

INSIDE

Class-size limits: Teachers and students benefit	4
A decade of salary decline	4
Put the brakes on corporate intrusion	5
SFU/BCTF study of violence against teachers	6
Accreditation: more cost than benefit	6
Debunking the tax cutters	7
A social justice union	8
What about the boys?	10
Schoolground planting projects	13
World Teachers’ Day	16

CONTENTS	
President’s message	2
Looking back	2
Top 10 lesson aids	3
Yours for the asking	7
Teachers retired	11
Retirement seminars	12
Classified	15
PD calendar	15

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Teacher

Respect and dignity at Telkwa School

concerted effort reduces violence

by Nancy Knickerbocker

Six years ago, Telkwa Elementary School, near Smithers, was in turmoil. Staff were stressed out and struggling with a large group of students acting out violently. “When I first came here, the school had a very bad reputation for really tough kids and a lot of meanness,” said teacher Jill Schneider. Principal Ernie Janzen agreed. “We had a pretty big wolf pack,” he said. With an enrolment of 200, an average of eight students per day were coming through the principal’s office on discipline issues. “We were dealing with a lot of fighting, throwing, very abusive language,” recalled teaching assistant Cathy Whalen. Staff members decided they needed a concentrated plan to change the atmosphere and attitudes in the school. To begin to turn things around, they asked the community what kind of school they would like to see.

*The staff began
 logging all
 behaviour,
 documenting and
 coding all incidents
 requiring
 disciplinary action.*

“The number one thing across the board was that people wanted a safe school where the children learned to respect themselves and others,” Janzen said. With that focus on safety and respect, the staff set about implementing a consistent system of progressive discipline combined with programs in peer counselling and opening up better communications between children and adults. “We decided to focus on consistency,” said Schneider. “Everybody was responsible for everybody’s behaviour, not just the children in their own classes. All the staff and parent volunteers had to be respected and listened to.” The staff began logging all behaviour, documenting and coding all incidents requiring disciplinary action. From minor infractions that could be dealt with by teachers, to



Students distribute play materials in the schoolyard at lunchtime to encourage students to participate in constructive play.

issues that required a trip to the principal’s office, up to behaviour that required a suspension, they kept track on a daily basis. “When we looked at the logs over a weekly or monthly review, we started to recognize patterns,” Whalen said. “For example, we might notice that one student seemed to be having trouble over the lunch hour, so we’d work on helping him/her learn how to ask to join in and play with others.” They also noticed that at certain times of the school

year—near Hallowe’en and Christmas in particular—more students acted out. In response, the staff focussed on the positive, with smiley cards and other rewards for good behaviour. As well, they started offering other extra-curricular activities such as art clubs. The strategies so successfully employed by the staff at Telkwa are consistent with the findings of the recent study by Simon Fraser University and the BCTF. It found that written codes of

conduct, clear policies for student discipline, formal record-keeping of incidents requiring discipline, and violence prevention programs all contributed to a reduced risk for violence in schools. “The findings associated with these policies suggest that a proactive stance toward the problem of violence actually can produce tangible, concrete, and measurable reductions in violence,” the researchers reported. (Full report on page 6.)

President's message



David Chudnovsky

It's not often that someone's comments at a local teachers' union meeting move me to tears, but it just about happened in Campbell River early in October. I was attending the first Teacher Forum, and I was pleased about the large number of members who had taken time from their busy schedules to come talk with me—they were talking and I was listening and taking notes. Their comments, on a broad range of issues, were often provocative and always thoughtful. Thirty-one colleagues made presentations at that meeting.

As you might expect, most of them talked about bargaining and salaries, accreditation, standardized testing, and the use of professional development days.

Then a fellow at the back of the room got up and changed the subject a bit. He said that BCTF had done good work in social justice over the years. He was concerned, however, that we are missing a new and important reality. A third-world economy is developing in Canada. He worried that many of our students are graduating into a society in which they can only expect \$7.50-an-hour jobs at the Superstore. He reminded us that we need to be concerned about the future of these students if we are going to be responsible teachers. He argued that fairer distribution of the wealth of our society is an important issue for teachers.

All the BCTF members in the room were quiet and respectful as he spoke. When he finished, there were many nods, a short silence, and further talk about more traditional topics.

When we introduced the Teacher Forums, we hoped they would motivate our members to think deeply and seriously about our Federation. If the Campbell River forum is any indication, that's exactly what's happening. I want to thank that eloquent colleague for his important reminder, and I want to thank each of you who participates in the consultation process for helping to build a stronger BCTF.

David



Special "Kids First!" assignment

You have a class full of budding artists, poets, and young reporters who could put together a profile of their unique and special community.

Kids First!, Knowledge Network's daily children's broadcast from 07:00 to 10:00, features commercial-free, non-violent, educational and fun TV programming for children. Younger viewers are encouraged to send in their letters, drawings, poems, book reviews, and stories.

Submissions could be printed in the *Kids First!* section of *The Vancouver Sun's Kids & Comics* page or read on air by hosts Zach and Zoe.

Send class projects to Kids First!, PO Box 4111, Vancouver, BC V6B 3Z6.



Make music with Cuba

Cuba has a vibrant musical culture, but it lacks instruments. B.C. teachers are asked to help. Take that old instrument out of the closet—even if it is in very poor condition. The Cubans will refurbish it so it can be used. Brass and wind instruments especially are in short supply in Cuba.

Instruments could also be those deemed unusable by schools. Donations from individuals may be eligible for charitable tax receipts. British Columbia school groups travelling to Cuba will take the instruments with them.

The project is organized by the World Music Continuum, Lower Mainland music teachers who promote world music in schools. It is supported by the BCTF International Solidarity Committee and CoDevelopment Canada.

For more information, or to arrange for the donation, contact Eric Hartman, 604-713-5500, F: 604-713-5503.

Ken Novakowski appointed new executive director

The BCTF Executive Committee has appointed Ken Novakowski to the position of executive director. Novakowski is well-known in the education community and in the labour movement as an effective and committed activist.

A social studies teacher, Novakowski taught in Langley for more than a decade and served as president of the Langley Teachers' Association and of the B.C. Social Studies Teachers' Association.

He was elected first vice-president of the BCTF in 1988 and president in 1989. Novakowski served as president of the Federation until 1992.

On the administrative staff of the Federation, he has served in various roles, including as a member of the Bargaining Division and as acting director of the Bargaining Division. Currently he is director of the Organization Support Division, which bears responsibility for BCTF communications, legal services, governance, leadership development and training, graphics, and member records.

AGM 2000 deadlines

- December 15: deadline for submission of local resolutions.
- January 31: deadline for Executive Committee nominations.
- February 1: deadline for candidate statement copy for *Teacher* newsmagazine.
- March 3: deadline for withdrawal of candidate names from ballot and agenda.

Federation holiday closing

The BCTF office will be closed at 12:00 noon Friday, December 24, 1999 and re-open Tuesday, January 4, 2000.

What's new on the web

Key world events are now highlighted on the BCTF home page, www.bctf.bc.ca. The educational and social justice events include United Nations' observances, World Teachers' Day, International Literacy Day, and Campaign 2000.

Our Feature headline, updated weekly, alerts members to new educational and social issues and promotes BCTF events, publications, and resources. The feature archive is available at www.bctf.bc.ca/Headlines/index.html.

Publications recently added to our site:

LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

Some teachers assign the letters on a purely arbitrary basis, with the result that pupils have report cards with no mark lower than A or B. Thus used, the letters mean precisely nothing. The parent is deceived into thinking that the child is doing excellent work in all subjects. Then, perhaps, the next teacher, marking more honestly, gives C for average work, and the same pupil's card even shows an occasional D or E. Forthwith the parent visits the teacher and demands the reason why her offspring is doing so badly, after doing so excellently under her previous teacher.

The BC Teacher, November 1929.

50 years ago

Where is the Canadian teacher who has not said or who will one day not say: "some year I must take advantage of the exchange system. How nice it would be to go to England or Scotland in particular and to see something of Europe?"

Yes, how nice it would be to go to the United Kingdom this year as an exchange teacher. Just think how far a Canadian teacher's salary (already inflated in terms of old country standards) would go in meeting England's much lower living costs. Then too, on top of all this there would be a 20% premium on Canadian money, enough in many cases to pay travelling expenses.

The BC Teacher, December 1949.

30 years ago

One of our major problems in convincing taxpayers that money spent on education is an investment is the fact that there is a severe lag between the time when the investment is made and the time when dividends to the individual and to the community become apparent. The time lag makes it appear as if education is a cost rather than an investment.

The BC Teacher, November 1969.

10 years ago

Shut out of the first wave of bargaining under Bill 19 by a two-year agreement, Mission teachers opened negotiations in March and were on the picket line in October. The issues—class size and composition, salary, evaluation, and duties of teachers—were those central to the working lives and security of teachers. Two hurdles in the process were met with resolve as teachers said NO to a professional board negotiator in May and NO to bargaining under the shadow of a new School Act, in August. As a result, the Mission agreement is covered by the old Act until the next round of bargaining.

Support for teachers during the strike was strong. Morale remained high over the 12 days the teachers were out...

As Mission teachers begin to live out their first union contract, the teacher bargainers across the province gear up for round two. In March 1990, 74 locals begin bargaining again, and this time Mission will be with them.

Teacher, Nov./Dec. 1989



Social Justice Programs of the BCTF brochure, including 1999–2000 workshops, <http://www.bctf.bc.ca/SocialJustice/programs.html>

– Diana Broome



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Beginning teachers

Non-disciplinarian's guide to classroom management

Prevention checklist

- 1. Assign seats or places for students.
- 2. Check attendance and other routines carefully.
- 3. Notice students who are late.
- 4. Expect respect from students—have respect for them.
- 5. Arrange desks neatly in the classroom.
- 6. Require a standard format for papers being turned in.
- 7. Expect students to ask permission to leave the room.
- 8. Have a firm rule about eating, drinking pop or water, or chewing gum in class.
- 9. Contact parents when necessary.
- 10. Don't sit behind your desk when students enter the room. Greet them at the door.

Handling daily behaviour problems

Four simple ways that require consistency:

- 1. Move closer to the offender, or make immediate eye contact from where you are. Use a non-verbal signal if possible to avoid giving undue

attention or breaking the flow of the lesson.

- 2. Remind the student of the correct procedure if he/she is not following an established rule correctly. Have the student perform the correct procedure to make sure he/she understands it. This will reinforce it.
- 3. Ask the student to state the correct procedure or rule. Then have it followed. By having the student state the rule, you will be sure it is understood.
- 4. Have the student stop the rule violation when you say so. Often a simple request to stop is enough. He/she could be testing you.

Seven principles for improving classroom control

- 1. Memorize the names of your students as quickly as possible at the start of the term (alphabetical order of seating in the first week helps).
- 2. Insist on mutual respect when addressing one another.
- 3. Look at classroom life through your students' eyes. Try to visualize what life is like in your classroom. Ask yourself if you give your students room to grow.

- Determine if any of your rules are oppressive. Are any of your rules counterproductive?
- 4. Listen to what your pupils are saying. It is all too easy for a teacher to turn off students and what they are trying to communicate.
- 5. Let pupils know exactly what you expect of them.
- 6. Take part in extra-curricular events that let you see another side of your students.
- 7. Maintain a professional approach. Never downgrade another teacher or administrative officer.

Wendy Gilmour, former faculty advisor, UBC. Reprinted from *THESA (Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association) Newsletter*, September 1999.

More helpful suggestions are available in the *Beginning Teachers' Handbook*. To obtain a copy, contact the BCTF PD Division, or check, our web site: www.bctf.bc.ca/beginning/handbook

Beginning Teachers' Conference
February 11–12, 2000
Delta Pacific Resort & Conference Centre, Richmond

Conference brochures are available in schools and on the BCTF web site, www.bctf.bc.ca

TOC Alert

by Susan Potzold

The Teacher on Call Advisory Committee (TOCAC) meets three times a year, charged with the task of providing the BCTF Executive Committee with advice. Among the committee's priorities for 1999–2000 are professional development, improved communication between TOCs and contract teachers, and supporting implementation of the conditions of the collective agreement.

