

The NOSTA Rattler

May 2009
Volume 1, Issue 1

Local 83 of the British Columbia Teachers Federation



Upcoming NOSTA Events

- ◆ May 11 AGM at Shuswap Theatre
- ◆ May 12 Provincial Election
- ◆ May 20 NOSTA Pro-D committee meeting
- ◆ June 1 Executive Meeting
- ◆ June 4 Last TOC meeting
- ◆ June 8 LRA Meeting at DEC
- ◆ June 11 retirement dinner at the Senior Centre

School Humour

Mid-January, I was talking to my class about the fact that our administrator was leaving for the rest of the year and someone new would be coming. I asked the class of grade 4/5 students if they knew who would be our new principal. One particularly astute boy says, "It is Bush? He will need a new job soon!"

The President's Message

Greetings Colleagues:

Welcome to our first edition of News Rattler for this school year. One of our goals this year was to find ways to improve communication to members. As such, we have school staff reps on an email fan out and I am pleased to report that the system seems to be working quite well. We have also welcomed Amanda Bowlby into the position of Communications Chair on the NOSTA Executive. Amanda took on the challenge of resurrecting our newsletter the NOSTA Rattler and has created an e-version that you are currently reading. Unfortunately, Amanda is unable to continue in the position next year and we thank her for the time she was able to give to the local. Thus, we are looking for someone who is interested in working with the Executive to publish an e-newsletter once every six weeks starting in the new school year.

Which brings us to the topic of elections: We have two important elections facing us this month, our local NOSTA Executive elections on May 11 and our Provincial elections on May 12. To quote George Bernard Shaw, "Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve."

So, what did the people in BC and the teachers of BC in particular, do to deserve this current government? Perhaps our greatest error was in believing what this government and Gordon Campbell said - that they wanted British Columbia to be the most literate province in Canada. We have learned over the past 8 years that their methods and ideology certainly do not promote the achievement of this goal. We also know that the not everyone in this province benefits from the "Greatest Place on Earth". When you read the Election special edition of the Teacher magazine you will read of the many ways that BC actually earns the title of the worst or close to the worst province in Canada in a number of very important areas, such as child and family poverty, minimum wage, crime, education funding and student to educator ratios.

What can you do? TAKE FIVE. Take five minutes of every day for five days and talk to five people about issues in Education in British Columbia and in your school. Talk about how the high poverty rates affect the children and families you work with. Talk about how the underfunding of Special Needs has affected the composition in your classroom and how that affects the learning environment for all students. Ask people if they are registered to vote. Offer to take five people to the polls.

And while you are in election mode, take five minutes to thank a staff rep for the work they have done on your behalf this year. Call or email a NOSTA Executive member to thank them for the dedicated service they have provided for members. Consider letting your name stand for a position on the Executive or serving your members as staff rep next year.

As Shaw says we get what we deserve - get involved - make your voice heard on May 11 and May 12.

Recommended Resources & Pro-D

- www.BCTF.ca
- BCAMT Math Teachers Conference:
<http://bctf.ca/bcamt/nw2009/index.htm>
- <http://www.yogainyourschool.com/>
- UBC Okanagan Summer Institute:
<http://web.ubc.ca/okanagan/education/welcome.html>

“My name is Amanda and it’s my first time at the AGM”

During Spring Break I attended my first BCTF Annual General Meeting on behalf of the teachers in the NOSTA local. WOW! What an experience! From the moment I was selected to be the alternate for this conference I realized it was going to be a huge learning curve and an awesome adventure. Before we went to Vancouver all the delegates met and discussed the motions that would be covered at the AGM. There were approximately 50

Recommendations put forward by the BCTF executive and 110 Resolutions from various locals around the province. My first lesson was in the extensive vocabulary and acronyms specific to the BCTF.

My next lesson came when we arrived at the AGM, held in the Hyatt Vancouver. The meeting room was an overwhelming sea of people, materials, celebration, snacks and campaigning. The AGM thankfully also came equipped with a wonderful training session for all new delegates which explained the rules of order and provided an opportunity to network with other new delegates.

On the second evening I had an unforgettable opportunity to meet Teachers On Call from around the

province and share our experiences, concerns and what makes each of our districts unique. I learned that there are over 8000 TOCs in our province and that they are enthusiastic teachers with a lot to offer this profession. Most of the BCTF Executive and candidates running for the Member-At-Large positions also came to this session; these people who seemed so elusive a few days before were there and listening to TOCs!

My final learning experience came as I witnessed Resolution 204 being brought to the AGM by our local, calling for an investigation into all challenges faced by teachers who teach on call and celebrating as it was passed. This was a very exciting moment for our local and for many of the 700 plus delegates at the AGM. This Resolution, like the other motions were zealously debated, amended and voted on. This process was eye opening as I realized that teachers are very passionate about a much wider variety of aspects of our profession than I imagined: from teacher education programs through to retirement, students, safety and assessment. The teachers at the AGM have worked and continue to work diligently on various aspects of

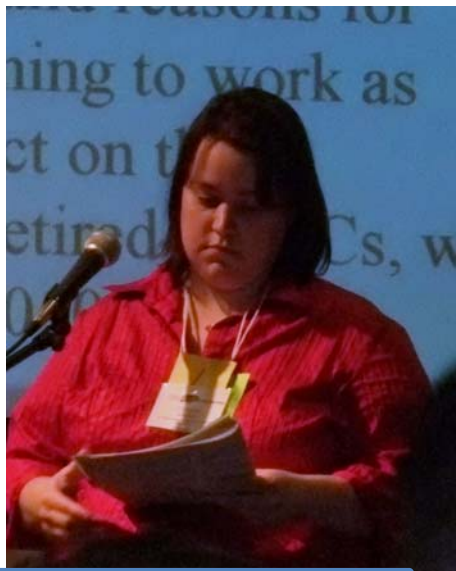
teaching; they may not always see exactly eye to eye on a topic but always want what is best for teachers and their students. I learned that there is a democratic process in place so that all voices from the BCTF can be heard and improvements can continue to be made. While I did not go to the mic to speak this time, the AGM renewed my faith and passion in the teaching profession. I thank all members for these wonderful lessons and hope that others may step into the AGM classroom in the future.

-Amanda Bowlby

“Teachers are very passionate about a much wider variety of aspects of our profession than I imagined”

Submissions

Do you have a funny story? Have you come across an excellent resource? Know of an upcoming event at your school or in our communities? Are you interested in sharing your ideas or experiences with colleagues? Know of pro-d opportunities in the near future? If so, please send your ideas and submissions for the NOSTA RATTLER to Madi at the NOSTA office. mdunleavy@sunwave.net The deadline for the June issue is May 29th.



Christina McDermott waiting at the microphone to speak to the motion on TOCs at the BCTF



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