

Teacher



Magazine of the
BC Teachers' Federation
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BC teachers **Morgan Spry**
and **Emily Ferreira** at the
New Teachers' Conference

In this issue

Restoration—taking stock
one year later

Making a difference
in our schools, our union,
our communities



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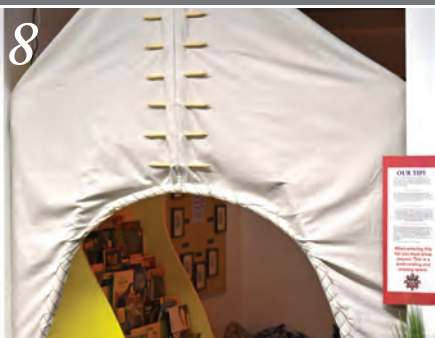
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Thank you, BC teachers, for another year of hard work and successes!

With the end of the 2017–18 school year and the beginning of summer just around the corner, I want to thank all of you for your work in classrooms, schools, locals, and communities.



IT WAS A HISTORIC year that saw our restored language back in place, the addition of more than 3,500 new teachers, and significant new funding. Implementation of our restored language is challenged by the ongoing teachers shortage, and our locals have been working hard—and still are—to ensure the restored language is followed, and that remedies, if generated, are provided in a timely manner.

With more lead time for school districts to plan, my hope is the next school year will have a smoother start, fewer remedies will be needed, and when they are—they happen quickly. We will keep working with the government to ensure they recruit more teachers to BC. We will also ensure the next round of bargaining, which will occur next school year, focuses on measures like improving teacher salaries so BC is more attractive to our colleagues in other provinces.

Respectful tone from new BC government

In this edition of *Teacher*, you will read about a historic moment at our Annual General Meeting when Premier John Horgan spoke to the delegates. Many in the room were relieved to hear a sitting Premier speak about the importance of respecting teachers, our work, and our profession.

That message has carried over to an announcement made in April about a new initiative called the Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education. The government says the awards are an opportunity to recognize dedicated educators who go above and beyond to make life better for students in British Columbia.

This is an excellent opportunity for BCTF members. I encourage you to go to the government's website and learn more about the application process.

Thank you again for everything you do for your students and our union.

Have an excellent summer.

Un grand merci pour une autre année de travail acharné et de succès!

Avec la fin de l'année scolaire 2017-2018 et le début de l'été qui arrivent, je tiens à vous remercier toutes et tous pour votre travail dans les salles de classe, les écoles, les syndicats locaux et les communautés.

ÇA A ÉTÉ UNE ANNÉE HISTORIQUE qui a permis de remettre en place notre langage restauré, qui a vu l'ajout de plus de 3 500 nouveaux enseignants et un nouveau financement important. La mise en œuvre de notre langage restauré est remise en question par la pénurie actuelle d'enseignants, et nos syndicats locaux ont travaillé dur - et sont encore à la tâche - pour s'assurer que le langage restauré soit respecté et que les remèdes, s'ils sont générés, soient fournis dans un délai opportun.

Avec plus de temps donné aux conseils scolaires pour s'organiser, mon espoir est que la prochaine année scolaire aura un début plus facile, moins de remèdes seront nécessaires, et quand ils le seront, ils seront mis en place rapidement. Nous continuerons de travailler avec le gouvernement pour veiller à recruter plus d'enseignants en Colombie-Britannique. Nous veillerons également à ce que la prochaine ronde de négociations, qui aura lieu l'année prochaine, soit axée sur des mesures comme l'amélioration des salaires des enseignants, afin que la Colombie-Britannique soit plus attrayante pour nos collègues des autres provinces.

Le ton respectueux du nouveau gouvernement de la Colombie-Britannique

Dans cette édition du magazine des enseignants, vous lirez à propos d'un moment historique à notre assemblée générale annuelle lorsque le premier ministre John Horgan a parlé aux délégués. Plusieurs personnes dans la salle ont été soulagées d'entendre un premier ministre parler de l'importance de respecter les enseignants, notre travail et notre profession.

Ce message a été reporté à une annonce faite en avril au sujet d'une nouvelle initiative appelée Prix du Premier Ministre pour l'Excellence en Éducation. Le gouvernement affirme que les prix sont une occasion de reconnaître les éducateurs dévoués qui vont au-delà de leurs moyens pour améliorer la vie des élèves de la Colombie-Britannique.

C'est une excellente opportunité pour les membres de la FECB. Je vous encourage à consulter le site internet du gouvernement et à en apprendre davantage sur le processus de demande.

Merci encore pour tout ce que vous faites pour vos élèves et notre syndicat.

Passez un excellent été.



Women's Institute

A powerful experience

I HAD THE great privilege and pleasure of attending the first annual BCTF Women's Institute. The topics were heavy, sometimes painful: sexism, patriarchy, rape culture, and gender equality. Yet I would describe it as the most inspiring three days I've ever spent professionally. We explored the legacy of some amazing women and their fight for equality, and the BCTF history of promoting the status of women. Did you know it wasn't until 1929 that women were deemed "persons" in Canada (and even then, not all women)? Or that it was as late as 1979 that the BCTF AGM passed a motion that women should be employed on the same basis as men? Of the 70 presidents in BCTF history, only eight have been women. That's 11%. Clearly there is still work to do.

So what can we do? Remind ourselves that change is not an event. It is a process and one that we are all part of. Start with the language you use. Stop calling women girls. You would never call it the Canadian Olympic boys' hockey team! Challenge your assumptions. The idea that boys and men should be a certain way is just as damaging as the idea that girls should be. Most of us have good intentions, but when it comes to equality it isn't the intention that matters most. It's the impact. What is the message that is being sent and internalized by our students? Check in with yourself. Ask, "What is the impact of my words or actions?"

To the women who bravely stood up and said, "This is not okay." We say a heartfelt and humble, "Thank you." To the men in our professional and personal lives we say, "Stand with us. We are allies. We cannot fight this alone."

To the children who look to us to shape their future we say, "We will not stop. Until every person, regardless of gender, is free to express all of who they are and be anything they want, we will not stop." ■

—**Amanda Byrne Jungen**, *Saanich teacher*

Protest the pipeline

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, including high school students, have been arrested as part of the movement to stop Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline. The pipeline will ship bitumen from the Alberta Tar Sands and could lead to seven times more tanker traffic in the Burrard Inlet. People are acting because they are concerned about oil spills, effects on ocean life, climate change, and First Nations' rights.

I want to call on teachers to be a part of this movement.

The new curriculum suggests we teach critical thinking and social responsibility. It is important for us to model this in the real world. In the face of injustice and ecological crises, students have too many examples of passivity and cynicism. Teachers who are acting on causes they believe in are islands of inspiration. Getting involved in this movement means acting and working in solidarity with local First Nations—such a huge learning opportunity for settler teachers wanting to work toward reconciliation.

BCTF archives available

I AM A social studies, English, and learning assistance teacher at Sutherland Secondary in North Vancouver. As part of my M.Ed program I am taking a course on the history of curriculum. The article titled "BC's 'new' curriculum" in a recent edition of *Teacher* sparked my interest. As we study curriculum in Canada and specific changes in BC, I can't help but feel the same debates from the 1920s and 1930s still exist today. Progressive education and teaching the "whole child" feels very similar to the core competencies in the new curriculum.

I am wondering if there is an archive of *Teacher* magazine, and if I might be able to browse through them. I am curious about the similarities and differences of teacher reactions to new curriculum from 1917 to now. I loved the quote from 1980, "Once again, teachers may be left to pick up the pieces of expectations shattered by the disparity between the promises of political announcements and the reality of a program that is philosophically misguided and operationally confused."

Taking action on climate change is one of the ways we show care to our students. As older generations enjoy the fruits of industrialization that caused the climate crisis, the next will have to deal with the most severe repercussions.

We also need to demonstrate our solidarity with other workers by advocating for green jobs and supporting oil workers' transition to a green economy.

It's about being on the right side of history.

When my future students ask what I was doing to stop climate change I want to have an answer for them.

We can make a huge shift quickly as the US and Canada did during and after WWII by retooling our economy. Just as teachers are leading the fight against austerity in Puerto Rico, and Parkland students are shifting the gun debate in the US, we, as teachers, can be a crucial catalyst for climate justice.

Find **Teachers against the Pipeline** on Facebook or email mrosen@vsb.bc.ca.

—**Michael Gabriel Rosen**, *Vancouver teacher*

Editor's note: You can find teaching resources, lesson plans, and workshops concerning the environment and sustainability at bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=22000.

Delegates to the 2018 BCTF AGM also passed a motion encouraging locals to stand in solidarity with Indigenous water and land protectors in opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline by lobbying local politicians and participating in protests and actions. ■

I would love to look at old issues. Let me know if this is a possibility.

—**Kelsey Beaudry**, *North Vancouver teacher*

Editor's note: Members are welcome to visit the BCTF archives located at the BCTF building in Vancouver. Our archival materials tell the history of our union in all its aspects, from bargaining to professional issues to social justice. Please contact info@bctf.ca to make an appointment.

Also, check out the BCTF Online Museum at bctf.ca/history. Browse through historical photos, learn about our bargaining history, research curriculum change, find out how we secured professional development, and anything else connected with working and learning conditions in public education throughout the last 100 years. *Teacher* from 1919–2009 is archived as a collection in the online museum. ■



Teaching this summer?

By Richard Hoover, BCTF staff

If you are thinking of teaching summer school students this year, you'll be glad to know that since 2010 all summer school programs in British Columbia's public schools have been operating under the provisions of the collective agreement.