Over 60 TOCs from locals throughout the province attended the BCTF Leadership Training Conference held at UBC in August. If your local did not send a representative, the training materials were sent to your local. Contact Margaret Ross at the BCTF, 604-871-1850 or toll free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1850), mross@bctf.bc.ca, if you have not received these materials.

TOC issues

- Did you know the average salary for a TOC is \$11,375—about one-fifth of the average teacher's?

- Do you think a TOC with several years experience should get bereavement leave?

• Do you wonder what the hiring criteria are?
As a TOC in B.C., you are one of 5,533 (February 1999) bodies and minds operating in our province's classrooms. The majority are women, 80% in fact, with a median age of 38. About 15% of the TOC force are single parents. These are just some of the hard facts, based on a BCTF survey done in the spring of 1999. We, as a committee, are looking to make some changes in the way TOCs earn a living. You will want to be counted, since our recommendations are being heard by the BCTF Executive, and some of them will be brought to the AGM and bargaining committees.

TOCs are a special breed. We come to the job for a vast array of reasons and stay or go for innumerable others. It is sometimes hard to get us together or even get information to us in a timely fashion. As well, we have identified two categories of TOC:

- The Transition TOC: looking to become a full-time contract teacher.

- The Career TOC: planning to stay in the TOC capacity.

While we want to stay a united whole, the first-year teacher and the veteran of 20 years have vastly different needs. Our committee wants to address those varied and common concerns at the bargaining table and through communications channels.

Your committee members are Cheryl Halsted (Okanagan), Murray Helmer (Cariboo-Chilcotin), Beverly Jones (Chilliwack), Maggie Kinnear (Boundary), Linda Lee (Gulf Islands), Susan Potzold (Delta), Darryl Smolik (Central Okanagan), Linda Watson (BCTF 2nd vice-president), and Margaret Ross (BCTF staff).

Dedicated to working on your behalf, we ask that you, as well, try adjusting schedules whenever possible to get to your local TOC meeting and participate in discussions on how to make our working lives better. It is indeed time!

Susan Potzold is a member of the Teacher on Call Advisory Committee.

disputes," she said. "Now the atmosphere at school is lovely. It sure makes this a nice place to work."

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.

Guiding Philosophy

- 1. Telkwa Elementary School is a safe school.
- 2. At Telkwa Elementary School, children:
 - learn to act responsibly
 - show respect for

themselves, others, and their school

- develop positive values, including tolerance, sportsmanship, empathy, honesty, and compassion
- strive to do their best.

- 3. At Telkwa Elementary School, children are involved in their own learning.
- 4. At Telkwa Elementary School, children participate in a wide range of activities.



Up the Creek—a colourful board game from World Fisheries Trust

Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

1 TRFic!—A temperate rain-forest teacher's guidebook and poster kit for intermediate grades. Susan Gage, 65 p., 4 posters. ©1998. This action kit contains four, full-colour posters, which depict various aspects of the coastal temperate rainforest, with a student/teacher guidebook. The kit contains all the information, activities and resources needed to educate about the rainforests in Canada, plants and animals, connections between forests and people. Grades 4–7. LA 9533—\$21

2 Circle of Learning. Produced by the First Nations Education CASE Committee, 114 p. ©1995. This resource book presents a learning style of First Nations students. CASE is a unique teaching method designed to develop problem solving skills and to teach students to think in complex and productive ways. Many of it's strategies parallel the ideal teaching methods recommended for First Nations students as well as some cultural traditions. 10 cases are included, 14 blackline masters and a bibliography. Grades 1–7. LA 3211—\$9

3 My Notebook is a Friend that Listens. Nomi Kaston, 110 p. ©1997. This 3-ring binder includes a guide to journal writing for self-exploration and growth. It is a unique collection of over 80 activities designed to provide teachers and students with wide range of personal journal writing opportunities. Grades 4–8. LA 2330—\$25.95

4 Science Experiments for Elementary Students. Gordon R. Gore. 160 p. ©1995. A sourcebook of hands-on, minds-on experiments for young people to do and a resource book of practical ideas for teachers to use. This collection of classroom-tested experiments, with a physical science emphasis, uses readily available or inexpensive materials. K–7. LA 9522—\$15

5 Names Will Never Hurt Me. Beverly Brookman. 86 p. ©1999. This resource book addresses the bullying issues and offers a comprehensive unit to help teachers "bully-proof" their students and create a climate in which bullying is simply not OK. Grades K–8. LA 2329—\$21.95

6 Let's Get Moving: Sequential Early Primary PE Lessons. Joy Collins. 32 p. 1990. This unit includes 15 PE lessons suitable for multi-age, early primary classrooms for use by teachers with a minimum amount of equipment in a 30-minute PE period. LA 8316—\$3.65

7 Geographically Profound: Explorations in Critical Thinking. Eric Bonfield. 25 p. ©1999. This curriculum provides paradigms and blackline master templates to apply an inquiry based critical thinking approach to geographical pedagogy. The book includes a complete oceanography unit, which is literature based and uses multi-sensory and multiple intelligence approaches to spatial thinking. Includes Map as Text, which offers an exciting paradigm for critically linking physical and human geography with economics, cultural theory, military history, and environmental studies. Grades 8–12. LA 2071—\$15

8 Les plantes. Ann Rainboth. 34p. ©1998. Une collection de six expériences et activités qui inclut des copies du professeur de l'élève, les fiches d'étude de mots, révisions, mots mystères, mots croisés et les illustrations des plantes et fleurs. Les idées ont été planifiées en consultant le nouveau ERI. 2e et 3e année. LA F8585—\$5

9 All Third-Order Magic Tesseract. John R. Gendricks. 36 p. This booklet supplements LA 3040 Magic Squares to Tesseract by Computer (\$32). All 58 basic magic tesseracts are found in one place. If you require to know how they were derived, you would have to find that in various issues of the Journal of Recreational Mathematics. More detail on "the species" is shown. Grades 7–Adult. LA 3041—\$9

10 Up the Creek—The Salmon Survival Games. Produced by World Fisheries Trust, 43 cm x 43 cm gameboard. ©1998. This game takes players into the dangerous world of six real-life B.C. salmon runs. The goal of the game is to complete the life cycle of a salmon run without becoming extinct. The package includes a colourful gameboard, illustrated game cards, a die and player pieces, and teacher's guide with lesson plans an follow-up activities. Grades 5 and up. LA 9540—\$29.95

For a complete listing of over 900 BCTF Lesson Aids, consult the catalogue in your school library or the Lesson Aids online catalogue, www.bctf.bc.ca/LessonAids

To order any of the above lesson aids, enclose a cheque payable to the BCTF or authorized purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2. GST and postage/handling are included in the prices. Orders are sent by return mail.

RESPECT from page 1

Today the atmosphere at Telkwa school is markedly different. "We've seen a gradual but consistent decrease in acting out, so that now we've almost eliminated misbehaviour," said Janzen. "It's been a real team effort."

Schneider says all the teachers have noted "huge" differences in their classrooms. "It really gives you shivers to see the kids applying what they've been taught in terms of mediating

Class-size limits: Teachers and students benefit

by Bill Ferguson

Flexibility is a word teachers in West Vancouver hear whenever they discuss class size with their school board trustees. During its budget setting process, the West Vancouver Board invites its stakeholder groups to offer advice as to where its priorities should be. Year after year, the teachers and, more recently, the parents have advised the board to focus attention on reducing class size. Its response was always “flexibility.” Class-size limits would take away from the board its perceived need for flexibility in meeting the myriad needs of our public school system and thus create chaos.

West Vancouver is one of the few districts in the province with no language in its collective agreement concerning class size. At times the superintendent appears to take great pride in that fact, saying that it allows the board greater “flexibility” in meeting other needs of the system. However, whenever the trustees say “flexibility” the teachers hear the word *control*. Class sizes in our district continue to be some of the largest in the province. Teachers want the board either to direct its flexibility at class size or to accept class-size limits.

For the last number of years, the board, claiming that many studies prove that smaller class size has no effect on student performance, ignored the advice of both the parents and teachers who believe that smaller classes enhance student learning.

And then along came the new Letter of Understanding in the Provincial Collective Agreement that mandated firm class-size numbers for K–3 classes. Now that these “hard” numbers are in place, teachers are beginning to experience the benefits for student learning they always believed smaller classes would bring. Anne Stuart, a West Vancouver Kindergarten teacher comments, “More than anything, having a smaller number of children in my Kindergarten classes has

allowed me to diagnose reading problems and to work with support teachers in remedial activities with those children. Kindergarten teachers are the front line in identifying those children who may have some learning difficulties. Having my class protected from ‘flexibility’ allows me to be more effective in early intervention, especially with reading problems.”

Those sentiments are echoed by other teachers who believe that the smaller number of children in their classes enables them to be more effective in identifying children with learning difficulties and getting them into helpful programs earlier than they would be if they still had to deal with large classes.

“The smaller number of students helps me focus more on learning and less on crowd control,” said Grade 3 teacher Jacquie Whittaker. “Children at the primary level take up a lot of space as they spread out their material. Much of our teaching is done through the use of manipulatives, and this requires more space than even those large kids in high school [require]. Having my students protected from larger classes enables me to use more effective and varied co-operative teaching and learning strategies.”

Similar comments are made about the ability to actually work with individual children or small groups more frequently and effectively. “The inclusion of special-need students in the composition of primary classes has placed further demands on the teacher’s time. Smaller numbers help with this as well. I feel I can spend more time with my special needs students because of the reduced number. I believe I am more effective as a result.

“There are fewer social problems; the kids just aren’t as crowded and thus don’t bump into one another. I can meet with them individually to help establish a more co-operative learning environment.”

With fewer students, teachers also feel that they can increase the information on which they base assessments and evaluations. “Fewer

students in my class creates a situation where I can respond to my students’ journals more frequently and in more depth. This is one of many examples where I can record more observations from which I can inform parents on the progress of their child,” says Anne Stuart. “Besides, with fewer report cards to write, I can provide more refined information to parents.”

Clearly the reduction in class sizes at the K–3 level, as provided by the new Provincial Collective Agreement, has resulted in enhanced learning opportunities for children. Teachers report that they feel less stress from teaching, and believe that they are more effective in meeting their teaching responsibilities. As a result, they feel energized rather than enervated.

The trustees in West Vancouver, who for so long believed that their need for flexibility was more important than firm limits to class size, remain doubtful about the benefits our new agreement has brought to these young children. At a recent meeting of the board, teachers presented work they are doing on early intervention for students with reading problems. Those in attendance praised the professionalism and the dedication of the teachers working on the initiative. However, as the discussions drew to a close, one trustee asked if the smaller classes as a result of the new agreement had any impact. The answer was short and to the point: “Yes!”

What will protect the learning of these young children? In West Vancouver, teachers believe that reasonable limits to class size provide a greater likelihood of success than returning to the board’s need for “flexibility.” We are not trying to take control from the board; we are trying to ensure that the benefits of smaller classes continue. It is hoped that this farsighted initiative will benefit the children in this province for years to come.

Bill Ferguson is president of West Vancouver Teachers’ Association.

A decade of salary decline: Turning the corner on wage restraint

by Garry Litke

Teachers across Canada have had a disastrous decade of salary decline. In B.C., we will have lost more than 6% to inflation between 1992 and the expiration of our contract in 2001. Teachers in every other province have experienced net losses as well, as their earning power over the last 10 years has lost ground to the Canadian Consumer Price Index.

In Nova Scotia, where negotiations have just begun, teachers are looking for 11% over three years.

But there is hope. Rollbacks, freezes, and excessively modest wage settlements appear to be coming to an end. Teachers’ unions and other unions are saying they’ve had enough; a fair salary increase is overdue.

The last few years have seen provincial governments legislating wage rollbacks, salary freezes, and mandatory unpaid leaves to cut teachers’ salaries. In B.C., teachers have fared slightly better than their colleagues across the country by negotiating minimal percentage increases since 1992, but salary increases have not kept up with inflation, and they certainly have not given teachers a share in the province’s economic growth.

However, we are beginning to see a new Canadian trend toward reasonable settlements, along with union members’ willingness to take action and submit to public criticism in order to achieve their objectives.

