



THE NOSTA RATTLER

North Okanagan-Shuswap Teachers' Association

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www.bctf.ca/local83

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NOSTA Members Celebrate

Although the teachers of British Columbia have had little to celebrate since this government started its ideological attack on public education, a few positive events have come to light. These events were celebrated at our latest GM on February 9, 2004, with the sharing of a fabulous cake.

We have a new Minister of Education! Tom Christensen was appointed to the job on January 26, 2004. Not many will shed tears as Christy leaves education behind her. The new Minister has made some positive moves and the BCTF looks forward to much more constructive and positive relations with Mr. Christensen.

Before the former Minister left her appointment she kindly took the time to shell out the BC College of Teachers fees for all the teachers who were boycotting payment. NOSTA teachers, together with their colleagues in other locals, have won an important battle for our college with their dedication, resolve and unity.

On January 22, 2004, the B.C. Supreme Court held that stripping arbitrator Eric Rice made such fundamental errors of law on issues important to the education system that his August 2002 decision must be quashed. Thus some of what was stripped from our contract may, in fact, be preserved.

Finally, our new local has received our charter as seen in the photo at right.



Dick Lonsdale (LAR), Patricia Clough (LAR), Neil Worboys (Pres. BCTF), Lynda Nicholson (Pres. NOSTA), Doug Brown (LAR)

College Update

Well, Christy blinked before she left. Twice in fact! She has promised that the college will consist of a majority of elected teachers and she paid the outstanding fees of those teachers boycotting the college. An excellent start.

Unfortunately, she has also kept the present undemocratic college in place. This college of political appointees continues to make drastic changes to the college bylaws at a rapid pace. Even worse, a future elected college will not easily amend these changes, as a 2/3 majority of votes is required (14 votes). Only 12 of the 20 councilors are elected while the others are political appointees in the proposed college.

Since this appointed college continues to make extreme changes that will not be able to be undone by an elected college, the Representative Assembly of the BCTF has passed the following motions:

That the minister act on the commitment made in the December 10, 2003 open cabinet meeting and dismiss the politically appointed council and hold elections for a democratic college.

That teachers vote on remitting the funds now in the Democratic College Fund to the College of Teachers when:

- *a democratically elected council is in place;*

- *there is a guarantee that by-law changes made by the political appointees not come into effect until ratified by the democratically elected council; and*
- *the requirement to report on college members is amended to be similar to those pertaining to other professional bodies.*

By standing together for what is right teachers have won important concessions from this government and by continuing to be united we can achieve our goals for our democratic college.

Stop Welfare Cuts

The BCTF is calling on the government to rethink its cuts to welfare payments. Many teachers in British Columbia think the two-year time limit on eligibility for welfare and the cuts to assistance for parents could have a very negative impact on many families in this province. Despite the latest exemption for persons complying with their employment plans and seeking work, the Liberal legislation continues to define welfare as a time-limited benefit rather than one that will be provided based on need.

Neil Worboys, BCTF President said "Teachers are worried and concerned about the impact on our students and communities of this government's punitive policies."



NOSTA to Send AGM Delegates

At our last NOSTA General Meeting, not only did the members celebrate some small gains for teachers in British Columbia, but they also voted for delegates to attend the 88th BCTF Annual General Meeting (AGM). Paul Bennett, Tami Burgess, AJ Decker, Ruth Hay, Sharon Mitchell, Steve Naylor, Lynda Nicholson, and Dale Townsend allowed their names to stand and were elected to attend the March 13th through to March 16th AGM. These eight, together with our three Local Representatives (Patricia Clough, Doug Brown, and Mike Holoiday as alternate LR for Dick Lonsdale), will give up four days of their spring break to represent NOSTA. Our delegates together with other elected representatives from throughout the province will set policy and future directions for the BCTF over this four-day period. For more information on this years BCTF AGM see: <http://www.bctf.ca/events/agm/>

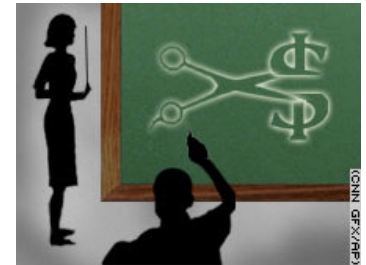
Liberal “Fudget Budget”?

We won't know if the Liberals have presented a “fudget budget” or not until after the next election. This is due to the fact that the budget makes projections for the coming year and the Auditor General will not give his report on the finances for the year until mid 2005.

We do know that the Auditor General has shown that the Liberal government inherited two

consecutive balanced budgets from the NDP and that the Liberals have produced huge deficits in the previous two years (\$5.617 billion). So how reliable will the Finance Ministers projections be? Will it be anything like his promise that tax cuts would pay for themselves? Is it like the promise not to sell BC Rail? How about like the promises on education and health care?

In terms of K-12 education, the budget claims to be adding \$313 million yet only \$50 million is slated for the coming year (and that was previously announced) while the rest is “promised” for after the election. The B.C.



Liberal's Budget contains profoundly misleading claims of increased education funding, and only widens the credibility gap between government rhetoric and the reality in public schools all over the province. "The Liberals' claim to have increased per-pupil funding is proven false when you take into account the additional costs they have downloaded onto communities," said Neil Worboys, President of the B.C. Teachers' Federation. Government-imposed unfunded increases to district salaries, MSP premiums, and electricity rates, and inflation, all have a negative impact on school board budgets.

For more budget highlights look to: <http://www.strategicthoughts.com/record2004/budget04.html>

Cuts Around the Province

NDP MLA Jenny Kwan is speaking out against the \$3-million provincial cut in funding for inner city lunch and breakfast programs, family workers and interpreters. The Vancouver School Board says it's being forced to cut those programs back because of reduced funding from the provincial government. The cut by the Ministry of Children and Family Services represents about a third of the Community Link budget – affecting services at nine schools.

Kwan joined more than 250 parents and teachers at a public meeting at one of the affected schools – all voicing their concerns about the government cuts.

The NDP MLA says the B.C. Liberals need to reassess their priorities before denying Vancouver's poorest children.

"Eliminate the advertising funding that's going on right now that's saying what a good job the Liberals are doing and put that money into inner city school funding," says Kwan. "That will fund all of the children."

What's Up Doc?

World Wide Web

www.bctf.cd/local83

NOSTA web page.
-or just leave off "local 83"
for the BCTF site.

www.canadians.org

The Council of Canadians.

www.policyalternatives.ca

The Canadian Centre for
Policy Alternatives.

www.handsoffhydro.com

Site dedicated to keeping BC
Hydro in the hands of
those who paid for it.

<http://www.strategictoughts.com>

Analysis of BC political
events.

<http://www.bcfed.com/index.htm>

BC Federation of Labour

Calendar of Events

Month	Day	Event
March	01	Executive Meeting
	03	LRA Meeting
	08	Spring Break Begins
	13 -16	BCTF AGM
	22	Back to Classes
	25	New Teacher Induction
April	05	Executive Meeting
	07	LRA Meeting