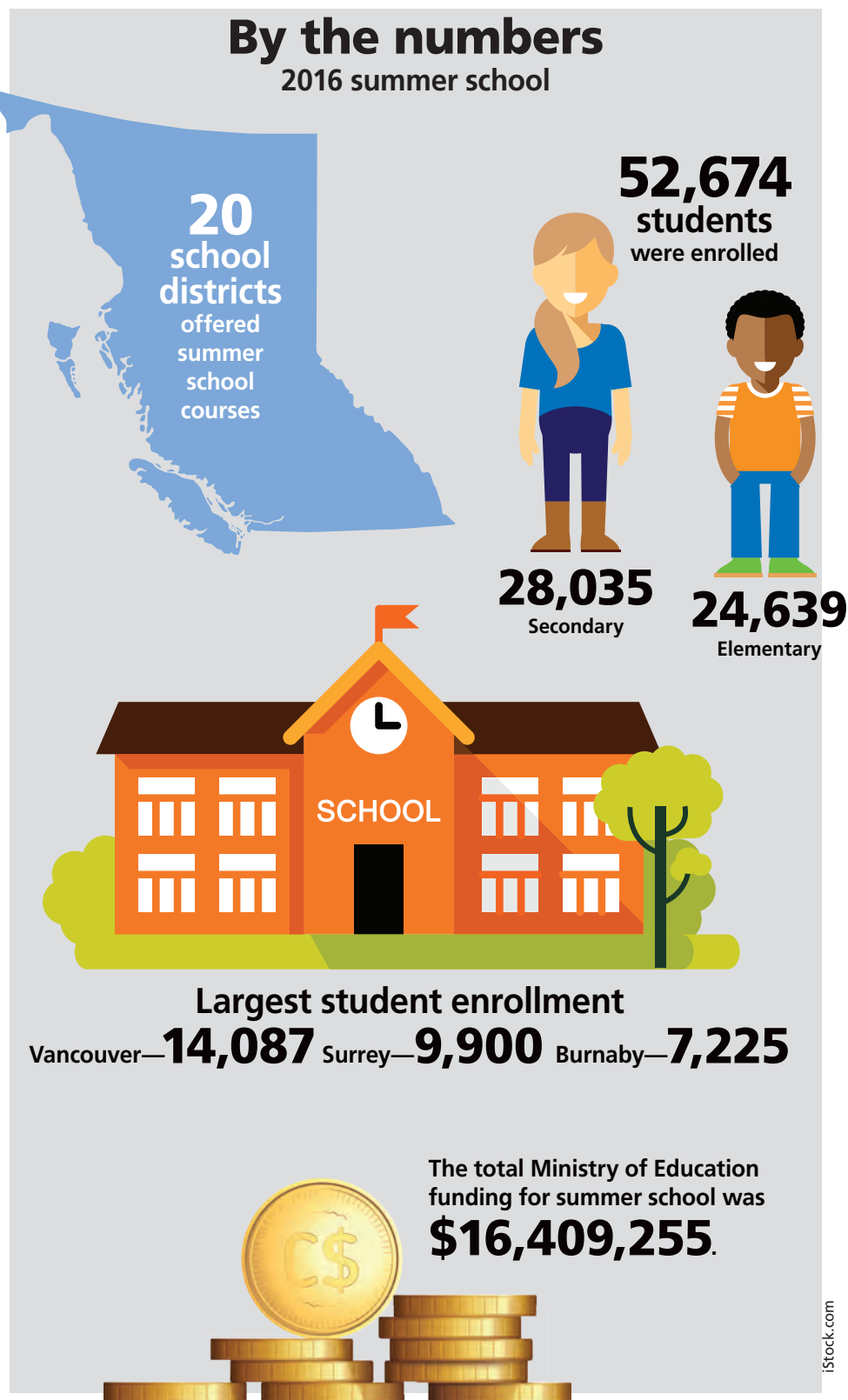
SUMMER SCHOOL TEACHERS are members of the BCTF bargaining unit, pay local and provincial union dues, and have access to the applicable provisions of the collective agreement. Summer school teaching can count for pensionable and contributory service for the Teachers' Pension Plan, and summer school teaching can also count for experience credit for salary increments and for seniority, depending on the specific local provisions of the collective agreement.

Although all provisions of the collective agreement may not apply, in many cases provisions regarding class-size and composition, workload, preparation time, supervision, health and safety, professional autonomy, posting and filling of positions, harassment or sexual harassment, and more will apply. In each of the approximately 20 school districts that offer academic summer school programs, local collective agreement provisions will differ.

Pay rates for summer school teachers must be specified in the collective agreement, but vary widely. The base rate, established in 2010, is 1/1000 of Category 5/PB Step 0 per hour of instruction.

Prior to 2008, summer school programs were not funded by the Ministry of Education, and school districts that offered courses charged fees. Since 2008 the Ministry has funded summer school programs and students attend free of charge.

For details of the salary and specific local conditions of work that apply to summer school work, refer to the collective agreement for the district in which you want to teach, or contact your local union office. ■



ONE YEAR LATER

The 3Rs: restoration, recruitment, and remedy

By Glen Hansman, BCTF President

Twelve months have flown by since the provincial election last spring. At that time, who could forecast where public education would be one year later? We'd only won our Supreme Court of Canada case in November 2016 and had just ratified the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), returning the bulk of stripped language to our collective agreements.

Teacher recruitment hindered by inaction

Political turmoil after the May 9 election left a lot of uncertainty concerning the funding of the MOA, and school districts were either scrambling to recruit thousands of teachers or, unfortunately for teachers and students, waiting until the dust settled on the election before proceeding. Now, one year later, many challenges remain, predominantly flowing from the failure of school districts' recruitment efforts.

To be fair, restoring 3,500 teaching positions is no small feat. Stripping those positions from collective agreements in 2002 involved the stroke of a pen, while recruiting thousands of teachers takes real time and effort.

The BCTF publicly congratulated school districts that reached out to teachers in other provinces early on and subsequently boosted their TTOC numbers in anticipation of the crunch they might find themselves in during the 2017–18 school year.

Other districts waited, some perhaps because of the uncertainty of funding from the BC Liberal government, but others perhaps in denial that class-size, class-composition, and specialist teacher ratio language would actually be restored. Other than remedy-related provisions (local remedy provisions, where they existed, were replaced by new provincial remedy language that applied to all sixty school districts), all local class-size, class-composition, and specialist teacher ratio language was restored. On top of that, locals that had language pertaining to school-based teams, district committees related to special education, inclusion, or other provisions were also returned and should have been reactivated this school year.

We've witnessed the depletion of TTOC lists in many districts, resulting in the problematic disruption of special education services and in the work lives of our members serving in non-enrolling specialist teacher positions.

Before this school year even started, the BCTF called upon the new Minister of Education and school districts to swiftly enact an assertive, province-wide recruitment and retention strategy—one that considered BC teachers have (along with Quebec teachers) the worst starting salaries in Canada, and lower-than-average salaries overall.

Adding in the high cost of living in BC begs why sufficient numbers of new teachers would want to come west of the Rockies, when they could stay in Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, or other provinces, earn significantly more money, pay off student loans more quickly, and even afford a place to live.

Previous shortages for French language and senior secondary specialist teachers in rural and remote regions were compounded by an overall shortage. Furthermore, existing BC teachers were applying for the thousands of available positions, causing momentous movement within the province.

On the plus side, thousands of BCTF members were able to get positions in school districts closer to their homes, translating into shorter commutes and better work-life balance, especially for those teachers working in the Lower Mainland or Capital Region.

On the down side, because of the shortage of certified teachers, hundreds of positions were unfilled at any given time, and school districts hired non-certified teachers in numbers that we've never seen.

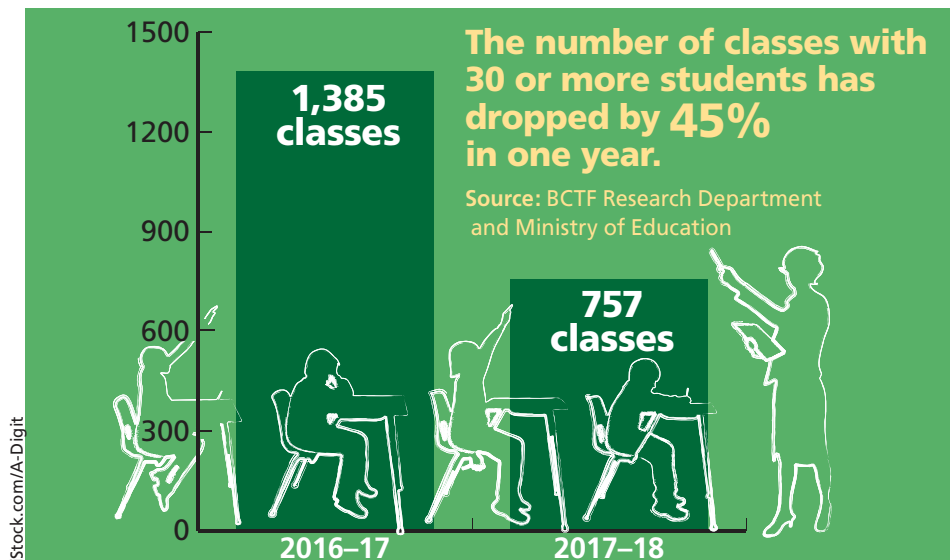
After a tremendous amount of public attention on teacher shortages, Education Minister Rob Fleming convened the Task Force on Immediate Recruitment and Retention Challenges during the fall. The task force delivered their report on December 11, 2017, which proposed six immediate actions and a number of medium- to long-term steps.

On February 9, 2018, the Ministry of Education announced funding and support for a few of the task force's recommendations, but we still await news on the remaining immediate and medium- to long-term actions.

Remedy

Remedy is proving to be one of the biggest headaches in about a quarter of school districts, especially as we approach the end of this school year. In districts where there is no class-composition language or where teacher recruitment hasn't been a problem, remedy hasn't factored high on the list of

What a difference a year makes



concerns. But as in Vancouver, the Conseil scolaire francophone (CSF), and other school districts, it is extremely vexing to have a great number of teachers with large amounts of remedy generated because the employer has not fixed the original problems.

The BCTF is concerned that in many instances, remedy in these districts could have been avoided had class-size and composition language been implemented properly. We are using the grievance and arbitration processes to challenge how some school districts implemented—or did not implement—the language. The remedy mechanism outlined in the MOA was intended for rare occasions when language could not be met because of the lack of physical space in a building or in other considerations also spelled out in the MOA.

Unfortunately, in a few school districts, remedy is the norm instead of the exception, and in some of these districts, the employer is not even consistently delivering on the remedy—leaving many teachers coming close to the end of the year without having their workload addressed in any form.

The BCTF deems this lack of action [on remedy] unacceptable, and will continue to use the grievance/arbitration process to find a just solution for members.

Let's not forget that this mess would have been avoided had the previous provincial government not enacted unconstitutional legislation in 2002 and in 2012, or not underfunded the system for 16 long years and decreased the number of teachers graduating from teacher education programs. That said, the BC Liberal government is now history, and we urge the new government to take proactive steps to avoid further problems for the 2018–19 school year.

Mentorship, revised curriculum, the grad program, and bargaining

We are also pushing for mentorship programs, greater access to in-service for teachers in every school district, more supports for the revised curriculum, and for greater clarity on the graduation program

and other education policy matters left in limbo by the previous government.

On the plus side, we are heading into collective bargaining with more than 3,500 new teachers in BC schools, more supports for students overall, and a more respectful and working relationship with the current government.

I encourage members to participate in your locals as we prepare for bargaining locally and provincially. Your voices, including

the voices of our newest members, are important to the process. Our collective priorities and strategies must fit the needs and wishes for all members, at all stages of their teaching careers. I, and the other members of the provincial Executive Committee, look forward to meeting you in your schools, in your locals, and at other events over the months and year ahead.

The MOA: <https://is.gd/QEwR06>.

The government's recruitment and retention task force: <https://is.gd/SWEjEA>.

Now that workload language is restored, how will we negotiate it next round?

When the government legislated *Public Education Labour Relations Act* (PELRA) in 1994, cost items related to workload (including class-size, class-composition, and ratios/caseloads) were bargained provincially. Workload, as an item, was returned to PELRA by Bill 22 a few years later.