Alberta teachers recovering from the wage rollbacks imposed on them by the Klein government, are now negotiating increases the likes of which have not been seen for several years.

In Calgary, teachers in the Catholic system recently settled for a 7.2% increase over two years, retroactive to September 1998. The settlement followed difficult negotiations, a teachers’ work-to-rule campaign, and the first lockout of teachers due to a labour dispute in Alberta’s history.

Just north of Calgary, Chinook’s Edge School Division had been the last school division in the province still trying to settle their 1997–98 contract. This fall, a provincial mediator was called in to

make recommendations, and in early October, teachers and trustees accepted the recommendation of a 9.4% raise from 1997 to 1999. Other bargaining units in Alberta are negotiating fair increases as well. (See Table 1)

Table 1 Average Salary Increases for Alberta Teachers	
1998–99	4.2% (60 of 62 units reporting)
1999–00	3.2% (46 of 61)
2000–01	2.8% (10 of 61)

Source: Alberta Teachers’ Association

In Nova Scotia, where negotiations have just begun, teachers are looking for 11% over three years. Already, the provincial media are writing critical editorials.

But the best idea comes from the Canadian Auto Workers, which has just achieved a ground-breaking settlement with Ford Canada. The union agreed to a 4.5% wage hike for each of the next three years, a 25% overall increase to basic pension benefits and significant increases to employee welfare benefits. The CAW/Ford deal, which was signed hours before a strike deadline, will likely provide a new standard for the auto industry and other sectors of the economy.

These negotiations may be seen as breaking the trend in excessively modest settlements

To reach those settlements, negotiators went to their membership for support in the form of strike votes and job action, and members were subject to public criticism.

over the past decade. To reach those settlements, negotiators went to their membership for support in the form of strike votes and job action, and members were subject to public criticism. That’s what it takes.

The trend in positive settlements can continue. When negotiations open during the next school year, B.C. teachers may have to take a lesson from their counterparts across the country in order to get the wage increase they deserve.

Garry Litke is an assistant director in the BCTF’s Bargaining Division.

References available on request.



PETER OWENS PHOTO

Prior to the provincial collective agreement reached in May 1998, class-size limits did not exist in West Vancouver. The limits, which only apply to the primary grades, mean that for the first time primary teachers in that district can experience the educational benefits of smaller classes. By contrast this intermediate split class in West Vancouver has 35 students, 12 more than the largest primary class.

So that's the way it happened



by Ken Novakowski

When I began teaching, in Langley School District in 1971, I was paid the same as the other teachers in the district who had the same years of education and experience.

In 1971, B.C. teachers were still 17 years away from gaining full collective-bargaining rights, but our locals were recognized bargaining units for salaries and benefits, and the BCTF was there to support us in our efforts to gain improvements.

Although we did not possess the right to strike, we had binding arbitration to resolve disputes not settled by negotiations. Many events in the history of the BCTF had given rise to the conditions that determined my economic welfare as a teacher in 1971. I want to discuss two of those events here: the teacher strike in New Westminster in 1921 and the Langley dispute of 1939–40.

After the 1919 teacher strike in Victoria, the provincial government introduced arbitration for resolving teacher-board salary disputes. The amendment to the Public School Act read: "The Board of School Trustees of any school district may enter into an agreement with one or more teachers by arbitration in such manner as may be determined by agreement." But there was no requirement to recognize teacher locals as bargaining agents for teachers. Boards could refuse to enter into arbitration and if they did enter into arbitration, they were not bound by the results of the arbitration. But it was a start.

By 1921, teacher salaries in New Westminster had fallen behind salaries in other districts in the Lower Mainland. After unsuccessful attempts by the New Westminster Teachers' Association to

engage the board in negotiations, the NWTA, led by their president, George Ford, sent an ultimatum to the board: "Unless the School Board consents to meet the executive and arrange a salary schedule mutually satisfactory to both parties, the teachers will not be in school on Monday (February 14, 1921)." Only two of 86 teachers showed up for work on Monday after the board refused to meet with the NWTA executive.

After a week-long strike and public pressure on the board from parents and the community, the school board agreed to meet with teacher representatives. The settlement reached included recognition of the teachers' association and an attempt to negotiate teacher salaries, with arbitration as a resolution if negotiations failed.

The school board again refused to pay the arbitrated award and proceeded to fire all the Langley teachers on the arbitration list.

Sadly, the negotiations did fail, but the arbitration board decision did favour the teacher position on salaries. Not until new trustee elections almost a year later were the arbitrated salaries finally honoured.

The New Westminster strike was a key event in teacher history because it led to recognition of a teacher-organized bargaining unit. During the strike, support for the NWTA poured in from teachers all across B.C. and the rest of Canada. It was the genesis of the BCTF reserve fund, which, for over half a century, financed initiatives to improve bargaining. In

1987–88, the reserve fund became the Collective Bargaining Defense Fund.

Almost twenty years after the New Westminster strike, another key development in the achievement of bargaining rights for teachers occurred in Langley. The government had finally enshrined compulsory arbitration in legislation, in 1937. That legislation did not sit well with some school boards. They continued to fight their loss of arbitrary power over, and control of, teachers. Connie Jervis was the president of the Langley Teachers' Association for the 1939–40 school year, and the teachers presented their case to the school board for a salary increase. The board would not agree to an increase; instead it imposed its own schedule of individual teacher salaries. The teachers asked to have the matter submitted to arbitration, but the board refused to do so voluntarily. When the teachers invoked the compulsory aspect of arbitration that had become law two years earlier, the board continued to refuse to co-operate. The board would not appoint a member to the arbitration board, so government did so for the board. The board refused to make a presentation to the arbitration board. The arbitration board ruled in favour of the teachers.

The school board refused to pay the teachers the arbitrated award. So the teachers took the board to court and had the court order the school board to pay the arbitrated award.

The school board again refused to pay the arbitrated award and proceeded to fire all the Langley teachers on the arbitration list. The fired teachers appealed to a Board of Reference under the Public Schools Act, and the firings were promptly rescinded. But still the school board persisted. When teachers' assignments were posted in the local

newspaper, *The Langley Advance*, five of the teachers active in the arbitration fight had been demoted by the school board. But the teachers persisted, and the five

In both situations, school boards refused to acknowledge their loss of arbitrary power and control over the work lives of teachers.

demoted teachers, on opening day in September of 1940, showed up in the school and classroom assignment they had left in June. The chairperson of the school board actually went from school to school ordering the teachers to their new assignments. Then the provincial government finally acted and fired the Langley School Board and replaced it with a single trustee administrator. The teachers were all returned to

their June assignments and paid the arbitrated award. The Langley case demonstrated the significant acts of courage that were undertaken by a handful of teachers in a community where the local press and sentiment were largely against them.

The stories from New Westminster and Langley stand out as examples of teachers acting together with the full and ongoing support of the B.C. Teachers' Federation to expand the bargaining rights of teachers. Even when the rights were won, they still had to be protected. In both situations, school boards refused to acknowledge their loss of arbitrary power and control over the work lives of teachers. More recently, some trustees have refused to recognize the right of teachers to negotiate their working conditions by refusing to ratify the provincial agreement with new primary-class-size limits and some minimum levels for non-enrolling teachers.

Ken Novakowski is director of the BCTF's Organization Support Division.

Focus groups on collective bargaining

The BCTF will be holding eight focus groups in different regions of the province. Each session will involve 12 randomly selected members for two days, discussing collective bargaining topics—economic issues, employment and job security, professional issues, and teacher workload. The BCTF has commissioned MacIntyre and Mustel Research to conduct the focus groups on our behalf. They will prepare a

final report based on the eight sessions and deliver it to the BCTF Executive Committee by the end of February 2000. The information gathered through the focus groups will be used in planning and organizing for the next round of collective bargaining. The objective-setting process for the next round will begin with meetings and discussions in all locals in fall of 2000. A delegated, decision-making bargaining conference will take place early in 2001.

Put the brakes on corporate intrusion

by Peter Owens

Corporate intrusion into schools sometimes resembles an unstoppable train. But last year there were at least two good examples of people in B.C. putting the brakes on the train.

Last year, we asked the government to ensure that school boards not sell instructional time to the Youth News Network (YNN). At the 1999 Annual General Meeting, Paul Ramsey, then minister of education, announced that YNN would not be allowed to purchase instructional time in the schools of B.C. YNN proposed to lend televisions and computers to schools on the condition that students be required to watch 12.5 minutes of their programming every day. The programs would contain advertisements, and YNN would make its money by selling time to advertisers. A

similar program is operated in the U.S., where advertisers pay more to have their message carried on Channel One in the schools than they do on prime time TV. YNN has been able to access a handful of schools in Quebec, Alberta, Ontario, and Manitoba. The new government in Manitoba has announced that YNN will be removed from its schools.

Another example of the brakes being applied occurred in Kelowna. In April 1998, a trustee proposed a laissez-faire policy on advertising in the schools. There were proposals for placing electronic advertising boards on the walls of the schools, for ads on the busses, and for selling exclusive access to the student body. The local responded by making the board aware of our policy on corporate involvement and the Code of Ethics. The board decided to seek public input through six public meetings. Most occurred with very little

participation, but the last scheduled meeting was well attended, and a parent involved with the Parent Advisory Council made a well-researched presentation arguing that the integrity of the public school system must be protected from private companies motivated by private interests over the public good. Students are expected to

There is a real push by companies to gain access to students in schools.

attend public schools, and trustees should not be selling access to students to the highest bidder. That is why schools are supported by tax dollars. They are to serve the interest of society.

Following that meeting, the district PAC conducted a survey of parents and eventually took a strong position opposing corporate advertising

in the schools.

The board then set up a committee with representatives from the different partner groups and attempted to get agreement on a policy that would allow the schools to have the flexibility to seek advertising as a supplementary source of revenue. In the spring of 1999, the parents proposed a set of principles written by Alex Molnar, of Milwaukee State University, that were generally accepted by the board. School District 23's interpretation of the principles established that there will be no advertising in schools, and logos can be used for identification purposes only. Other business publicity in schools, for example in the gyms, would be limited to sports teams, tournaments, and vending machines.

There is a real push by companies to gain access to students in schools. Corporations are attempting to gain customers by having their

products promoted to a captive audience in a setting

Selling corporations access to students is clearly contrary to our Code of Ethics. We are educating citizens, not providing customers.

where there is a lot of credibility for what is presented to students. Corporations are in business to make profits for their shareholders. Selling corporations access to students is clearly contrary to our Code of Ethics. We are educating citizens, not providing customers. As demonstrated in these examples, if we speak up and act, we can ensure that the learning environment is protected.

Peter Owens is editor of Teacher newsmagazine.

SFU/BCTF study of violence against teachers

by Nancy Knickerbocker

A study by Simon Fraser University and the B.C. Teachers' Federation provides a wealth of new information about the scope, nature, predictors, and impact of violence against public school teachers in British Columbia.

The first systematic study of the topic, *Violence Against British Columbia Teachers*, was written by David Lyon and Kevin Douglas of the Mental Health, Law, and Policy Institute at SFU, in co-operation with BCTF staff researcher Charlie Naylor.

"There is no evidence that violence is increasing..."

"As teachers, we are committed to building safe, non-violent schools," said BCTF President David Chudnovsky. "This report gives us new information and new impetus for that work. And its message is heartening. We know that if we take action, we can produce tangible, concrete, and measurable reductions in violence."

The study reveals that violence against teachers, broadly defined, is prevalent in B.C. schools. Researchers examined 13 categories of overt and covert violence, ranging from insults, name-calling, and rude or obscene gestures through to stalking, sexual harassment, and physical violence with a weapon. The more serious forms of violence were not nearly as prevalent as the less serious categories.

More than 80% of teachers reported having experienced violence at some time in their careers, and half of those surveyed reported having experienced some form of violence in the 1997-98 school year.

"The data for this study were collected before the tragic school shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, and W.R. Myers High School in Taber," Chudnovsky said. "I think that gives us a more realistic picture of the problem than the one we might have found in the wake of the saturation media coverage of those terrible killings."

Despite a general perception that schools are becoming more violent, the study did not find that teachers perceive

there to be an increase. Indeed, some information suggested that violence may be seen by teachers as a somewhat less serious problem than five years ago.

