest:

Calgary Public as of January, 2007:
\$80,582

Edmonton Public as of January, 2007:
\$77,976

Edmonton Catholic as of January, 2007:
\$81,108

Ontario Elementary at end of contract:
\$84,138

It is also noteworthy that Ontario secondary teachers now enjoy 25% preparation time (they teach six blocks out of eight) and Ontario elementary teachers have 200 minutes a week for preparation. There is no PST in Alberta.

What could we do with real bargaining?

And Finally

I approach this year with strong resolve melded with genuine optimism. Together we are strong; we will stand up for our rights. Knowing that you are with me as we move forward makes my job easier. Thank you and best wishes for a successful year.