Proposals to introduce, improve, change, amend, or delete any language pertaining to workload (including class-size, class-composition, ratios/caseloads—and the new compliance/remedy language) are bargained at the provincial table. No doubt we have much work to do. In the 2012 and 2014 negotiations, the Federation brought common provincial language on class-size, class-composition, and ratios to the table. The employer refused to negotiate these items, even though they were within the scope of PELRA.

At that time, language had not yet been returned by the courts, so we bargained as if starting from scratch. Now that language is restored, we will bargain from language that legally exists. This long-overdue opportunity is our first since the 2001–02 round of negotiations.

Process/ancillary language was also restored to some locals. Most of that language can be locally bargained under Appendix B of LOU#1.

What is the starting point for workload language?

All language that is currently in use (including the March 2017 MOA itself and Schedule A detailing all the workload language unique to each local) remains in effect until there is an agreed-to negotiated change through the

regular collective bargaining process. All language is renegotiable.

What workload language needs addressing?

Distributed learning and adult education need class-size and class-composition language. A few locals don't have any class-size language for Grades 4–12, and understandably members in those locals will want to see language bargained. About 20 locals don't have any class-composition language at all, while other locals have various forms of this language.

Bargaining objectives are chosen, and decisions about how to proceed with bargaining come from members through their locals. This spring, locals throughout the province are surveying and receiving input from members about possible bargaining objectives, and strategies to support those objectives. The Executive Committee (EC) will appoint the bargaining team in August.

This fall, at the BCTF Provincial Bargaining Conference, delegates will consider resolutions from locals and recommendations from the EC, for items related to the provincial table. The Executive Committee then has primary responsibility for bargaining, once bargaining commences.

Are other unions bargaining the same time we are?

Most public-sector collective agreements in BC expire at the end of March 2019. Our agreement expires at the end of June 2019. On government's part, all public-sector bargaining is co-ordinated by the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC), which is overseen by the Ministry of Finance. ■



Nature room INSPIRES learning

By Susan Croll, Teacher editor

Passion for nature drove Sheri Evans to create her magical nature room at Seaview Community School in Port Moody. She grew up by Deer Lake in Burnaby next to a farm and spent her time exploring the shoreline, learning to appreciate the trees, plants, animals, and insects that inhabited the lake.

WITH HER BACKGROUND in Girl Guiding and its own history of nature rooms, Sheri dreamed of creating a similar room in her school, one where students of all ages could learn about and experience BC's flora and fauna.

Sheri also wanted to take advantage of the revised curricula and integrate inquiry and nature-based teaching and learning ideas in the displays she created in the room.

"I want kids to touch, feel, pick things up, and play with them too. Instead of a 'don't' list, we have a DO list. If an object isn't under glass, then it's theirs to pick up and examine. I change up the displays and my aim is to make them hands-on and minds-on."

She shared with staff that she wanted to create a nature room and took them on a field trip to Lighthouse Park, showing them the Girl Guides' nature room there. Colleagues were sold on the idea and Sheri began to clean out and transform a book room in their school. Walls were primed, cabinets installed, and murals painted. Parents, friends, and colleagues donated antlers, skulls, birds, nests, and other kinds of flora and fauna appropriate for her room.

"It took just over a year from the idea to the room's establishment and grand opening this past January," Sheri says. "While I got some funds from our PAC and the district, people gave me lots of the things you see in this room."



Port Moody teacher Sheri Evans

“I love it when they say, 'I've never seen this. What is it? Can I pick it up?'”

The nature room also includes a quiet space replete with nature books, puzzles, quiet games, and a solar system. Sheri says that because some children become overstimulated quickly, she built a tipi to distinguish the back area from the front and define the quiet space.

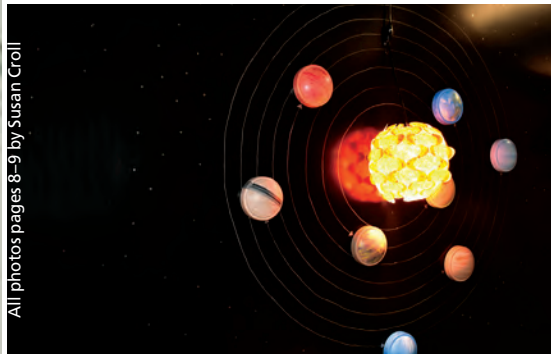
A salmon tank also hums in a corner and in about a month, young salmon will be released into a stream in Burnaby.

As well as Sheri, other Seaview teachers use the nature room to enhance teaching and learning. Sheri says that the room has been well worth her efforts. "It's the kids' excitement and awe. I want them to touch and play with the displays, to appreciate nature. I love it when they say, 'I've never seen this. What is it? Can I pick it up?'" ■





Panoramic image of the nature room at Seaview Community School.



All photos pages 8-9 by Susan Croll

2018 AGM: Elections, heartbreaking truths, and bargaining

More than 700 BCTF members gathered in Vancouver from March 17–20th for the 102nd Annual General Meeting.

FOLLOWING LAST YEAR's changes to the structure of the Federation's Executive Committee, this AGM saw two members elected for the two designated positions for equity-seeking groups.

Vancouver Secondary counsellor **Marjorie Dumont** was elected as Member-at-Large for the designated Aboriginal position, and Surrey teacher **Lizanne Foster** was elected as Member-at-Large for the designated racialized position.

The addition of these two new positions was the first structural change to the Federation's Executive Committee in over 50 years. Addressing the AGM, President **Glen Hansman** called these changes historic and applauded all of the candidates who put their names forward. "Our membership is diverse, so we need our leadership to be diverse."

Also elected to the Executive Committee were **Carole Gordon** (Central Okanagan), **Robin Toszak** (Greater Victoria), and **Kip Wood** (Nanaimo). **Glen Hansman**, President (Vancouver Elementary), **Teri Mooring**, First Vice-President (Quesnel), and **Clint Johnston**, Second Vice-President (Chilliwack), were re-elected. Members of the Executive Committee whose terms end next year are **Rory Brown** (Vancouver Secondary),

Rae Figursky (Burnaby), **Shawn Gough** (Vancouver Island North), and **Jody Polukoshko** (Vancouver Elementary).

This year's keynote speaker was **Tanya Talaga**, an award-winning investigative reporter for the *Toronto Star* and author of *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death and Hard Truths in a Northern City*. Tanya told the true story about several young Indigenous youth who have died in Thunder Bay over the past eight years, including how and why their deaths went unnoticed by governments and the media for so long. For a full hour, she connected these tragic deaths to the legacy of residential schools and the need for justice reform. After her speech, a line-up 200 teachers long formed to buy her compelling book and simply to meet her.

BCTF President Glen Hansman informed delegates about our upcoming round of collective bargaining. He said that preparations are well under way with many BCTF locals surveying members and bargaining training in progress. The BCTF has told both government and BCPSEA that the Federation's goal is to bargain a new agreement well before the current agreement expires on June 30, 2019.

Larry Kuehn, a former president of the BCTF and current Director of Research and Technology, received the G.A. Fergusson

Award, the highest honour within the BC Teachers' Federation. Larry was lauded for his decades of championing public education at home and around the world.

Read AGM proceedings including recommendations and resolutions here: <https://is.gd/lAtEcm>. ■



Wendy D photos

2018–19 BCTF Executive Committee (Below, L to R): Glen, Clint, Teri, Marj, Lizanne, Shawn, Rae, Rory, Robin, Jody, Carole, Kip.



Wendy D photo



Susan Croll photo



Horgan pledges RESPECT for teachers

Marilou Strait photo

9:30 a.m., March 20, 2018: Delegates rose to their feet in an enthusiastic standing ovation as a smiling Premier John Horgan entered the meeting hall, the first sitting premier to address the BCTF Annual General Meeting since 2001.

AFTER INTRODUCING Education Minister Rob Fleming and Labour Minister Harry Bains, Horgan began by thanking teachers and expressing respect for the work they do.

"I want to say, on behalf of my colleagues who are here and all of the BC NDP, that we respect what you do. We care about what you do. And we're going to do everything we can to make your lives better so that kids of this generation aren't deprived like the kids of the last generation were," he said.

Horgan referred to obstacles placed in teachers' way by the past government, and asserted that his government wants to remove them. "That's why we're investing 1.2 billion dollars in the K-12 system between now and 2021," he said, to huge applause. "Now I know you're saying: 'Well, what about bargaining?' But that's not in there, it's somewhere else. I will assure you that on the way in, Glen [Hansman] mentioned two or three times that he'd like to get [bargaining] started."

Horgan promised wide consultation with British Columbians in both urban and rural settings around the education funding formula review, saying he wants to get away from a one-size-fits-all approach. He noted that since September his government has put funding in place for 3,700 new teachers and 50 projects are under way to renovate old schools and build new ones.

"School safety is much more than the bricks and mortar. It's about kids and teachers feeling safe, free from racism, homophobia,

sexism and all forms of discrimination. We've had some disruptions in the [Fraser] Valley," he said, referencing transphobic positions taken by a Chilliwack trustee, "but I really believe SOGI 123 is a great first step to make sure kids do feel safe in their classrooms."

Supporting Indigenous students is also a top priority, he said. In mandate letters to all ministers, "I laid out my expectations that our new government would implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

The affordability crisis facing BC families is another key concern. "That's why we are investing \$1 billion over the next three years to deliver universal quality childcare." He called on teachers to speak out as allies in the debate around public investment in child care and other public services.

"Public services are the whole point of government—not to disrupt services, but to enhance them."

Horgan ended by emphasizing the importance of public service in a democracy. People who feel called to serve are the ones who should be running for office, people who believe in helping their neighbours and bringing communities together in one common purpose to tackle issues such as child poverty, inequality, and the overdose crisis.

"Working together we can succeed, we will succeed," he concluded.

New Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education

The Ministry of Education recently announced the Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education, which will honour the achievements of public, independent, and First Nations school system educators. Awards will be given out in nine categories ranging from Community Engagement to Indigenous Education. Nominations will be accepted until June 18, 2018.

Shortlisted nominees will be announced in September and finalists will be invited to an awards ceremony at Government House in Victoria on World Teachers' Day, October 5, 2018.

Winners will receive a \$3,000 personal bursary for professional learning, a \$2,000 contribution to their school community for professional learning, and an individual photo with the Premier and Minister of Education while receiving their award.

For more information, please visit <https://is.gd/sKCaXV>. ■



An exciting time to be a teacher!

NEW TEACHERS share their unexpected experiences

By Susan Croll, Teacher editor

Susan Croll photos

Eagerness, energy, and excitement were just some of the emotions that could be felt in the large meeting room at the New Teachers' Conference organized by the BCTF in Richmond recently. They have a true right to their feelings—with the BCTF win at the Supreme Court of Canada and the restoration of collective agreement language, more than 3,500 additional teachers have been hired in British Columbia this past school year.

AND OVER 400 new teachers and student teachers came to learn about how they could connect with other new teachers, deepen their understanding about teaching using an antiracist and inclusive lens, and find out about their profession from their union's perspective.