...violence was lower in schools and districts that had implemented policies and practices such as written student discipline codes, formal record keeping for violent incidents, occupational health and safety committees...

"There is no evidence that violence is increasing, despite what may be an increase in general social anxiety about the issue," Chudnovsky said.

The study also revealed factors influencing the risk of violence. Factors associated with an increased risk of being subjected to violence included being male, being a teacher on call, teaching at the middle

school or junior high level, teaching at an inner-city or rural school, being located in a lower socio-economic catchment area, and having fewer years of teaching experience.

Factors associated with decreased risk of violence included the opposite demographic characteristics (e.g., elementary school level, suburban catchment area) as well as key protective factors that will inform the BCTF's future work in the area.

The study found that violence was lower in schools and districts that had implemented policies and practices such as written student discipline codes, formal record keeping for violent incidents, occupational health and safety committees, and other pro-active measures.

"We know these strategies can work, and that is the most important lesson to learn from this study," Chudnovsky noted. "We believe that this study is a major step toward that goal of creating safe, non-violent schools for all our students and teachers."

BCTF Occupational Health and Safety Officer Lynne Sinclair will be working with the Workers' Compensation Board to ensure that Bill 14,

the new law giving more weight to health and safety regulations, is implemented in school districts throughout the province.

"School districts have not, in the past, complied with the regulations as much as they should have," WCB spokesperson Raymond Roch told *The Vancouver Sun*. But with the passage of Bill 14, boards must either follow the rules or face stiff fines as high as \$70,000.

"...this study is a major step toward that goal of creating safe, non-violent schools for all our students and teachers."

Robertta Ellis, vice-president of the WCB Prevention Division, recently wrote to all school districts telling them to re-examine their practices and take whatever steps are necessary to reduce violence-related injuries and claims.

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.

Accreditation: more cost than benefit

by Grace Wilson

I'm thinking of a word that begins with A. It is a word that sets the heart racing and the blood pressure rising; just the mention of it can raise the temperature in a room. It will consume your time and energy for a year; exasperate everyone on your staff. All together now—Accreditation.

In spite of revisions to clarify and reduce the number of criteria, the accreditation process continues to turn teachers' worlds upside down, with little of value to justify the turmoil. Resentment over accreditation is widespread, even among teachers who play lead roles in the process. Comments on accreditation rarely cite benefits, but cite intrusion into professional development days, curtailed extra-curricular activities, soaring stress levels, and unconnectedness to the classroom. Most teachers don't feel the product is worth the effort, and that there are more expeditious ways they could arrive at the same product.

Ongoing reflection and action replaces episodic upheaval.

What is the BCTF doing about member concerns about accreditation? First, the Federation accepts the importance of a process that causes a school community to reflect on its work and work toward improvement. Last year, the Professional Development Advisory Committee developed an alternative to the ministry accreditation process. Schools Taking Action and Review

(STAR), is now ready for piloting after extensive member input and endorsement by the BCTF Representative Assembly.

The purpose of STAR is "to enable schools to develop with parents, students, and other members of the community the best possible school

Teachers regularly set goals for themselves, their classes, and schools.

climate and programs for their students." The process provides for the monitoring and implementing of school goals in a manner that allows for a more immediate response to the changing needs of both the school and the community. While STAR would occur annually, it is a much more reasonable, manageable, and feasible alternative to the current onerous accreditation process. The process provides that a school's goals are monitored and implemented in a manner that allows for a more immediate response to the changing needs of both the school and the community. Ongoing reflection and action replaces episodic upheaval.

Throughout the spring and into the fall, many schools have phoned the Federation asking to pilot STAR. So why are no pilots under way? In 1996-97 the currently mandated accreditation process was updated. That revision is being reviewed by a working committee of the education partner groups, including representatives of the BCTF. The committee will once again

look at how to reduce the number of accreditation topics, make the workload more manageable, and increase the benefits gained from the effort. It will consider ways to better engage Aboriginal parents and increase district participation in accreditation.

The ministry indicated that it would be interested in alternative school evaluations models, but Deputy Minister Charles Ungerleider stated that no alternative process will be approved until the review of the current accreditation process is completed. The report of the review committee goes to the deputy minister on November 8, 1999.

As one of the representatives on the Accreditation Review Committee, I have been pressing for significant

...a mandated process to do this work must be respectful of teachers' personal and professional lives.

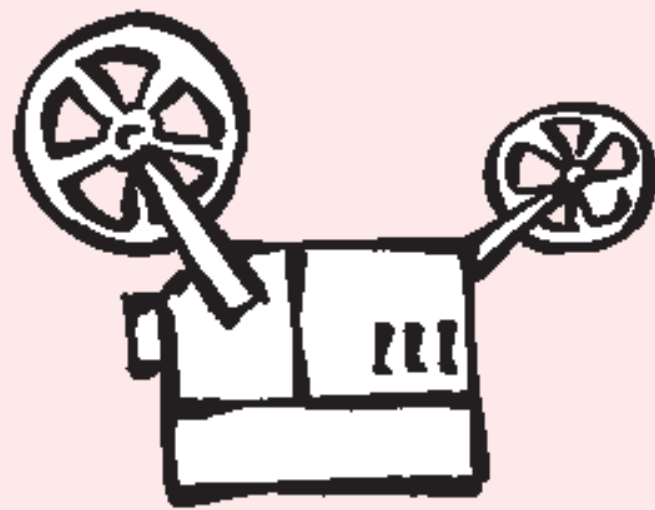
changes to the present process. Unless the issues of time, workload, clarity, and roles and responsibilities are addressed in a manner that recognizes and honours the commitment and seriousness that teachers bring to the process, the report to the minister will be deficient. STAR meets all those objectives.

Accreditation is important. However, the current accreditation process contributes little to school improvement. It is based on the erroneous

assumption that without a mandated and comprehensive process, teachers and other members of a school community don't reflect on their work and purpose. Teachers regularly set goals for themselves, their classes, and schools. They recognize the value of working with colleagues, support staff, parents,

students, and administrators to provide the best possible school climate and programs. However, a mandated process to do this work must be respectful of teachers' personal and professional lives.

Grace Wilson is the BCTF's first vice-president.



Avoid Famous Players and Cineplex Odeon

Unionized projectionists have been locked out by the Famous Players and Cineplex Odeon chains since December 1998. The chains are demanding that the projectionists accept a 60% cut in their wages. The parent companies of both theatre chains are enjoying enormous profits. Cineplex Odeon, owned by Sony, last year earned more than \$50 billion U.S. Famous Players, owned by Viacom, made \$13 billion U.S.

Teachers are asked to refrain from attending or encouraging students to attend movies at those theatres. The picket lines are difficult to maintain because there are not many projectionists, but they are locked out and deserve our support. Driving down local wages to increase profit levels for foreign companies will not benefit our communities.

Members are reminded of Procedure Statement 44.02 in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*, which states that "members should respect the position of employees who are legitimately picketing and should not cross a picket line."

DEBLINKING THE TAX CUTTERS



by Murray Dobbin

In what looks and sounds like a replay of the big deficit scare of the early '90s, business think tanks, conservative politicians, and the daily press are calling for *big tax cuts*. Once you strip away the rhetoric—Canadians are over taxed, a tax cut will stimulate the economy, it will make Canada competitive—it is clear what the tax-cutters are really after. They are the same voices that have for years called for huge cuts to education, health care, and social spending. And how better to guarantee those cuts than to radically reduce the amount of tax revenue governments have?

Canada had the lowest effective corporate tax rate...

Much of what you hear on the tax issue is misleading, and some of it is deliberate deception. Here are a few facts about taxation in Canada.

- Contrary to what many commentators suggest, there is no "tax revolt" in Canada. Even in Ontario, in the middle of the last provincial election, 75% of those polled said they did not want more tax cuts—53% wanted that money spent on health and education, and 22% wanted it spent on bringing down the debt. Other polls confirm this attitude. Several suggest that a majority of Canadians would be willing to pay *more* taxes if the revenue went to health, education, child care, or alleviating child poverty.
- We often hear that Canada is among the highest taxed countries in the OECD (29 industrialized countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). Wrong again. For the past 15 years, Canada has placed at the centre of those countries in terms of tax levels. Our taxes are considerably lower than most European countries'.
- Our personal income tax rates are higher than they are

...\$100 million spent on education and health care would create 70,000 jobs...

in the U.S.A. But looking beyond this simplistic comparison, there are some surprises. A study, Standard and Poor's DRI, revealed that what Americans pay for health insurance has the effect of making our income-tax systems almost exactly the same. Canadians actually have a slightly higher disposable income than

Americans. The median family in Canada had \$30,000 CAN to spend after taxes compared with \$29,500 CAN for the median American family.

- Corporations calling for corporate tax cuts call taxes "job killers." Most jobs "killed" in Canada are the result of massive corporate layoffs. Canada's taxes on corporations are the lowest in the G7. A study by KPMG comparing the U.S.A., Canada, GB, France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden showed that Canada had the lowest effective corporate tax rate (27.4% compared with the U.S.A. rate of 40%). We also had lower payroll taxes (EI, pension, etc.) and lower property taxes than the U.S.A.
- Tax-cutters say that across-the-board cuts will create jobs. But several studies demonstrate that increased government spending is a far more effective way of creating jobs. The Ottawa firm Informetrica demonstrated that \$100 million spent on education and health care would create 70,000 jobs; on child care, 130,000 jobs. The same cut in corporate taxes would create just 22,000 jobs.

In 1997, we lost 8,000 university graduates to the U.S.A., but we gained 32,000 from other countries.

The best performing tax cut would be a cut to the GST, which would result in 55,000 jobs.

- Everything from the so-called brain drain to alleged low productivity are being blamed on our "high taxes." But the brain drain is largely propaganda. In 1997, we lost 8,000 university graduates to the U.S.A., but we gained 32,000 from other countries. Most of the brain drain is in health—thousands of nurses have gone to the U.S.A. because of massive cuts to medicare. And in high tech we have a relatively small net loss, due largely to the higher salaries and more plentiful

opportunities of the giant American market.

- As for productivity, it has very little to do with tax levels. Standard and Poor's study found that "low tax countries have widely varying productivity performances. This implies that there are a number of other factors...that are important." In any case, StatsCan figures show that Canada's productivity growth rate has at least kept pace with the U.S.A. since 1961,

...Canadian plants had an \$8-an-hour advantage over American plants because of the high cost of health premiums American employers have to pay.

and in recent years has surpassed it.

- The tax-cutters say we need to be competitive with other countries. But our taxes pay for medicare, one of the biggest advantages Canadian corporations have over their American counterparts. One study determined that in the auto industry, Canadian plants had an \$8-an-hour advantage over American plants because of the high cost of health premiums American employers have to pay. The crisis in education funding is now a huge issue in American politics, and a recent poll showed that 70% of Californians (famous for their 1979 tax revolt) are now willing to pay more taxes to improve the education system. Do we in Canada have to experience the same crisis in public services to make us realize that taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society?

Murray Dobbin is a research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

More information on the CCPA web site, www.policyalternatives.ca

Those powerful unions!

"Unions have too much power." I hear it all the time, even from ordinary working people. What are they thinking? I try to be polite (I'm getting older and grayer and must be mellowing).

"Do you mean," I ask, "that the balance of power between workers and corporations, or between workers and government, has become too strong?"

"Well, uh, I don't know," they say.

"You mean," I point out helpfully, "the corporations have become so weak that they've lost the power to fire their workers whenever they want, lay them off, or move their companies anywhere in the world where the labour or taxes are cheaper and there aren't too many pesky regulations?"

"Well, no, not exactly."

"You mean, then, that the workers have been able to force the bosses to pay them so much that they're practically earning as much as the boss, and that's not fair?" I ask.

"Uh, no."

"Is it that the workers have become so powerful that they can force the boss to pay women as much as they pay men?"

I shift gears. "Maybe the workers have become so powerful that they've been able to force government to pass laws making it really easy to organize new workplaces. No? Okay, maybe it's that they've made governments pass tough health and safety laws, enforced by armies of inspectors, so that practically no one is being injured on the job anymore. Is that it?"

"Nope."

At this point, still struggling to figure out what they mean when they say unions are too powerful, I launch into a bit of labour history.

"You mean, like when the workers demanded laws to get children out of the mines and the factories? You mean today's workers are powerful like that?" I ask. This, usually, does not get a positive response, either, and I continue to fish for the answer.

"Maybe it's like the times when workers demanded a 40-hour week and went on strike all over the place to gain it, which is why you have the weekend off, is that it?"

"Uh, uh,"

"I know now," I say, and maybe not quite so mellowly anymore. "It must be that you think every worker ought to have to go one-on-one against the boss. Workers shouldn't have the right to act collectively, should they? That's not really fair to the boss, is it? One worker, one corporation. That's only right, eh?"

Usually, by now, they begin to backtrack.

But, in the back of their minds, they are still thinking about the time the teachers went on strike, and they had to scramble to find someone to look after the kids during the day. Darned inconvenient. They might be remembering when the postal workers went on strike a few years ago, and they couldn't mail their aunt's birthday card. Annoying. And, it was kind of touch-and-go there whether they'd get their passport renewed on time for that overseas holiday.

Unions! It's obvious. They're too damn powerful.

Source: Canadian Association of Labour Media, George Ehring, *Our Times*.

Yours for the asking

Read Up On It

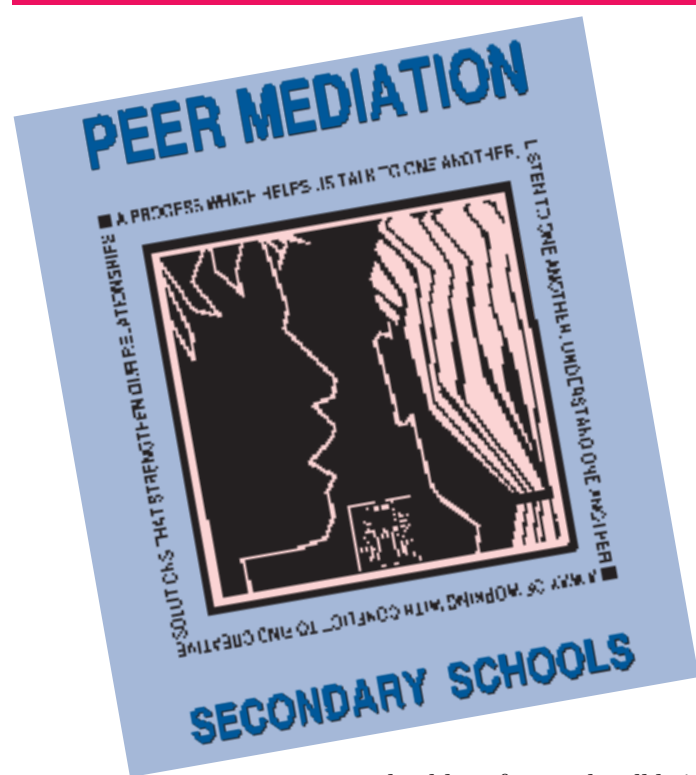
The National Library of Canada's *Read Up On It* kit is an annual bilingual guide to the best in Canadian literature for children and young adults. It is based on the National Library of Canada's Canadian Children's Literature Collection www.nlc-bnc.ca/services/eclsc.htm. The free kit encourages young people to read, on their own or with their families, books by Canadian authors or illustrators.

Free copies available from: National Library of Canada 395 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0N4 (613)995-7969, F: (613)991-9871 publications@nlc-bnc.ca

Reality Check radio competition

Outfront, CBC Radio One, wants to know who Canadians aged 13–18 really are. What are they passionate about? What do they believe in? What are the real issues in their lives? Students may send in less than one page written or under two minutes recorded about something important to them. Winners will be chosen and given the tools to produce a short radio piece based on their submissions.

Contestants must include full name, home mailing address, and home phone number to qualify, and send submissions before the January 31, 2000 deadline to: Outfront, CBC Radio Box 500, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1E6 www.radio.cbc.ca



Just over a year ago the BCTF initiated a Social Justice Program. This program is intended to help teachers address the issues of discrimination, violence and other forms of social injustice that confront us every day in our classrooms and communities. The articles and information on these pages give some examples of how the BCTF and its members are dealing with issues of social justice. They include literacy, violence, poverty, and homophobia to name a few. Also we are presenting here some concrete suggestions and resources to help teachers work toward social justice in their classrooms and communities.

First call: Spotlight on children and youth

First Call is a coalition of provincial organizations, community organizations, and individuals throughout the province who are working for improved legislation, policy, and practice to ensure that children and youth have the opportunities and resources required to achieve their full potential and to participate in the challenges of creating a better society. First Call thinks there could be an important role for local teachers' associations in community First Call groups to put a spotlight on children and youth.

The folks in 100 Mile House, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Fraser North (Coquitlam area), Golden, Grand Forks, Kamloops, Port Alberni, Prince George, Smithers, Terrace, Vancouver, Vernon, and Williams Lake are mobilizing for their children and youth and are part of the Spotlight on Children and Youth Campaign. Any of these community-based groups would eagerly welcome involvement from the local teachers' association.

Spotlight on Children and Youth is a community-driven public-education, community-mobilization, and policy-advocacy campaign to increase public and political support for improving the

health, safety, and well being of all our children.

Kamloops, Fraser North, and Prince George have led their work by inviting Dr. Clyde Hertzman, a child-development expert at UBC, to speak to the public and to communities of decision makers. Terrace, which until the Spotlight on Children and Youth Campaign, did not have a forum for child and youth issues, is using the campaign as a framework to bringing people together. Vancouver is engaged in a broad public involvement process that is called "Windows of Opportunity."

All communities are using the resources provided by First Call, The "Call to Action" booklet for community leaders provides background research, keys to success, indicators, and ideas for action. To help educate the public, we use posters and brochures.

In addition, First Call has generated media coverage on child and youth issues. The goal is to increase public understanding that "It takes a community to raise a child" and that we all have a role to ensure that all children have access to the keys to success.

For more information on the campaign, to order campaign materials, or to become involved in mobilizing your community for children and youth, contact First Call.

B.C. used to have interministerial committees, then we had children and youth committees, and now there is no provincial network for multi-sector coalitions/committees in communities working on the range of child and youth issues in the community. First Call has begun a list of such groups. If your community has such a group, or if you would like a copy of the list, call First Call.

First Call, L408-4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4, 604-875-3629 or 1-800-307-1212, F: 604-875-3569, info@firstcallbc.org

BCTF resources

Lesson Aids

- **Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for use with fourth and fifth grade students (PD160)** \$23
- **Free the Children! Conflict Education for Strong and Peaceful Minds (PD107)** \$20.95
- **Peer Mediation: A Manual for Secondary Schools (LA 2211)** \$15

Wake up to child poverty!

On November 24, 1989, Members of Parliament unanimously passed an all-party motion to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Ten years later, it's obvious that despite their fine words and good intentions, their promise to the children of Canada will not be met.

The sad truth is that today the plight of poor children is dramatically worse, not better, than a decade ago. In 1989, about 98,000 British Columbia children were living in poverty. Today the figure is about 180,000—more than the total population of Burnaby. In Vancouver, a shocking 36% of children are growing up in poverty.

The BCTF is working with Campaign 2000, a national coalition determined to hold our legislators accountable for their promise to the nation's children.

On November 24, 1999, the 10th anniversary of the all-party motion, we will be part of a cross-Canada campaign. In a series of co-ordinated actions across the country, the day will begin with school bells and church bells ringing out to wake up the nation to the deepening problem of child poverty. In the morning, we will host the release of the 1999 Child Poverty Report Card at a news conference at the BCTF building. In the late afternoon, we will participate in a vigil from 17:30 to 20:00 at the Plaza of Nations.

For more information on how you can help wake Canadians up to the plight of poor children, contact Nancy Knickerbocker at the BCTF nknickerbocker@bctf.bc.ca, 604-871-1881, toll free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1881).

Gender studies video features Women's Studies 12 at Britannia

A social justice grant recently funded a video project that profiles gender studies in the Vancouver School District. The locally developed course, "Women, Gender, and Society 12," now in its fourth year at Britannia, is described in the upcoming video.

Wide ranging in content, the course reviews the achievement of economic, social, political, and racial equity issues for women and men, and seeks to empower students in working to eliminate discrimination. Women, Gender, and Society 12 was created to meet the needs of senior students who are on the verge of adulthood, providing grads with knowledge and abilities to understand the inequities beyond secondary school. Women may have come a long way, but working women still earn 25% less than men overall, and they report widespread sexual

harassment on the job. Youth today need to be able to recognize instances of sexism and also to have the skills and confidence to challenge those conditions.

In seminar format, students cover media messages in popular culture, versions of history and "her" story, self-esteem development, violence prevention, relationship and communication issues, and gender roles across cultures and religions.

Grads report satisfaction with the course. "It gives you a better understanding of why people act the way they do," reports Lisa. "Unfortunately, I've learned about how unequal things still are in our society," laments Celine. "Things are not changing fast enough. But we've also learned about women's situations in the past and compared to those times, things are changing for the better," added Dao. "It's the one course that talks about something that is relevant to my life," said Alison. "I know what I learn will go with me after high school."

In terms of the relevance of Women, Gender, and Society 12 for males, former student Ben put it this way: "I would recommend this course and think it applies to males, because so many men are unaware of women's history and their experiences in general, and should be better informed about the lives of half the population." Another male student concurs. "We get to argue with the girls," grins Johnny, "plus we learn about their way of looking at the world."

By offering Women, Gender, and Society 12, teachers can help break down sexism and stereotyping in secondary schools and in the community at large.

In March 1999, to raise money for course resources, Britannia students created and sold International Women's Day buttons, baked cookies, and handcrafted paper roses for the IWD march, in which they took part. They wanted to do something as a class to ensure that the course would continue and attract new students. Their activism led to the social-justice video project as students sought a wider audience for the work they were doing.

The new video ensures success and opportunity for students, teachers, and parents to learn about gender studies and to lobby for their inclusion in their secondary schools. By offering Women, Gender, and Society 12, teachers can help break down sexism and stereotyping in secondary schools and in the community at large.

For more information, contact Margaret Ross, BCTF Professional Development Division, 604-871-

1850 or toll free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1850), mross@bctf.bc.ca

BCTF resources

Lesson Aids

- **Gender Equity Education: Teacher Resource Guide (WS 401)** \$12
- **Open Doors: A Gender Equity Instruction Kit (WS 305)** \$7
- **Positive Action—Gender and Violence in Children's Entertainment (SR200)** \$11
- **A Voice for All Students: Realizing Gender Equity in Schools (PD 133)** \$18.50
- **Famous Canadian Women (LA 9219)** \$4.50
- **Environments for Girls and Women** \$8
- **Remarkable Canadian Women Poster (LA 9204)** \$5.75
- **Teen Women Information Numbers: TWINning Young Women with Services (LA 2212)** \$2.25

Workshops

- **Health and Balance**
- **Transforming Body Image**
- **Here Today! Where Tomorrow? A Workshop for Teen Women**
- **Strategies for Dealing with Harassment**

Literacy project Chilliwack

In May, when the Chilliwack District Teachers' Association held a workshop for staff representatives on developing a local social justice project, they were confronted with an array of issues, any one of which would merit the attention and resources of the local. The issues were diverse and complex, like the long-term sustainability of such a rapidly growing community as Chilliwack and the matter of the increasing numbers of children living in poverty. It was difficult to find a "focus" the local could work on to address some of the fundamental social justice issues of equity, opportunity, participation, and security.

But the workshop did give the local a way to identify a problem of concern to teachers that does pertain to social justice. The issue, if left unaddressed, has ramifications for almost all the elements of social justice. The issue on which the local resolved to develop a social justice project is literacy.

As the Chilliwack Social Justice Committee sees it, illiteracy fundamentally affects the equity, opportunity, and participation of a significant number of people in the community. It has a socio-economic aspect. The children most affected are from families in poorer circumstances; it is a poverty issue. The children affected also tend to come from ESL and First Nations families so it is a race issue. It marginalizes people and in the end affects the viability and sustainability of a community.