This positive change for public education has renewed hope for many teachers who've worked for countless years as teachers teaching on call finally getting their own classroom and receiving better pay and benefits too. It's meant an infusion of new people in classrooms and schools, bringing fresh ideas and experiences, excited to work with students and more veteran colleagues.

But teaching is a journey into the unexpected and surprising. No day is the same as the one previous. I asked our newest and future members what surprised them about the world of teaching, and how they overcame any challenges they encountered.

Common themes popped up in our discussions. Many new teachers are tech savvy, having grown up with technology so the digital world is second nature to them. But the access to technology is uneven in BC schools. Some districts embrace cyber learning with schools looking like tech labs, while other schools use technology in more limited ways or haven't had the funds to properly outfit classrooms.

With positions opening in nearly every district, many teachers are returning from teaching overseas, finding they are having to adapt to a different system. Others are returning to teaching after prolonged absences and some people have worked in other positions in school districts and have decided to pursue a teaching degree.

For some teachers, feeling anxious about how they will do in the classroom, whether they're prepared enough, or how they will get through the curriculum haunts them.



Eric Kuo was surprised about the lack of technology at his school in Vernon. He designed research projects for his students that required using digital devices, but had to scramble to rejig assignments so they did not require technology. "Not only do we have limited technology at our school, I cannot assume my students have it at home either."



Kiran Olak is working as a TTOC in the Fraser Valley. She taught in England previously because she couldn't get a job here. When she returned she worked at a private

school. "The court case was like manna from heaven. I've always wanted to work in the public system. It was difficult breaking into the public system and even with the court case win, getting an interview was hard."



Priskilla Oommen is a Surrey teacher who moved back to Canada after teaching in India, and she's found it challenging to adapt to such a different system. "I really appreciate the smaller classes here, but I think there needs to be greater support for kids who have troubles learning and behavioural difficulties."



Claire Leesui taught in Richmond ten years ago and has recently returned to teaching. She notices that teaching today is more collaborative and she likes what she's seeing with how younger people teach. "There's more sharing, co-operation, and planning together." She wonders if increased collaboration is motivated by greater pressures and asks if this pressure forces teachers to share more. "Kids seem to have more behavioural needs and challenges, and still there's not enough assistance in the classroom. From this perspective, I see more on teachers' plates. But I love the enthusiasm—it's an exciting time to come back to teaching."



Julia McClelland-Pepin is a student teacher who has worked as an education assistant since 1999. Now she's gone back to school to get her teaching certificate. Fluent in sign language and with a history of working with students who are deaf and hearing impaired, she wants to teach in this field. She finds the amount of time spent planning lessons and just thinking about her students—along with figuring out the revised curriculum challenges her to keep balance in life.



Logan Storrie is a student teacher at Saltspring Middle School also grappling with balance—specifically trying to find a balance between their queer/trans identity and teaching. They explain, "I became a teacher to effect social justice. I want kids to know that if they are queer or trans that this is normal. It takes so much energy and I am learning my own limits and trying to keep my own balance."



After eight years on the TTOC list, **Amber Hunter** from Prince George, now has two contracts, one in primary and one in intermediate. Besides juggling the demands of both divisions, she initially found the workload of lesson planning, marking, and staff and parent relationships a tad overwhelming. "Compared to my work as

a TTOC, I now have the full-meal deal! It was challenging at first, but now I'm really enjoying it."



Muneeb Arshid is a secondary-school trained teacher who found himself working in a K-Grade 5 setting in Langley. "At first, I was pulling my hair out. I didn't have the resources. I had to learn to teach in a different way. As a resource/learning assistance teacher I had many, many individual education plans (IEPs) and had to co-ordinate meetings. It was a hectic first two months. I got through it because of my supportive staff, admin, and local



president. I learned to take things in stride and have built relationships with both staff and students."



Dustin Stolen was part of a five-person panel who spoke to conference participants about the benefits and joys of teaching in rural communities. He teaches in the tiny community of Greenwood, which has a population of 650. "There's no grocery store, no pool, yes there is a lack of facilities, but strangely I never feel isolated. I love where I teach. It's about the relationships you develop. I find people here supportive. There was no housing in Greenwood, so I bought a house which was affordable in nearby Midway, something I could never afford to do in a larger and more urban area."

Dave Lewis, a secondary teacher from Terrace, explained how he was initially anxious about not knowing enough about kids, teaching, and education in general. It wasn't until he sat down and had a good conversation with an experienced educational assistant at his school that his fears were calmed.

Meghan McArthur, a student teacher from Vancouver, is pleasantly surprised by the amount of support and resources she's finding. "I thought I'd have to create it all but I don't and people are really helpful."



The BCTF website has a wide range of resources for new teachers. From lesson planning ideas, reporting, classroom management, to dealing with the many demands of the classroom, you can find it at all at bctf.ca/NewTeachers.aspx#who. Check out the *New Teachers Handbook* under publications, especially formatted for mobile devices. ■

Vernon Teachers' Association

By Marian Dodds, 2017–18 Teacher Editor

Life in local #22

Lisa LaBoucane photo

KALAMALKA LAKE, “the lake of many colours,” sparkles and beckons. No wonder Vernon-area teachers say they never tire of the view. A whirlwind tour of Vernon schools revealed a kaleidoscope of creative, enthusiastic teachers and kids. “Teachers build the next generation, their hearts go into teaching, and their efforts must be respected and valued,” asserts President Lisa LaBoucane, explaining why the Vernon Teachers’ Association (VTA) makes teacher professionalism and the professional voice of teachers their priority. New teachers and teachers teaching on call get support through a “school buddy” system, developed by the Professional Relations Committee, and are supported by Q&A sessions and SURTs at the VTA office. This central hub for professional development, mentorship, inquiry groups, workshops, and committee and executive meetings will soon be the site for a grand celebration—they are now mortgage free!

Bargaining chair Barry Dorval has noticed that “teachers are paying close attention in this round of bargaining.” Their committee has been busy with school visits and a bargaining survey, to ensure teachers have a voice in upcoming processes.

Robyn Ladner shares a “full lean in” photo of teachers at a PD event to illustrate how a decade of rethinking PD has born fruit with teacher-led, evidence-based initiatives that

brim with passion and purpose. The local has collaborated with district staff to rebrand the district’s mentorship model. At a recent school board presentation, one new teacher enthused “I feel I am having PD every day! As teachers we’re always changing.”

Vernon’s more than 1,200 Indigenous students graduate at rates significantly higher than the provincial average. Schools have welcome rooms staffed with Aboriginal support workers, and teachers use resources designed to support infusing Aboriginal history and culture into all curricula.

Vernon teachers enjoy a reciprocal relationship with the BCTF. They serve on many BCTF advisory committees and PSA executives, providing important “interior” perspectives at the provincial level. VTA advocacy led their district to be an early adopter of the SOGI initiative.

Like all BC communities, there are issues of affordable housing, crime, and drug abuse. The VTA has a history of compassion, donating from their generous Community Resources Fund to causes that affect families. School drama and music programs collaborate with local groups to build community. Vernon teachers and their families enjoy fabulous outdoor recreation and sports opportunities alongside a vibrant music, art, dance, and theatre scene. In the words of one teacher, Vernon is “not little, but just big enough.”

Vernon at a glance

District includes communities of Vernon, Lumby, Cherryville, Coldstream. Population: Vernon 42,000, greater Vernon about 60,000.

Education system: 8,500 students (1,200 identify as Aboriginal), 565 teachers.

Four elementary schools including a K–7 French immersion school, a K–6 Montessori program, and a late French immersion program. Five secondary schools (includes one dual-track French immersion). Alternative education programs in Vernon and Lumby. Many academy programs (rowing, swimming, hockey).

Post-secondary: UBC Okanagan in Kelowna campus, Okanagan College.

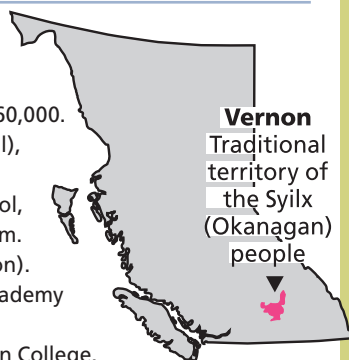
Economy: Tourism, Kal Tire, Tolko (forestry). Many residents travel to and from jobs in Alberta via Kelowna airport.

Visitor interest: Silver Star Provincial Park: both downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and tubing in the winter; mountain biking and hiking in the summer.

Sovereign Lake Nordic Center: the nation’s largest cross-country ski club.

Golfing: At least six golf courses near Vernon. Wine tours. An amazing farmers’ market.

Kalamalka Lake and Okanagan Lake: paradise for boating, paddle boarding, and swimming.



Susan Croll photo

President profile

RAISED WITH a union mindset on a Saskatchewan wheat farm, Lisa LaBoucane could claim being an “activist in utero.” Her farmer father was active in the National Farmers’ Union. Her mother and grandmother taught in the same one-room schoolhouse. Lisa contemplated studying law or journalism but realized her passion was teaching.

While a student teacher at the University of Lethbridge, Lisa took advantage of the student membership offered by the Alberta Teachers’ Association, attending events showing her the benefits of teacher unionism. After five years teaching drama, English, and health in rural Alberta, she moved on to the University of Victoria, completing a master’s degree in special education. In 2005 she moved to Lumby as a behaviour specialist teacher and counsellor, then on to Vernon. In her third year as VTA president, Lisa uses a collaborative leadership style, advocating passionately for teacher engagement and voice.

This year, Lisa has tapped into her expertise in special education to address challenges with restored language issues centered on class-size and composition, special education designations, and the professional role of school-based teams. With the local’s intent to build voice through active involvement of members in mind, she’s invited teachers to sit in and take notes at grievance meetings.

A BCTF Women in Negotiations facilitator, Lisa describes her training as a “most impactful experience” centered on listening, collaborating, and relationship building. She is committed to encouraging other women to step in to negotiations.

In her spare time Lisa and her family take full advantage of the natural environment. They enjoy snowboarding, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and slalom skiing all winter; wakeboarding, rowing/skulling and camping in summer; and yoga year-round.



Photos contributed by Nathan Bennett, Marian Dodds, Lisa LaBoucane, Robyn Ladner, and Sheila Munroe.

Shifting our culture to deeper forms of professional development

By Robyn Ladner, Vernon Teachers' Association Professional Development Chair

HOW DO WE build awareness and capacity to shift our local culture of professional development? Ten years ago, this was our challenge. How could our Vernon local support individual teachers, groups, and school staffs to embrace a teacher-led model? Supported by a BCTF Program for Quality Teaching grant and facilitator, we began with an "inquiry into inquiry" project. Over a year of inquiry, we developed a PD model that identified key points and skills needed to shift the thinking and culture in our local toward teacher inquiry

and self-directed learning as a deeper form of professional development.