The important point for CDTA was that they be

Justice Union

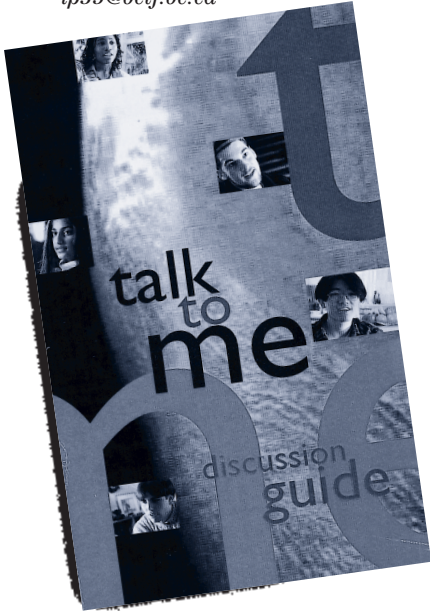
involved in a project that has a community focus and involves the community. Also they wanted a project that was manageable and appropriate.

The Chilliwack Literacy Project is a good example of how a local teachers' union can work on developing a community orientation that demonstrates concern and has a practical value. The literacy project goes beyond charity, and it highlights an important part of what education and teaching are all about.

The project involves a group of volunteers drawn from the community who conduct reading circles with children after school in school libraries. It is offered in schools that have a lower socio-economic demographic so as to address the poverty aspect of illiteracy. The books, chosen by teacher-librarians, emphasize social issues and inclusive communities. The volunteers are truly representative of the community—seniors, parents, grandparents, retired teachers, and college students in early-childhood-education programs.

The project is truly working on social justice. It is community focussed, and it puts the CDTA forward as a union that is working for a community defined by social justice.

For more information about the Chilliwack Literacy Project, contact Dolores Lees or Kathleen Lucas, CDTA office, 604-533-1618, lp35@bctf.bc.ca



BCTF Lesson Aid

• Talk to Me (SR300) \$24.95
A new resource on race relations and cultural diversity

B.C. Safe School Centre resources

The B.C. Safe School Centre maintains print and video resources in these areas: Counselling and Support; Crime and Violence Prevention; Diversity; Intimidation, Harassment and Violence; The Legal System; Social and Emotional Development; Youth at Risk; Youth Leadership.

Materials are available for unlimited use at the centre, or for loan and can be purchased or previewed from suppliers.

A complete catalogue of resources has been sent to schools and communities. The catalogue and *Safe School Planning Guide* are also on the safe school web site www.safeschools.gov.bc.ca

Gay straight alliances in schools

by James Chamberlain

As we teachers learn about homophobia and heterosexism, we often wonder how we can support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students. We also ponder how to provide them with a safe, inclusive learning environment. One of the best ways to address these questions is to ask those students themselves. I interviewed two student pioneers of sorts, Beth Maron and Brent Power.

Power and Maron see Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) as being crucial to breaking down stereotypes and intolerance. Each expresses disappointment and frustration with their own personal experience in trying to establish a GSA in their high schools. One was rebuffed, but the other has a success story, and B.C. now has one GSA. By contrast, more than 500 GSAs have been formed in United States public and private schools over the past 10 years.

Beth Maron says, "GSAs are a good way for queer youth to get support at school without risking 'outing' themselves." She speaks of needing to know that there are allies in the school. "I needed to know I was not the only one in the school."

Brent Power echoes the same concerns but emphasizes, "GSAs are for all students. Everyone suffers from homophobia. A GSA's mandate should be to help educate the overall student population and push for queer students' safety—both their physical and their emotional well being."

While both spoke of the numerous barriers they faced in trying to set up a GSA in their school, Maron is the more passionate. She talked of her failed attempt to start a GSA in a school on the West Side of Vancouver. She initially found a supportive teacher and a counsellor who agreed to act as sponsor for the group, and the vice-principal approved. All agreed to help her get started, but the principal had to be consulted first, and he would not allow the GSA to be established. He expressed fears of creating rifts among staff, potentially alienating parents, and worries over the school's reputation. He expressed discomfort with the name of the support group. Maron had many meetings with administrators to educate them on queer youths' needs and to discuss the purpose of a GSA. She encouraged lots of her allies in the school to speak to the counsellor about the desperate need for a GSA. In the end, her efforts were futile when the principal "put his foot down and exclaimed 'We don't want to be the only school on the West Side known as the school with the gays'."

Maron's disappointment is

most acute regarding the lack of understanding the administration exhibited about the need for a GSA in her school. She said "schools are a more comfortable, familiar setting and are not as scary as going to outside services." She also talked about the difficulty of queer youth accessing outside services because such services may not exist, may be difficult to get to, or may result in personal risks of being outed to family members.

Brent Power had previously been harassed out of the public school system and re-entered it last year with the support of his parents after being in an alternate system. Power, who wants to make a difference for other queer students, sees the GSA as a group to support others like him. Power says GSAs are important because they allow both straight and queer students to discuss issues together. "They help break down stereotypes so straight kids learn about other people."

However, he faced many of the same problems Maron did, and the principal expressed anxiety over the possibility of causing a rift among the teachers. Power found he had to educate the teachers and administrators on the use of the word *queer* as a positive, inclusive term to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students. He explained that the word *queer* has been reclaimed as a term of identity and pride.

In addition, Power used the school board's harassment policy implementation plan, which states, "the victims of harassment are provided avenues of support to overcome the effects of victimization," and specifically includes establishment of peer support programs in schools. Eventually the principal publicly supported the GSA in discussions with staff.

Support for queer youth from teachers is vital. Maron and Power offer these suggestions for teachers:

- be sensitive to queer students and their issues

"Take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

—Elie Wiesel

- give encouragement and positive feedback
- put up safety-zone or gay-positive posters in classrooms
- include books about queer issues in the school library
- if you are gay or lesbian, be "out," a positive role model for all students, particularly for queer students, who can begin to see a future for themselves
- talk about queer families
- use inclusive vocabulary
- advocate for queer youth to the administration
- start a GSA.

Recommendations for starting a GSA:

- establish a group of dynamic, supportive teacher sponsors
- find a group of committed youth
- organize meeting times, and stick to them
- make the group visible—advertise via posters, announcements, bulletins, and the school newspaper
- replace posters if they are torn down
- use the words *gay*, *lesbian* or *queer*; do not be afraid to do so.

We should heed the good advice of Elie Wiesel: "Take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

James Chamberlain teaches at George Vanier Elementary School, Surrey.

For more information on GSAs, check the Massachusetts Board of Education web site: www.doe.mass.edu/doedocs/gsa/

New workshop: "Taking Action Against Homophobia"

This school year, we are introducing a second workshop on dealing with homophobia. The workshop complements the current offering, "Dealing with Homophobia in Schools and Classrooms." The purpose of the second workshop is to help schools, locals, and interested groups of teachers develop specific approaches to homophobia. The workshop has participants identify problems relating to the issue



and then develop approaches to the problem. (They prepare a presentation to a school board, setting up sexual-minority support groups in secondary schools, or working with community groups that assist sexual-minority youth.)

The main objective of the workshop is to give teacher groups a plan of action for dealing with homophobia that is focussed and obtainable.

If you are interested in having either workshops or both workshops in your local, contact Anna Bosi, BCTF Professional Development

Division, 604-871-1831 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, local 1831.

More on Homophobia

The homophobia and heterosexism associates team developing the BCTF program on homophobia will be developing a handbook for locals on how to address H/H issues and develop a local action plan. The handbook will be available to local offices later this school year.

Also, the H/H group will be developing several H/H resource materials, including a kit that will be available to schools and locals to help them identify good resources on the issues and begin to build a local resource base on homophobia.

The group is also going to develop a lesson aid specifically on name calling (homophobic and other name calling) that should be available in the fall of 2000.

BCTF Resources

Lesson Aids

- Opening the Closet Doors: An Annotated Bibliography and Resource List enabling educators to provide advocacy and support for lesbian and gay youth (LA 2305) \$4.25
- Counselling Gay and Lesbian Youth (LA 2206) \$4
- The Joke's Over—An Interactive Exploration of Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment in Our Schools (LA 2214) \$54.95

Workshops

- Dealing with Homophobia/Heterosexism in Schools
- Taking Action on Homophobia/Heterosexism

Other resources

- Teaching Respect for All (videotape)
- It's Elementary (videotape)
- Both My Moms' Names are Judy (videotape)
- We Love Our Children (videotape)
- School's Out: Confronting Homophobia in High Schools (videotape)

WHAT ABOUT THE BOYS?

Debate: gendered anxieties and public schools

by Arlene Tigar McLaren
and Leslie Roman

The Fraser Institute study, *Boys, Girls and Grades*, noted by Paul Sullivan (*The West*, June 5, 1999) made front-page news in Vancouver. Headlines blare that “schools favour girls” and that “boys’ problems are getting short shrift,” turning equity issues into a pro-girl versus pro-boy joust.

Which boys does the FI report care about—the truly disadvantaged? First Nations, ESL, or poor boys (and girls)?

The report, an anxious panic over gender-equity efforts in schools, ignores the complex factors leading to differing kinds of underachievement of both genders and the real economic and political disparities outside of schools that affect achievement and life chances.

It is no news to educators (whether gender-equity proponents or not) that some boys underachieve or fail in certain subjects. The complex reasons for this and other gendered academic outcomes, well-researched for over two decades, are remarkably absent in the Fraser Institute (FI) study.

The authors have not done their homework. How do they arrive at their extraordinary conclusion that schools favour girls and give boys short shrift? All the authors show is that boys get higher marks (by no more than three percentage points in a couple of subjects) in provincial examination results, and that girls get higher marks (little more



than three percentage points) in several subjects in school-based assessments.

In concluding that schools favour girls, the authors show obvious lapses in logic. Are one-shot provincial-exam marks really more fair than the assessments teachers accrue over time based on their knowledge of students’ capacities over a wide range of activities? Are the latter really not to be trusted? Do girls really receive unfair assistance through “girl-friendly strategies”? Do boys lack equivalent “boy-friendly strategies”?

The report turns boys into victims and girls into victors. Despite laudable, gender-equitable efforts, plenty of biases remain that don’t favour girls. Textbooks today are not full of women and silent about men; girls are still concentrated in “soft” subjects, (e.g., English) that lack status equal to “hard” subjects (e.g., math and science), and resources, such as support for sports, are not equally distributed.

By exaggerating very small discrepancies in academic assessments, the report fuels an unjustifiable apprehension about school-based gender-equity programs. Are the authors promiscuously searching for scapegoats? In reality, there is more overlap between the achievement of boys and girls than difference. Where gendered achievement differences exist, they are minor, in different subjects and at different levels. While many boys do not perform well at schools, many others do.

The FI report would have us believe that all girls are doing better than all boys in school achievement measures. It also taps into a larger, unfounded anxiety about previously disenfranchised groups becoming “overly entitled.” But given the larger agenda of this right-wing “think tank,” such anxiety is no surprise.

Which boys does the FI report care about—the truly disadvantaged? First Nations, ESL, or poor boys (and girls)? Why don’t the authors tell us

that parental educational and occupational attainment is the strongest predictor of how children (“Kevin and Sarah”) will fare educationally and in the labour market?

The authors turn a blind eye to everyday realities. Their facile blaming of public schools and gender-equity efforts for boys’ “underachievement” distracts us from important economic and political disparities largely generated outside schools.

Let’s focus on the crucial goal of public schooling: to foster critical inquiry and inclusive citizenry.

Both young women and young men have difficulty finding jobs. The jobs they do get are likely to be insecure; such is the case for young women especially. The authors fail to understand that despite gender-equity efforts in school, women in

the labour market remain concentrated in casual, marginalized, low-paying, and often dead-end service-sector work. “Women’s work” is not comparable to the earnings, security, potential for upward mobility, and power of “men’s work.”

Schools alone cannot create a skilled workforce to solve mass, casualized labour and unemployment. Having the skills does not mean there will be jobs after finishing one’s schooling. Rather than focus on the important social inequalities, the report targets feminism and inclusive public education and promotes education for the already privileged.