Now our vibrant teacher-driven PD culture helps us navigate the constant changes in our profession. Sometimes we do this in individual quiet reflection and sometimes with the support of our colleagues. We support both by facilitating activities for local specialist associations (LSAs), promoting teacher-generated PD activities, building inquiry into school-based PD days, and supporting as many as a dozen teacher inquiry groups a year

using funds from the BCTF, our local, and the school district.

Professional engagement also infuses the goals that guide our local executive. The past few years we have made it our priority to create a culture of professionalism that focuses on autonomy, leadership, and the voice of the professional teacher. We take this goal with us into every meeting and committee. It permeates our interactions with colleagues, management, the board, and parents.

Teachers of Vernon leading in inquiry and specialist associations

Marian Dodds photos



Sheila Monroe's passion for monarch butterflies led her to create a drought-resistant pollinator garden. "Kids love it!" They've attracted bats, beetles, wasps, bees, and hummingbirds. Every June they harvest and roast garlic. She works with science teachers on environmental stewardship connected to First Peoples principles.



When **Kate Morrison Kaneda** first started as a Vernon Montessori teacher she found the job isolating. Now she is president of the Montessori LSA, enabling their small group to share ideas and support each other. With funds from local and provincial Montessori PSAs, they've hosted experts to enhance their PD.



Gail Wolanski is president of her local special education teachers' association and a member-at-large on the Teachers of Inclusive Education PSA. Involved in the Cross Currents Conference and mini-conferences in the local, she believes that passion-driven and self-directed PD enables teachers to look at what is truly meaningful for them.



District counsellor **Michell Bennett** shares her expertise in using dogs for Animal Assistance Interventions (AAI). She and two colleagues have an inquiry project that asks "what can our district do to support animals in schools?" They're sharing research on benefits to kids and developing health, safety, and ethics protocols.



For over 15 years, music teacher **Ann Dorval** led the local music teachers' specialist association. She says their links to the provincial PSA have been a lifeline. Their LSA plans a choral showcase where 350 kids representing every school come together to sing for each other.



Darlene Loland's research on mindfulness began with a personal quest for ways to help anxious or stressed students. Now she's heading an inquiry group on mindfulness in the classroom involving 13 teachers in two schools, using local PD-funded release time. ■

On gender diversity, we have a lot to learn from today's youth

What CampOUT! taught me about acceptance through language and action

By Rich Overgaard, BCTF staff

It was a sunny July day, in the large dining hall of Camp Fircom on Gambier Island, when my 30-something cis (meaning not trans) white gay guy self got a fresh lesson in getting called out.

IT WAS THE first day of CampOUT!, a UBC-run summer camp for queer, trans, Two-Spirit, and allied youth. I was there as a volunteer community mentor. The CampOUT! director asked if I would do a speech about how to treat the facilities.

"Sure, no problem."

I had given that speech before to other camps. When I get to the part about what can and can't be flushed down toilets, I said one of the things I would always say.

"Please don't flush any feminine hygiene products down the toilet."

Boom.

A youth in the front row shot up their hand. "Excuse me!? What did you just call them?!"

My stomach knotted, my face went red, and I searched hopelessly for a friendly face to rescue me. No one did. This was going to be a takedown that I deserved.

The youth (see, no need for gender pronouns) said, "One—they have nothing to do with being feminine. And

two—they have nothing to do with being clean or dirty! Call them what they are: Tampons. Pads. Menstruation products. It's. Not. That. Hard."

They clapped along to each of those last four words.

I thanked them for the call out, restated my point with the correct language, and moved on to where the compost bin was.

In that moment, I learned that I had not wrapped my head around what it meant to be misgendered umpteen times per day. I had no idea how frustrating, distracting, or hurtful it could be. I promised myself to spend more time listening and less time simply assuming.

A few days later, the next lesson shook me hard.

Earlier in the week, the camp director had invited me, as a cis guy, to lead by example and wear inclusive swimwear.

"Inclusive swimwear? What the hell is that?"

"Swimwear that doesn't box people into restrictive gender identities," came the response.

I still didn't get it.



"Like, a bikini top?"

The director looked at me with endless patience.

"If you like, or anything else that might signal to other cis campers what would work for them."

Hmmm, I chewed on that for a while. And then it dawned on me. The director was asking me, a cis male, to cover up my top half. Why are my nipples free?

To create an inclusive space for these youth, some of whom are in transition, may have already transitioned, or wear gender-affirming clothing like binders (to minimize one's chest) or breast forms (to give someone the look of having breasts), we had to get rid of gendered swim costumes.

So, I took out a tank top, cut some fringe into it (for fun!), and showed it off before the first program session started.

Everyone, no matter how they identify, would wear a top at waterfront.

The next two afternoons, I spent time swimming and laughing and helping youth climb up and onto the little dock—so they could just jump off again. We sang songs, we made friends, we forgot about the world back home. It was so joyful.

Then, on the last day, the whole camp sat in a circle and shared their closing thoughts.

This one youth who had been in the swim party with us took their turn and a wave of emotion filled me. My eyes were wet with tears and my throat was jammed. Choked up with all the feels.

The youth said they had not swum in six years.

Not at a pool, not on a school field trip, not at the beach. They never felt safe enough to swim. I was so struck by that: something so simple that brings so much happiness was out of reach for this youth.

Why? Because there was no bathing suit in the world that they could wear that would affirm their gender identity. The

fear and anxiety of social isolation kept them from experiencing the simple joy of jumping off a dock at summer camp.

That changed at this camp because some thoughtful people led from the front and invited others, like me, to join them.

I had never thought about how painful it must be to be excluded from something like swimming. Not because of bashfulness or a fear of water, but because of one's own identity.

My hope with this article is to pass that learning on. No, I'm not asking all of you to wear shirts on your next swimming field trip. But, I am hoping some of you will.

Maybe, just maybe, there is a youth in your presence who is questioning their gender. Maybe there is one who already identifies as non-binary or genderqueer. Maybe there is a youth wearing a chest binder that you don't know about.

Wouldn't it be amazing if one of their role models showed up—in solidarity, acceptance, and understanding—in inclusive swimwear? ■



Singing their hearts out and the seven-second echo

By Susan Croll, Teacher editor



"Pretend to take a shower, then do it again, and this time faster" is not a statement typically equated with singing. It is however, if you are Suzanne Fulton, a music teacher with the West Vancouver School District, who directs not one but four choirs, including the district-wide Women's Choir and Mixed Honour Choir (all genders).

St. Nicholas Church, Prague, Czech Republic.

I AM A GUEST at her practice and watch her run the 60-member Women's Honour Choir through warm-ups and drills. "Taking a shower" is a physical warm-up at the start of choir practice. After their "showers," they continue to practice, making odd gestures and strange faces to warm up their voices and vocal cords, with evocative high, low, short, and long notes escaping from their mouths.

These keen and dedicated students, ranging from Grades 7–12, stand on risers in the music room and listen attentively to their teacher's directions. They are an enthusiastic group, having just returned along with the district Mixed Honour Choir, from a busy

"I strive to have choirs whose members are caring. An integral part of a choir is belonging."

11-day, performance-based tour to Prague, Salzburg, Vienna, and Venice.

A tour highlight was singing in a cathedral in Prague. Suzanne explains that the cathedral's design is perfect for allowing the sound to resonate. She recalls that she had her students stop singing after one chord so they could hear the echo. "The echo was seven seconds long. Not only could we hear it, we could feel it."

One of Suzanne's Grade 12 students, Madeline Scott-King, who has sung in the choir for five years, lights up when she speaks about the experience at the cathedral. "Hearing the echo ring for seven seconds was amazing. I can't explain it—even though I am not a religious person, it was just so amazing hearing this echo in this beautiful cathedral. Then the sun began shining through the windows."

Visiting some of Europe's most historical cities included singing in Latin at St. Mark's

Basilica in Venice during a mass at Lent. They also performed at an elementary school and sang at a concert in Austria with a traditional folk music group.

Suzanne began teaching 15 years ago, and as her career developed she saw the need for a higher-level choral experience for students in the West Vancouver School District. The desire to create such an opportunity grew stronger as Suzanne's career took her from teaching elementary music to teaching high school music. With her love of music and her background in both opera and choir, six years ago she proposed to the district a unique class that includes auditioning students from across the district who have a particular passion and talent for singing: thus, the Honour Choir Program was born.

Five years later, in addition to teaching music exploration classes to secondary students, she directs four choirs: a concert



John Lennon Wall, Prague, Czech Republic.

“For many students, music gives them a place to shine, a reason to feel excited about coming to school.”

choir for students in Grades 8–12; a chamber choir for students in Grades 10–12; and the two district choirs, the Women’s Honour Choir and Mixed Honour Choir, for students in Grades 7–12. In total, Suzanne works with about 160 choir members.

Suzanne says she did not grow up in a particularly musical family. It wasn’t until she was six years old and attended a musical performance at the Sagebrush Theatre in Kamloops that she fell in love with music. “I told my mother when the show was over, ‘That’s what I want to do.’” She joined her school choir, the Kamloops Thompson Children’s Choir, Kamloops Youth Choir, and community choirs (all led by BCTF members). Suzanne later studied opera and choir at UBC before completing her teaching degree and Masters in Music Education.

She says she became a teacher because she realized she was not a solo performer and was looking for a better musical fit. “Even though I took a break from music while completing my education degree, I was hired because of my musical background. I have now definitely found the shoe that fits.”

“My mission is to give my students the same rich musical experience I had growing up in Kamloops. For many students, music gives them a place to shine, a reason to feel excited about coming to school,” reflects Suzanne.



She refers to the words of Richard Nace, one of her own mentors. “He believes that music is a vehicle for connection. That is the crux of my teaching. I strive to have choirs whose members are caring. An integral part of a choir is belonging. Of course the singing is important but not as important as being a good human being.”

For those unfamiliar with how choirs function, the idea of a choir as a vehicle of connection and caring may be novel. Suzanne explains she loves choirs because they have to work as a unit and a team. “Because we have Grades 7–12 in the honour choirs, the older students mentor the younger students. Relationships are built, and I emphasize that all choir members must be respectful and careful with each other’s feelings.”

Grade 12 student Meagan Mak, who plays piano, adds that the choir is a special bonding experience. “I love the choir because even though we have different voices, we create beautiful harmony.”

Andrea Iorizzo-Santoyo, who incidentally loves to sing in Latin, concurs with Meagan, saying the choir is her happy place. “I love to sing but I don’t want to perform by myself.

Because of the choir, I get to express myself through music and with other people.”

Taylor Vaughan, who graduates this June, has also been a choir member since Grade 7, loves to sing opera and “anything with high notes. The choir is my family. I can be vulnerable and be myself. We support and care about each other. I remember when I was going to sing my first solo and I was really scared. I began singing and I looked at the other members. They were all smiling, holding me up.”

When I congratulate Suzanne on her achievement with her choirs, she quickly changes the subject and defers to colleagues. “I am humbled by what my colleagues here and in other districts do. They do truly amazing work. I am particularly grateful for my involvement in the BC Choral Mentorship Project, where I am able to meet with incredibly talented colleagues for professional development. I have learned so much from them and rely on their expertise and support regularly as I grow in this profession.”

When I asked her if she had any future plans for the choirs, she did not miss a beat. “To keep the students coming,” she said. ■



The Knowledge Keepers Project

Respecting INDIGENOUS PEOPLES by keeping knowledge alive

By Brent Chudiak, Salmon Arm teacher



“You have been given the title of ‘Knowledge Keeper.’ What does that mean to you, and what duty do you feel with the responsibility of being a Knowledge Keeper? How has the role of Knowledge Keeper changed over the last few generations?” These are just a few of the questions senior photography students in my class asked Indigenous Knowledge Keepers last year when we collectively embarked on the Knowledge Keepers Project.

INSPIRED BY THE Truth and Reconciliation Commission, my students and I organized a special tea at our school. Working collaboratively with the Indigenous Education Department, we gathered Knowledge Keepers from the local area to an information tea at our school, to show respect for the values and traditional knowledge held by Indigenous peoples and to show that our school was a safe and inviting place that welcomed and valued them.

At the tea, the students proposed the Knowledge Keepers Project—an initiative that combined Knowledge Keepers sharing their wisdom with students receiving that knowledge, while learning to take professional portraits. Our Indigenous guests cautiously agreed to the portraits, but were enthusiastic in their desire to share their knowledge. As a result, Knowledge Keepers from the Neskonlith, Splatshin, Little Shuswap Lake, Adams Lake, Lillooet bands, and off-reserve Knowledge Keepers along with the Métis Association joined the Knowledge Keepers Project.

In conjunction with the Indigenous Education staff, students were provided with background information to develop cultural understanding and appreciation of Indigenous wisdom and traditional knowledge. We learned that “Knowledge Keeper” was a title bestowed on some and completely distinct from the title of “Elder” in their Bands. These Knowledge Keepers are recognized for the specific gifts, talents, and knowledge they possess. They are living libraries that pass on valuable knowledge from generation to generation. They not

only keep knowledge but more importantly they share that knowledge.

Students prepared for their interviews with the Knowledge Keepers by creating a list of interview questions. Then, over the next two months, students interviewed the Knowledge Keepers, participated in discussions about Indigenous issues, and learned about some of the specific gifts, talents, and traditional knowledge each of the Knowledge Keepers offered.

What my students didn’t see was the amazing behind-the-scenes logistic efforts of the Indigenous staff, in particular Irene Laboucane, District Principal—Aboriginal Education, and Diyame Derrick, Salmon Arm Secondary Indigenous Support Worker. We worked together organizing schedules and provided whatever support was required to ensure the Knowledge Keepers’ comfort and confidence in this heartwarming project. Understandably, many of the Knowledge Keepers were somewhat uncomfortable in the school environment because of the history of residential schools.

Caitlyn O’Brien, a senior photography student, described her experience as “eye-opening...it made me so much more aware of the terrible experiences they faced in residential schools. It really altered my view of Canadian history.” Lawrence Moren, a senior photography student and Filipino

“Our Indigenous guests cautiously agreed to the portraits, but were enthusiastic in their desire to share their knowledge.

permanent resident of Canada, reflected on his culture’s colonization/assimilation by the Spaniards after learning more about the Indigenous peoples of Canada. “Wow, I really started to see similarities in their experiences and ours. I also appreciated their views on love, perseverance, compassion, and importance of life itself.”

As a photographer, I admire the work of master Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh, and encourage my students to study his unique lighting style. I want my students to become aware of his strong lighting techniques that show high contrast and reveal sharp detail. A familiar saying is that the “eyes are windows to the soul.” While I don’t dispute that claim, I would argue that in Karsh’s work, the hands are windows to the soul. Whenever possible we included the Knowledge Keeper’s hands in their portraits.

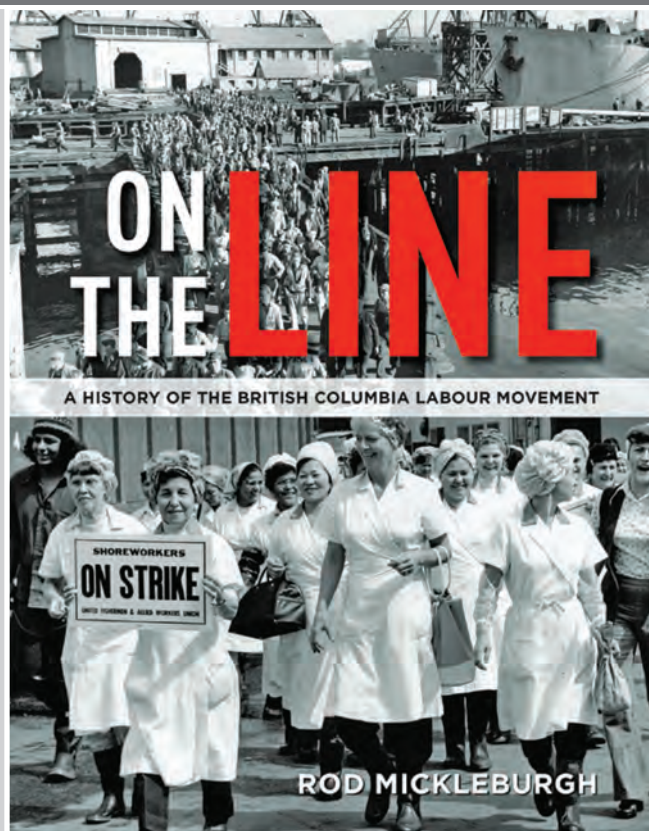
The large 24x30 inch portraits were printed on Dibond metal plates with funds received through an Indigenous school-based project grant from School District 83, and were unveiled at the 2016–17 Indigenous Students Graduation Ceremony at the Splatshin Centre in Enderby, BC. Each portrait was accompanied with the Knowledge Keepers’ advice to the graduates. The display was a resounding success with great pride taken by the Knowledge Keepers and their respective communities.

The same summer the portraits were the premiere show at the opening of the newly built Haney Heritage Museum and Art Gallery, before the show moved to Victoria. There, the Knowledge Keepers Project was shown in the Art in Public Places Gallery, supported by the BC Art Teachers’ Association at the Ministry of Education and in the Minister of Education’s office at the Legislature. The success of this project was described by one gallery viewer, who said, “The portraits fill the gallery with soulful compassion and joy!”

Again, a special thank you to the Indigenous Education Department staff of School District No. 83. This project would not have been as successful were it not for their generous and tireless efforts to not only support and educate the students at Salmon Arm Secondary, but also to serve the Indigenous community they are part of. Finally, a thank you to every one of the wonderful Knowledge Keepers. As Lawrence Moren so aptly put, to feel the “love, perseverance, compassion, and the importance of life itself,” exemplified by the Knowledge Keepers was, by far, the most important and rewarding part of this project. ■



Photography by
Brent Chudiak,
assisted by third
and fourth year
photography
students.



Solidarity forever, for the union makes us strong!

Review by Marion Pollack

On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement

By Rod Mickleburgh, The BC Labour Heritage Centre Society, Harbour Publishing, 2018.

This jam-packed, 280-page book, filled with tales of courage, perseverance, and humour, chronicles how working people and their unions fought to make a better life for themselves and each other. British Columbia has a rich, and at times, militant history, and author Rod Mickleburgh drew on his experiences as a former labour reporter for *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province*. The book begins in 1778, when British explorer James Cook sailed into Nootka Sound. Fittingly, a photo of NDP Premier John Horgan and BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger is one of its bookends.

READING *ON THE LINE* reminds me that employers pull the same tricks time and time again. In 1898, for example, union leaders worked with their allies in the BC legislature to pass legislation imposing an eight-hour day as the maximum shift for underground miners. Mine owners cut the daily pay from \$3.50 to \$3.00. And now, 120 years later, Tim Hortons cut workers' breaks in response to the \$15 minimum wage in Ontario.

Mickleburgh does not shy away from the history of racism in the labour movement. He documents the racism promoted by labour leaders against Chinese and Japanese workers that began in the 1890s. Mickleburgh also discusses the role of Indigenous workers, and outlines the strength, solidarity, and determination of Indigenous fishers and longshore workers. The plight of mostly South Asian farmworkers in the Fraser Valley, and the dedication to improving health and safety and building a union is acknowledged in Chapter 17.

“A mass coughing fit drowned out any attempt to read an injunction at the 1996 wildcat strike at Lenkurt Electric.”

My favourite parts are the wonderful stories of picket line and strike solidarity. During the Great Coal Mine Strike of 1912, “two fiery women” were fined for calling the pit bosses scabs. In 1919, Vancouver unionists organized a month-long sympathy strike in solidarity with the Winnipeg general strikers. When the relief camp strikers occupied what is now the Carnegie Centre in Vancouver, crowds of supporters sent in buckets of food. When this “rich” food proved to be too much for some of the hungry occupiers, antacid and other stomach remedies were included in the newer buckets!

Pickers in the 1938–39 International Wood Workers (IWA) strike at Texada Island wore signs in English and Cantonese. Non-union woodworkers walked off the job to join an IWA strike in 1946. A mass coughing fit drowned out any attempt to read an injunction at the 1966 wildcat strike at Lenkurt Electric. In 2005, the dismay that a Dawson Creek coffee shop was running out of donuts was alleviated when people learned that a local business had brought the entire lot to distribute to striking teachers.

Mickleburgh also writes about teachers unionizing, explaining that during the 1960s, “...the ranks of the BC Teachers' Federation grew dramatically, launching the union on a tradition of militant leadership that made it a force to be reckoned with in education.”

He tells about the 1971 strike—the first province-wide teachers' strike—when teachers demanded better pensions, and describes their growing anger with provincial restrictions on class-size.

Internal divisions, unfortunately, also figure far too often in BC labour history. Mickleburgh outlines how many strikes were lost through internal fights and odiously by collaboration amongst employers, the police, and militia.

While he refers to the experiences and struggles of women workers, I find the book weak in this area. The discrimination, sexism, and harassment that working women and union leaders faced—and still face today—is not spotlighted in the way I believe we deserve.

Despite this shortcoming, *On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement* teaches us that we gain only what we fight for, and that ordinary people are the real heroes of our history. ■

Marion is a retired postal worker and former president of the Vancouver local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. She also served her union as a full-time grievance officer in Vancouver and as a national representative in Ottawa.



Jim West Photography

Labor Notes Conference 2018

Strong and resilient teachers EXCITE

By **Sheila MacPherson**, Sunshine Coast teacher, **Kip Wood**, Nanaimo teacher, BCTF Executive Committee Member-at-Large, and **Jack MacDermot**, BCTF staff

Imagine you teach in a city where some students go to private charter schools, while others attend sham schools in strip malls with uncertified teachers and no playgrounds. Or where your salary, your assignment, and even keeping your job depends on your students' standardized test scores.

OR IF YOU COULD only avoid higher medical plan premiums and deductibles by answering health survey questions like: "How often do you have sex? Is it vigorous?"