Let’s not push schools into pitting boys against girls, into simplistic visions that ignore the truly disadvantaged. Let’s steer clear of the insidious rhetoric of “performance indicators” and the narrow excellence movements of which the “what about the boys?” panic is a part. Conservative movements have monopolized public educational policy debates in the Australia, New Zealand, United States, and Great Britain to the detriment of their already beleaguered and embattled public school systems.

We are at a crossroads. Are we to repeat these countries’ mistakes? Let’s focus on the crucial goal of public schooling: to foster critical inquiry and inclusive citizenry. Such goals mean putting the public back into public education, a future far from that imagined by the Fraser Institute.

Arlene Tigar McLaren is associate professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, SFU, and Leslie Roman is associate professor, Department of Educational Studies, UBC.

Youth turned on by history

by Margaret Bell
and Barb Preston

Laurier LaPierre, historian, author, and broadcaster, said, “Let Canada be the inspiration of your life; dream large dreams, so as to have a large life in our vast country.” Yes, history can be exciting! Interest in history, geography, and Canada’s heritage has been generated through heritage fairs that are held annually at school, regional, and national levels for pupils in Grades 4 to 9.

Canada is populated by peoples of diverse backgrounds and culture, and there are thousands of stories to be told by everyday people in this country. These stories may be lost if students do not make a connection with their past. Much valuable information can be unearthed through interviews with grandparents,

great-grandparents, and other older members of the community. When preparing their heritage projects, many students choose to research their own families. They learn about the experiences within their families that have helped shape themselves, their community, and their country.

Heritage fairs encourage students to become involved in telling our stories and interpreting and sharing the various aspects of Canadian heritage. The program was initiated in 1995 by the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation, which also sponsors Heritage Minute on television and in movie theatres.

One of the goals of the program is to create an exciting learning environment for students as they develop individual and group projects. This year, 90,000 students across Canada participated at school heritage fairs.

The summer institute for teachers is another important arm of the CRB Foundation. We were fortunate to be selected to attend the Heritage Institute in Edmonton. The week-long institute focussed on Canadian history and social studies. We explored how co-operative learning could be used to teach the excellent student-centred CRB resource packages, *Canadians in a Global Community* and *We Are Canadians*. We came away with many exciting new teaching strategies and were able to attend the Heritage Day ceremonies and view more than 150 student projects. The students’ projects included models, posters, photographs, and computer displays. Other projects used creative writing and performance with imagined diary entries, dramatic presentations, music, and dance.



Students highlight their heritage by developing projects based on their families and communities. Above: Billi-Jo Mindel, Carney Hill Elementary School, Prince George.

Margaret Bell teaches at Carney Hill Elementary School, Prince George, and Barb Preston teaches at Ecole Phoenix Middle, Campbell River.

For more information, check out the CRB Foundation web site, www.heritageproject.ca, or contact Margaret_Bell@fc.schdist57.bc.ca or Rob_Larson@fc.schdist57.bc.ca or john.adams@gems9.gov.bc.ca.

More than 1,300 B.C. teachers retired in 1999. School Districts 5-43 were printed in the October 1999 issue of Teacher.

NORTH VANCOUVER #44

- Thora Bajard
Margaret Barbic
Dieter Bauer
Lloyd Burritt
Christine Chandler
Leonard Corben
Robert Cullen
Kevin Davies
Myra Davies
Susan Dux
Sonja Fowles
Judith Friesen
William Garby
Joan Gideon
Clifford Goertz
Kenneth Goodwin
Yvonne Haffenden
June Hahn
John Hammond
Carol Harrington
James Harrison
Kenneth Hegler
Doreen Irwin
Thomas Irwin
Irene Jeffery
Ilse Link
Ronald Ludwickson
Sally McDonald
Dianne McKinnon
Bryan Martin
John Montgomery
Dianne Morgan
Shirley Mulder
Ernie Oei
Margaret Pennerk
Shirley Smith
Craig Stewart
Edna Thomson
Genevieve Tobin
Rochelle Watts
Robert White
Mairwen Williams

WEST VANCOUVER #45

- Mary Abbott
William Armstrong
Penny Collett
Patricia Edgar
Judith Gold
Joan Hanson
John Hoover
Lynda Jamieson
Lita-Sue Korteling
Carole Lindsay
Valerie Mills
Judith McDonald
Patricia Pearmain
Derrick Phillips
George Potvin
Lilly Selby
Sheila Sexsmith
Leslie Tessman
Suzanne Veuger

SUNSHINE COAST #46

- Ronald Fearn
Barbara Pinkney
Kenneth Rogers
Harry Turner

POWELL RIVER #47

- Carol Bowes
Charles Bresee
Gertrud Buchanan
Irene Cook
Russell Macdonald
Lois Montgomery
Ann Palmer
Mervin Patterson
Theresa Pinel
Gordon Switzer
John Treen
David Yare

HOWE SOUND #48

- Elsie Anderson
Shirley Brown
Theresa Fitzpatrick
John Gilmour
Ellen Grant
Russell Martin
Malcolm McMurray
Michael Milner
Barbara Rudkin

CENTRAL COAST #49

- Peter Fralick
Eva Mack
Henry Penner

HAIDA GWAIL-QUEEN CHARLOTTE #50

- Luna Acedillo

BOUNDARY #51

- Denis Robinson

PRINCE RUPERT #52

- Inga Brunton
Marjorie Tattersall

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN #53

- Barbara Gardner
Arthur Halsted
Peter Bennett
Jon Johnson
Jacqueline Kovacs
Angus McCracken
Melvin McKortoff
Donna Nemeth
Terrance Wells

BULKLEY VALLEY #54

- Mary Bryant
Esme Challen
Paul Challen
Joan Good
Michael Monkman

PRINCE GEORGE #57

- Sylvia Ableson
Bonnie Addison
Joyce Antonation
Joy Applegate
Robert Armstrong
Pam Barmettler
Reva Bierman
Elfrieda Block
Marilyn Brown
David Bruce
Jean Chow
Helene Cooper
Lesley Dunn
Carol Ginter
Adeline Hamm
Walter Hanik
David Harrison
Wilma Hartnagel
Agnes Holeczi
Joy Hope
Sally Hough
Joan Lasure
Gerald Loehndorf
Marguerite MacKenzie
Hugo Martin
Brian Masse
Janice Monsen
Ross Pearce
Morris Quinn
Kenneth Redman
Sharon Revel
Lowell Saunders
Bert Schulz
Marlene Scoville
Brian Stapleton
Cynthia Swan
Monique Tulk
Linda Vennberg
Phyllis Ward
Michael Warr
Dinnis Zral

NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN #58

- Richard Chew
Robert Hainstock
Joan Koller
Raymond Montpetit
Ronald Morrow
Denise Williams

PEACE RIVER SOUTH #59

- Margaret Anderson
John Cook
Kenneth Davies
Charlene Dokken
Ydella Dulcetta
Ronald Hunter
Ronald Hunter
Mae-Lynne Grajkowski
Margaret Sutton
John Taylor

PEACE RIVER NORTH #60

- Sandra Durrell
Wayne Henze
Rosalind Ross
Jerry Secrist
Patricia Smith
William Sutton
Lenore Thomas

GREATER VICTORIA #61

- Lis Addison
Maureen Archambault
Thomas Baldwin
Olivia Barr
Mavis Bayer
Kenneth Bertram
Eleanor Blaauw
Lois Blackmore
Richard Bland
Gillian Bloom
Georges Bombezin
Margaret Boss
Leonard Box
Victor Bradley
Dennis Brammer
Trevor Calkins
Paul Chapman
Wallace Chow
Terrie Cloak
Therese Cobb
Aubrey Cobham
Norma Cowell
Ajit Dalep
Donna Dayton
Louis DeMacedo
Vic Derman
Mary Douglass
Joan Eis

- Karen Ferriday
Margaret Filmer
Lynne Freeman
Zuzana Gignac
Sandra Glassel
Oliver Goldsmith
Marion Grealy
Bronwyn Hackett
Peter Haylett
Thorston Henrich
George Humphreys
Gael Huntley
Beverley Isbell
Donald Johnson
Donald Jones
Trevor Jones
Fritz Karger
Daisy Kilates
Johannes Klein
Catherine Krock
Susan Langridge
Mark Le Roux
Rose Leong
Gary Letcher
Patricia Macgregor
James Maconachie
Joann Madill
Hannah Main
Maryl McCay
Keith Newell
Irena Otvos
Irene Parkinson
Richard Pears
Ariane Prohom
Rita Randle
Carol Rogers
Rose Rousseau
Marcella Sarkissian
Janice Sexton
Rone Sinclair
Susan Smith
Audrey Snowdon
Margaret Stevenson
Brian Tetlow
Miriam Tomlinson
Dalia Treigys
Karen Unruh
Audrey Van Eerden
Kathleen Walker
Cheryle Watson
Ronald Wickstrom
Gary Withers
Patrick Woods
Blaine Worth

SOOKE #62

- Carol Delisle
David Foster
James Galloway
Paul Kolada
Anthony Lampard
Julie Lawson
Beverley Lenihan
Raymond Leung
Janet McCutcheon
Colin McKenna
William Mason
Reginald Miller
Dennis Nurse
Kathleen Ollila
Helen Owens
Gail Robb
Peter Robertson
Ronald Smith
Shirley Walker
Daniel Weston

SAANICH #63

- Karen Adam
Darris Bertrand
Byron Burns
Paul Butterworth
Jean Coates
William Duckworth
Barry Gear
Judy Gerich
Avrille Gosling
Sharrin Harper
Stewart Kirkpatrick
Marie MacRae
William Osborne
Agnes Paterson
Carol Paton
Ronald Peach
Anthony Peard
Margaret Peard
Lynda Pope
Marie Reid
Margaret Rothery
Peter Smith
Doneen Sprowl
Lennor Stieda
Diane Taylor

GULF ISLANDS #64

- Douglas Bambrough
Jean Bradley
Maria Dammel
Louise Decario
Glenda Kaiser
Ralph Miller
Clive Prior
Richard Tallboy
Margaret Wilson

OKANAGAN-SKAHA #67

- Ron Awai

- Robert Brucker
Jean Coe
Lorna Cox
Anne Davidson
Murray Johnson
David Knowlton
Keith Lindstrom
Toner McGuire
Katherine Mulholland
Irmgard Olsen
Lynne Overland
Roger Paille
Delbert Ray
Frank Reimer
Lorraine Singh
Donald Sloan
Ben Stelluti
Vreny Swanson
Alojz Tinka
Frank Trenouth
Pauline Trenouth
Edward Wilson
Jean Winstanley

NANAIMO #68

- Keith Abbott
Charles Addison
John Alden
Doreen Allen
Carol Baird-Krul
Brian Bamford
Gordon Bamford
Patricia Barnes
Janet Bishop
Lorraine Brown
Rodney Brown
Margaret Cox
Diane Cripps
Imelda Cuthertson
Dawn Davidson
Lorne Elliott
Roy Ferrier
Joan Galey
Caroline Grimmer
Lynne Harris
Kenneth Helm kay
Frederick Henning
Roger Hewitt
Joseph Hillier
Denise Hird
Roberta Jordan
Claire King
George Koolery
Judith Latham
Ruth Lauscher
Bonnie Loehr
Ferdinando Luvisotto
Merrit Mabey
Roberta Manzini
John McAdam
Allen McRae
Edward Miller
Mildred Olafson
Victor Osis
Sandra Ostle
Joyce Platt
Joan Power
Cecil Poznecov
Larry Radu
Raymond Rosichuk
Terrance Royce
Norma Scott
Gail Slater
Nina Slobodian
Marie Surkan
Julie Thomson
Rudolf Van Der Vegt
Carol Wallace
Marvin Worden
Michael Yakelashek

QUALICUM #69

- Michael Driscoll
Gerald Galey
Janice Graham
Janet Howes
Beth LeBaron
William Morrison
Madeleine Natrass
Joan O'Connell
Michael Peck
Alexander Schneider
Donald Tait

ALBERNI #70

- Dolores Beley
Ernest Brightland
Marilyn Dailey
Cornelis DeMonye
Margaret Devries
Julianne Dostal
Elaine Jones
Katherine Lekich
William Lekich
Shirley Maddison
Sharon McLeod
Maxine Munsil
Heather Murton
Ronald Sandberg
Geraldine Stoutley
Joseph Walecki
George Walt

COMOX VALLEY #71

- John Bucher
Marian Crawford
William Dale

- Cynthia Davies
Martin Davies
Peter Douglas
Heather Ferraby
Dianne Hagen
Sidney Halls
Neil Henderson
Corinne Innes
Carol Lidster
John Ling
Philip MacLaren
Erik Mahrt
Janet Miller-Fox
Allan Morton
Kenneth Pelling
Wendy Reimer
Vincent Rivers
Sheila Scrase
Heather VanHolderbeke
Patricia Verschoor
Arnold Wall
Amy Yakimyshyn

CAMPBELL RIVER #72

- Anthony Akelaitis
John Arnold
Sharron Bollefer
Doug Cousins
Robert Davies
Viola Gramson
Joan Guthrie
Barbara Henshall
Barbara Hughes
Jack Jackovich
Marlene Knowles
Marjorie Pallan
Juaneva Smith
Patricia Vanhumbeck

KAMLOOPS-THOMPSON #73

- Margaret Bartsch
Joseph Baxter
Barry Beesley
Gary Beveridge
David Broughton
Denise Butler
Carl Capps
Penny Christenson
Grace Crofts
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- Mavis Bayer

These toys can damage eyes!