These are just some of the deplorable situations we heard about at the Labor Notes Conference in Chicago, from April 6–8, attended by more than 3,000 union activists from the US and 24 other countries. Started in 1979 as a media and organizing project, Labor Notes is now a broad activist network working for active, member-driven union movements.

We heard from teachers and activists from countries where those who speak out for workers' rights are threatened, and sometimes killed. A Mexican teacher reminded us that international solidarity matters, and how it has been crucial in stopping repression in their country. A South Korean teacher accepted an award on behalf of their jailed teacher union leaders.

This spring, wildcat teacher strikes are spreading across several US states; the most compelling story yet may be from West Virginia. Near the bottom for teacher salaries in the US at \$45,000 per year, teachers there staged an illegal nine-day walkout and won a significant victory, inspiring teachers and workers nationwide.

Their grassroots walkout was sparked by legislated pay increases below inflation and steeply increased costs for health insurance. A new and intrusive "wellness initiative" was a flash point for simmering teacher anger, including the sex-life question above that had conference delegates gasping in disbelief.

Though West Virginia law prohibits teacher strikes, teachers remained strong and defiant, building strong parent support by finding childcare and packing lunches for at-risk students before the walkout began.

After several attempts to end the strike, and facing strong public support for teachers,



state legislators unanimously approved 5% pay raises for teachers and other state employees, and a task force to find a permanent fix for health insurance.

A conference event included the screening of the film *At the River I Stand*, which documented the days before the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. Dr. King was in Memphis supporting a sanitation worker wildcat strike protesting low wages and unsafe working conditions. The strike became a struggle for foundational union principles: recognition of the union and dues check-off.

Fifty years later, the Supreme Court of the United States is about to rule on these very principles in the crucial *Janus* case. If the decision goes as expected, the elimination of the automatic dues deduction will make union membership optional.

The entire public sector in the USA will be "right to work," which essentially translates into low wages, lousy working conditions, and little say in their jobs.

Considering that many delegates are enduring situations we haven't experienced, we left the conference inspired and encouraged by how many dedicated activists are working toward a more just and equitable world.

For more information on Labor Notes, go to www.labornotes.org.

Traditional territory acknowledgment: sharing our practice

We were surprised that the acknowledgment of traditional territory that we make at BCTF meetings and events did not happen at the conference and seems to be unknown in the US. When Kip Wood, BCTF member and teacher, was on a panel he explained our practice. Chicago residents in the room were not aware who the Indigenous people of the area are or were. We later learned that the region now known as Chicago is considered the traditional territory of the Illinois, Miami, and Potawatomi nations. ■



Bread and Roses

WOMEN CREATING COMMUNITY, INSPIRING ACTION

By Susan Croll, Teacher editor

This past March, over 100 women from nearly every teachers' local attended the first-ever BCTF Women's Institute. The institute was organized with several objectives in mind, including skill-building and deepening one's understanding of women's issues and feminist analyses. Delegates participated in a wide range of workshops, including community and campaign organizing, dealing with adversity, and using stories and song to effect change. Highlights included a four-woman panel discussing perspectives on feminism and activism, with a fifth empty chair inviting women from the audience to share their stories. A human or living library featured BCTF members and women from the wider community speaking about their unique activist herstories. As well, an interactive timeline was unveiled showing the spirited herstory of the BCTF Status of Women program.



I ASKED PARTICIPANTS what right or gain won by the women's movement has made a positive difference in their lives. Here are some of their responses:

“Finding my voice and being able to express myself in a safe environment. I was in a bad marriage and got out of it. Now I see marriage from a different perspective and I will never go back to anything like that ever again.”

“A right to education and especially a post-secondary education. I met a lot of women who had lots of ideas and experiences and that opened so much for me. When I became a teacher I met even more women and I realized that I don't have a predetermined life. I have choices, and I can impact my community.”

“The power to make choices independently. To decide how I want to live my life.”



BCTF photos

“Reproductive rights and choices, the access to birth control. The right to decide if you want to have children. We do not have to be barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen anymore.”

“The women's movement has given me confidence. I feel like I have women behind me. I am part of the [BCTF] Status of Women and I'm able to share my ideas safely and express myself and know I will be supported, especially if I'm beginning to feel marginalized.”

“Having conversations about sexuality and not being heterosexual. Connecting with other queer women.”

“The right to a voice and to express myself.”

“I heard that at one time female teachers could not be married and still teach. I've been married for 23 years and I am still teaching. Thanks to those who won that.”

“The right to maternity leave. That gives us a better ability to participate in the workforce.”

“Top up for maternity leave. In my local we have 100% top up. It means mat leave without losing money for a year.”

“Longer maternity leave. The turnaround for maternity leave used to be six months. Now it's much better and you can actually bond with your child. It takes a lot of pressure off the mom.”

“I want to thank all of the women in locals who negotiated language in our collective agreement. It's made a difference in my life as a teacher.”

“Being able to say, ‘stop—what you're saying is not okay.’ Saying no to racism and other kinds of discrimination. The women's movement created a space to speak up and speak out.”

“The right and ability to vote. I can think of other things too but that one is really important to me. All other rights flow from that because if you can't vote then you don't get a say in the political conversation and are not included in the dialogue. If you don't have political voice, then you're not seen as human. It's an important step for fighting for equality.”

“Being single and owning my own home. It's normal now and it wasn't before.”

“[The most important right for me is] abortion and reproductive rights in general. The right to control your own body.”

“Choices. When I was growing up women could be teachers or nurses. I have a young adult daughter and she's got some choices like the kind of work she wants to do, whether to have children. She can be who she needs and wants to be.”

“I feel like we're finally getting somewhere with childcare and for the people who work in childcare. I remember how hard it was when I was a young mother and childcare was just pieced together. I'm hopeful that my adult children will be able to more easily find childcare for their children—my grandchildren.”

“It never occurred to me when I was growing up that I didn't have choices. I appreciate the women's movement for that.”

“As a secondary school teacher, I know that for young women having access to the morning-after pill and to abortion has meant that they are safe and don't have to die because they are seeking an unsafe abortion.”

“The concept of equal pay for equal work of equal value and also maternity leave. Oh and, birth control.”

“Prorated benefits for women working part-time because they have kids at home.”

“Empowerment, solidarity, and sisterhood.”



Together

By Amanda Wardrop, Vancouver teacher

*I have presented before;
I have stood before my colleagues,
Graced by their presence,
Honoured to work with them—
And this time, this time,
My pulse had been racing through my ears
for days.
I fretted and fussed,
Crafting the workshop
So that it would be just right,
Just the right thing,
The thing that these women needed,
possibly without knowing they needed it.
Walking in to the room,
I held the edges until I found a seat,
A place to perch
While my nerves played a symphony.
And I was eased soon,
A smile, an introduction, a welcoming.
Small and simple pathways forged in
talking together.
And there was so much in each presence:
So much willingness, so much intelligence
So much heart, so much vulnerability
So much light.
I thought I might come undone
I thought that I might not be able to walk
away on my own feet.
I thought that I might be carried away on the
waves of change
On the waves of gratitude
On the waves of deeply seeing and being seen.
So many voices found,
So many thoughts echoed,
So many questions lovingly explored
and supported.
As I stood to welcome them, they welcomed
me in return,
They too seemed to find grace and strength in
these moments together.
I did not walk away on my own feet—
I floated away
Full of everything I needed to be buoyed
Of everything I needed to dive deep
and resurface. ■*

Amanda facilitated the workshop *Storytelling for Action* at the conference.





Navigating the labyrinth of LEADERSHIP

Photos submitted by Teri Mooring

By Teri Mooring, BCTF First Vice-President

In February, I was fortunate to be part of a Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) delegation to attend the Third World Women's Conference, organized by Education International (EI), the global union federation that represents 30 million school teachers, university faculty, and education workers around the world. Held in Marrakech, Morocco, the conference brought together over 300 women from over 170 countries and territories represented by EI.

EI PRESIDENT Susan Hopgood of Australia opened the conference with some stark statistics: only 18.3% of government ministers are women, while a scant 3.2% of CEOs and corporate board members are women. In educational leadership, men dominate, even though most teachers worldwide are women.

Hopgood used the metaphor of a labyrinth as opposed to the glass ceiling to describe women's journeys through leadership. Women are not taught how to survive in the labyrinth and face many obstacles and biases trying to navigate through it. "Mastering the labyrinth of leadership includes learning how to work within organizations, rather than smashing through a glass ceiling," Hopgood said. "It is more about using leadership and power to foster changes that overcome gender inequities."

Quotas for women in positions of leadership create effective results, but the practice remains controversial—at least in North America. Many European speakers offered compelling evidence for quotas, especially

when introduced with other complementary systemic changes.

Dianne Woloschuk, former CTF President and current Education International Status of Women Committee chair, spoke about the courageous women who sparked the #MeToo movement and brought to light the prevalence of sexual misconduct and abuse. She noted how in Canada #MeToo has brought consequences for influential men in politics, journalism, sports, arts, and the RCMP. The movement is taking place against the backdrop of the federal inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and a massive *Globe and Mail* investigation that revealed only one in five sexual assault cases ever get to court, and only one in 10 results in a conviction.

"When women do not feel safe to report to the police or to pursue justice through the courts, the question of what we are supposed to do in the face of sexual misconduct and violence is a compelling one," Woloschuk said.

No matter where they came from, women agreed that teacher unions must help

Teri Mooring, BCTF First Vice-President (second from right), with Susan Hopgood, President of EI (left); Diane Woloschuk, former CTF President, now Executive Board member of EI (second from left); with colleagues from other Canadian teacher unions.

address gender inequity and sexualized violence in schools and in broader societies. For example, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union tackled the complex problem of male teachers exploiting female students. SADTU has established a Change Team made up of women who are working with the Department of Health, community churches, and the media to raise awareness.

Unions also have an important role to play in the economic empowerment of women. Equal pay for equal work seems basic but gender pay gaps exist worldwide. Iceland is the first country in the world to mandate that women receive the same pay as male colleagues for the same work. Under the new rules, companies and government agencies employing at least 25 people must obtain government certification for their equal pay policies.

In her closing remarks, Hopgood called on delegates to exercise leadership in ways that advance gender equality. She urged us to mentor someone and to find a mentor for ourselves. She asked us to be activists and to convince others to be activists as well. And she encouraged us to lead by example in terms of seeking work-life balance. ■

RETIREMENT is hard to do

By Pam Guilbault, itinerant teacher
for the deaf/hard of hearing, Victoria

I'm a teacher who loves her job, loves the people she works with, and especially loves working with students. Is that too many "loves" in one sentence? I don't think so, as my 35 years of being an itinerant teacher for deaf or hard of hearing students has been filled with amazing relationships, opportunities, and learning experiences. That's why it is so darn difficult to retire. I don't want it to end.

WITH MY FIRST teaching position, I was wearing a microphone around my neck the size of a water bottle and my students were wearing hearing aid receivers the size of juice boxes strapped to their chests, with cords leading up to each ear. Today I wear a small lapel microphone like you see TV news announcers wearing and my students have receivers the size of a tiny piece of Lego attached to their behind-the-ear hearing aids. I'll never forget the first time one of my students had their cochlear implant "turned on" as a teenager. Having heard—poorly—via hearing aids, the cochlear implant gave the student access to sounds never before heard. As we walked around the school doing an environment listening activity, I found myself explaining the sound of gravel crunching under our feet, or the tweeting of a bird in the tree beside the sidewalk. It was a gift to me, of reawakening my own brain to the sounds we take for granted as the background of our world.

My learning has kept pace with the technological revolution in education. From books, paper and pencil, to iPads and Google, I've kept on learning. And I've had to keep up with my students! They've been the first ones to benefit from email and Skype as tools for communicating. I remember one lesson I taught in the first years of my teaching career was how to make a reservation at a restaurant, because my student had never overheard an adult make a reservation. They needed to know what phrases to say and what questions to expect, but now communication via email and Skype mean my students have easy access to tools that work for them.

I'll miss the magic that happens when a young student has a bounce in their step as we go to work on speech targets and language goals, because they know I've got some fun games to play. I'll miss hearing from classroom teachers how my senior students had asked or reminded them to turn on their microphone, to please use the sound system, to turn on the closed captioning—all demonstrations of my years of work on self-advocacy coming to fruition. I'll miss the students, who are all so very different. It's a privilege and joy to spend years working with my students, watching the young people they become as they progress through the grades.

So where do I go from here? I plan on taking courses at our local university, in an area I have never before explored—art history. I hope to volunteer my time (perhaps helping seniors with their hearing aids), take up a new sport (pickleball looks like fun), and do some travelling. Leaving a career that I love is hard, but the next 35 years will be just as exciting. ■



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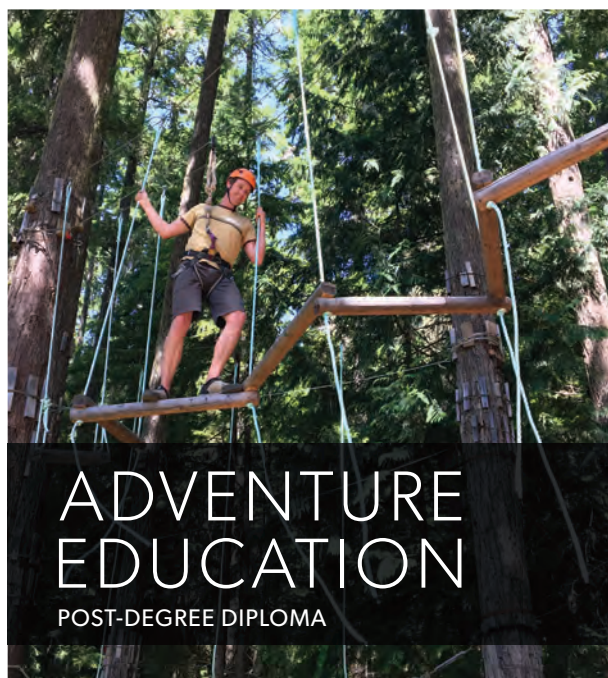
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MISCELLANEOUS



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erica@insightgloaleducation.com.

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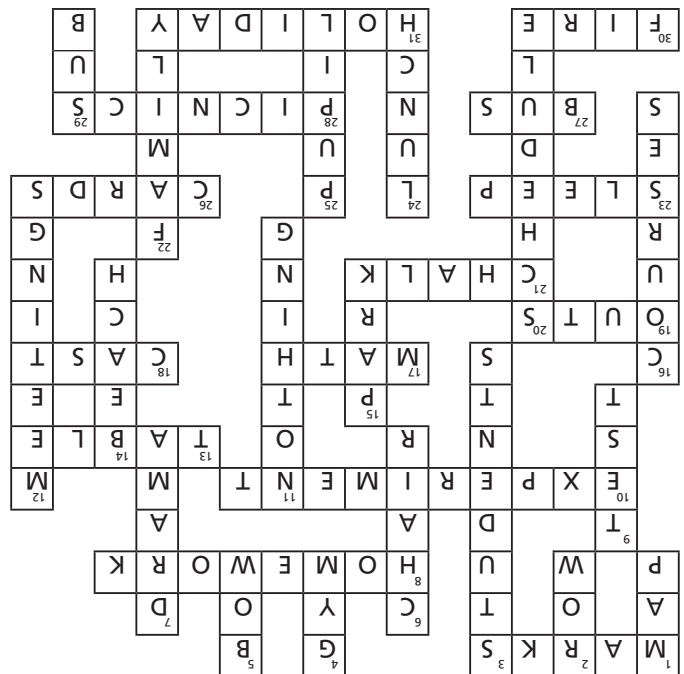
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Answer key

**School words
in the summer** page 32

JUNE 2018**Mindfulness Counselling Strategies
Activating Compassion and Regulation**

June 4 Vancouver

This workshop is designed to teach participants how to facilitate mindfulness-based strategies in their counselling work.

<https://lis.gd/Sjkpdo>

Making Sense of Anxiety and Related Problems

June 4–5 Halifax

The escalating level of anxiety in our children begs for an explanation as well as a solution. Dr. Neufeld sheds light on this age-old problem, paving the way for natural interventions that can actually get to the root causes as opposed to just managing symptoms. <https://lis.gd/62mAQ0>

Working with Stuck Kids

June 6 Halifax

Not everyone grows up as they get older. The construct of psychological immaturity has been with us as an intuitive concept for ages, but only recently has developmental science advanced to a state where it can now yield effective strategies and interventions to address learning and behavioural challenges. <https://lis.gd/wlrnee>

Emotional Intelligence

June 6 Vancouver

June 11 Kamloops

June 11 Victoria

Participants in this workshop will learn to utilize emotional intelligence more effectively through self-assessment and skill development exercises. <https://lis.gd/gHZybc>

De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations

June 19 Victoria

June 19 Kamloops

June 20 Vancouver

Participants of this workshop will develop a clear understanding of how to assess the potential for violence and respond with a diverse set of tools and strategies. <https://lis.gd/xAnwKx>

JULY 2018**Teaching with Heart: Experiencing the Waldorf approach**

July 9–11 Duncan

This course will offer an overview of Waldorf education. The three-day session will include presentations on child development, story-telling, ideas for how to create a curriculum for different ages, artistic activities and practical classroom experiences. k-reynolds@shaw.ca

**Mediation Facilitating
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July 10 Vancouver

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Engage in focused, sustained, reflective inquiry into your practice.

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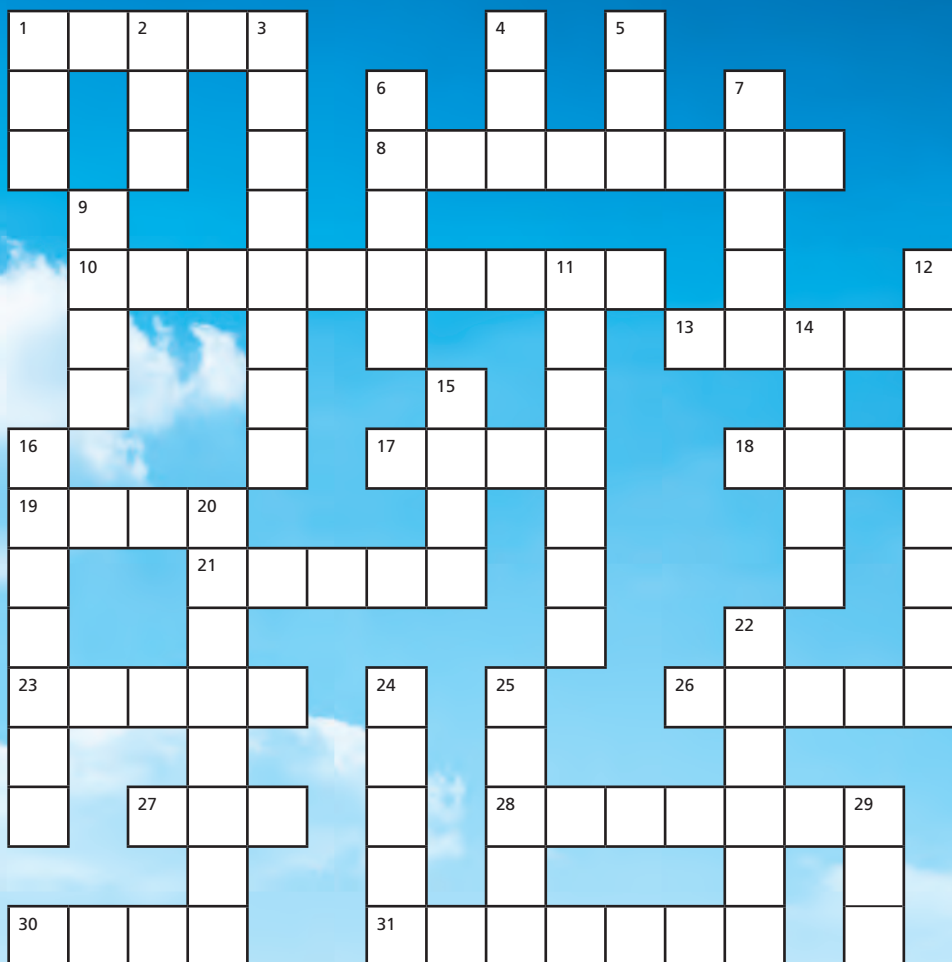
- Range of Program Themes
- Cohort Based
- 2 Years (6 Terms)
- TQS Upgrade Opportunity

Apply by July 6, 2018

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UPGRADE • INQUIRE • INSPIRE



School words in the summer

by Tom Redcam

ACROSS

1. What beverage containers might leave on tables
8. Mowing the lawn, not evening study
10. Trying new recipes, scientific method optional
13. Picnic furniture, not "times" learning
17. Calculating the restaurant tip
18. Fishing throw, not kids in school play
19. Baseball stat, not high school drop ____
21. For sidewalk art only
23. In August, back to _____, not school
26. For playing cribbage or poker, not reports
27. This vehicle isn't always yellow
28. Meals outside, supervision may be optional
30. Toaster of s'mores, not cause for a drill
31. Weeks long, not just statutory

DOWN

1. For road trip, not geography class
2. Not a line of desks, but done with oars
3. They might not recognize you in summer
4. Place for your workouts, not PE
5. Front of boat, not just for strings class
6. Found on the lawn, not at your desk
7. Film genre, not a fine arts subject
9. Dip your toe in water body, no marking
11. You can spend some days doing this
12. Seeing friends, not staff gathering
14. No seashore study required here
15. Place to relax, not last task of drive to work
16. Golf here, always non-credit
20. In summer should be as loose as your clothing
22. People you can be with on weekdays
24. Meal can be anywhere, and more than an hour!
25. Not a student, it dilates in the sun
29. Sandwich, not TTOC