1999 Dangerous toy list

Before Christmas each year, the B.C. Association of Optometrists releases a list of toys dangerous to the eyes. On this year's list are:

- Jitter Ball Jr., a hard plastic toy ball for 19-month-old children, has 12 solid spikes that could punch out an eye if the child fell on it or caught it wrong.
- Disney's ©Tarzan Power spear for three-year-olds has a sharp point and also shoots solid foam projectiles over seven metres.
- A Nerf-gun for six-year-olds

shoots five missiles all at once, with suction cups that are smaller than a soft contact lens.

- Air Hogs Real Flying air pressure plane for eight-year-olds is propelled by a hard plastic unprotected propeller that flies 100 m, the length of a football field.
- A Star Wars rocket for ten-year-olds has sharp points that could penetrate the eye and cause blindness.

Teachers, parents, and concerned adults are invited to alert the B.C. Association of Optometrists regarding other



toys they believe should be on this list.

To minimize the potential for accidents, optometrists advise, prevent children from playing indoors with outdoor toys, supervise children's use of projectile toys (better still, abstain from buying such toys), prevent younger kids from playing with older kids' toys, and avoid any kind of sharp or point-tip toys.

For more information, or to receive a free copy of the 1999 Dangerous Toy List, contact the B.C. Association of Optometrists, at (604)270-9909, f: (604)270-4950, bc-optom@mortimer.com.

1999–2000 retirement planning seminars

All teachers age 40+ should plan to attend one of the retirement-planning seminars listed. There is no pre-registration, nor fee. Seminars are on Saturdays from 09:00 to 16:00. The agenda includes what retirement is, the Teachers' Pension Plan, legal issues, retirement experiences, pension calculations, and personal advice. Make sure to bring a calculator and your most recent pension statement. Younger teachers are welcome.

Date	Location
November 20, 1999	Richmond, Richmond Inn
November 27, 1999	Cranbrook, Inn of the South
January 22, 2000	Vancouver, Plaza 500 Hotel
January 29, 2000	N.Vancouver, Capilano College, Birch Bldg.
February 12, 2000	Surrey, Sheraton Guildford Hotel
February 19, 2000	Burnaby, Radisson Hotel
February 26, 2000	Nanaimo, Coast Bastion Inn
March 4, 2000	Langley, Sunrise Conference Centre
April 8, 2000	Abbotsford, Inn at King's Crossing
April 15, 2000	Prince George, Inn of the North
April 22, 2000	Williams Lake, Overlander Motor Inn
April 29, 2000	Penticton, Lakeside Resort & Conf. Ctr.
May 6, 2000	Victoria, Victoria Conference Centre

Pension reinstatement deadline

If you withdrew your pension contributions from the Teachers' Pension Plan and are now an active member, you can reinstate your service. Up to December 31, 2000, you may reinstate any teaching service performed before December 31, 1995, provided you have returned to work for at least one day.

As of 2001, the reinstatement rules become more restrictive. Depending on the gap in your return to work, you may have as little as five years to reinstate after resuming contributions. The steps to reinstatement are:

1. Obtain a cost of reinstatement from the Superannuation Commission, your school board, or the BCTF.
2. Complete the form and

send it to the Superannuation Commission. The commission will advise you as to the cost of the reinstatement as well as the increased pension benefit you will receive. The commission will also advise you on payment and Revenue Canada's tax treatment of your reinstatement.

Failure to act on this opportunity may mean that you could lose service in your pension plan and important retirement income in your pocket.

– Al Cornes

For more information, contact Superannuation Commission at (250) 953-3022 (Victoria area), (604) 660-4088 (Vancouver Area), or toll free 1-800-665-6770. Your school board payroll staff or the BCTF office (604) 871-2283 or toll free 1-800-663-9163.

Age 64? or Factor 88?

Teachers who have reached the age of 64 or the factor 88, age plus contributory service, with the teachers or municipal pension plan, *may* voluntarily withdraw from the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan: Long Term. If you have reached age 65 or factor 90, you are no longer eligible for long-term benefits and *should* withdraw. It is necessary for you to apply to withdraw as the SIP does not

have information about your age or contributory service.

If you fit one of the above categories and wish to withdraw from the long-term part of the plan, send a completed form (available from Income Security, local presidents, or online at www.bctf.bc.ca/pensions/salary/LT-Withdrawal-Form.shtml) to the BCTF Income Security Dept.

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BUILDING STUDENT CITIZENSHIP

Schoolground planting projects

by Denise Philippe

Ponds, shade trees, berry bushes, bird houses, dry stream beds, boulder circles, planter boxes, vegetable plots, and Douglas Fir groves. They are the response of students, teachers, parents, and community members in B.C. schools to habitat and biodiversity loss and how to foster positive action and citizenship skills.

The *garden* themes and components are examples of school-ground-naturalization initiatives supported by The Evergreen Foundation. Evergreen is a national not-for-profit organization committed to engaging people in establishing and maintaining healthy, dynamic outdoor environments at schools and in communities. Through our Learning Grounds program and our B.C. Model Schools project, we assist schools to work through the process of naturalizing a portion of their school grounds and turning the grounds into educational resources.

Through our B.C. Model Schools project, we work with students, staff, and family members to plan, design, fundraise for, and establish naturalized areas that are then utilized as curriculum resources and experiential learning opportunities. Participants are encouraged to tell the story of the naturalization process, sharing knowledge and skills with other school communities who wish to undertake similar projects.

School-ground-naturalization projects address the need for students to act as citizens of both their local communities and the globe as a whole, in ways that are solution-oriented and responsible. Acting as a citizen also means



Grade 1 students at L'École Bilingue Elementary School, in Vancouver, plant bulbs. The schoolground naturalization initiative is sponsored by The Evergreen Foundation.

playing the role of teacher, explaining to others the possibilities for biodiversity protection and regeneration, and enacting those possibilities.

Giving students the opportunity to work alongside individuals from the community who have both experience and knowledge of the local landscape is another component of meaningful participation.

To teach students as if they too are potential teachers means recognizing the importance of providing students with skills and opportunities to lead, to make change, to commit acts of caretaking and relationship-building.

One student at L'École Bilingue Elementary School, a pilot-model school, shares with an Evergreen staff member a garden discovery. "If you're planting berries, they really like low spots where water can reach them."

Another student, at K.B. Woodward Elementary School, Surrey, shares other observations. "The plants make our school better, but it's also for our environment, and before we didn't have any animals or anything."

Central to the project is facilitating students' active involvement in the design, planning, planting, and ongoing care of the habitat.

Michele Christen, a teacher at L'École Bilingue Elementary School, observes, "At the beginning of the year, when I was outside watering, I heard two students coming along and looking at a sunflower and asking, 'Do you think those

seeds are ready to eat' and the other replying, 'No, no don't touch them, they're not ready yet, we have to wait.' And I thought to myself, this conversation would not have happened if we didn't have this garden. Just for that, it was worth the effort."

By creating natural spaces that support a wide range of native plant and animal life, students experience first-hand the delight and wonder of spring's first blossom or the hatching of a robin's egg. Learning becomes both planned and serendipitous as children discover details about insect life as that life unfolds in front of them, in real time and in real contexts. There is no mistaking the value of lessons learned in an environment where conversations between parent gardeners and students may be as illuminating as math exercises and science experiments.

Through Evergreen's B.C. Model Schools project, 18 school communities so far are building student citizenship. Central to the project is facilitating students' active involvement in the design, planning, planting, and ongoing care of the habitat. Students and teachers are encouraged and supported to make links with parents, neighbours, community groups, and businesses. Together, people can build garden infrastructure, generate financial support for the project, and help care for the garden after it has been planted. Most of all, the links are supported and encouraged so that diverse community members may share lived experiences and hands-on knowledge in diverse settings.

As students decide what needs the school yard can meet—socially, educationally, and environmentally—and take the action necessary to implement/ realize the projects, they are acting as the citizens we'll need for healthy, diverse communities.

Denise Philippe is the program manager for The Evergreen Foundation, 163 W. Hastings Street, Ste. 106, Vancouver, BC V6B 1H5, (604) 689-0766, dphilipp@evergreen.ca.

PROJECT OVERSEAS

Summer lessons

Canadian teachers have a special opportunity to share classroom lessons and methods with teaching colleagues in developing countries through a CTF program, Project Overseas. Six teachers from B.C. were selected, along with 50 teachers from across Canada, to volunteer teach this past summer. They journeyed to Asia (Mongolia and Nepal), South America (Guyana), and Africa (Ghana and Malawi). *Teacher* will run a short write-up in each of the next five issues.

Mongolian language teachers read tourist brochures about Vancouver.

Mongolia

by Janet Nicol

Sainbaina uu! Hello! That is the greeting of the people of Mongolia, a dreamlike land of blue skies and vast steppes. It is also a country in dramatic transition. Last summer, I observed the wonders and

challenges of that unique Asian society working with three other Canadian teachers and the Mongolian Teachers' Union in the capital city, Ulaan Bataar. We presented English as a foreign language methodology to teachers and developed curriculum materials.

For almost seventy years, Mongolians learned Russian as

a foreign language in school. But since the country achieved independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, English has become the language of opportunity. In our four-week language course, the student-teachers shared their culture while practising English. For instance, they brought special objects to describe: a friendship stick, chess

carvings of horses and camels, and a wolf's ankle bone (for good luck). Current events revealed attitudes—everything from a faith in their fragile yet hopeful democratic institutions to reverence for wrestlers. Sharing photographs, I learned about celebrations such as "White Moon," in February, the revival of Buddhism, and teachers' university days in Moscow. Most of the 49 student-teachers were female. Divorce is not uncommon, and families generally have two children.

Bayarma, a Mongolian language teacher, told me "In this time of transition and poverty, we must have education. Young people with a good profession will develop Mongolia."

I admire my colleagues' dedication and hope. I carried back to Canada some of their strength.

Janet Nicol teaches at Killarney Secondary School, Vancouver.



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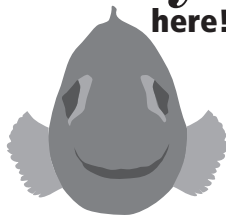
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AHHH! NO CHILDREN. Soothe away STRESS in our Wellness Spa. Private unique chalets with your own 2 person mineral bath, cozy wood F/P, full kitchen including microwave, gas BBQ on sundeck, complementary bikes. Near golf, horseback riding, kayaking. Spa features "Salt Spring" baths, relaxation massages, reflexology, facials, bodywraps, astrology, yoga and more. Packages & details www.saltysprings.com Reservations 1-800-665-0039.

WHISTLER. Creekside, 3 bd., 2 bath, multi-level townhouse, valley views, sleeps 8+, 604-535-3447.

A FABULOUS WINTER ESCAPE. Try Whistler. Just steps to mountains, village sq. & market place. Choose our lux. 1 bd. townhome (sleeps 4), viewing decks, priv. hot tub, fully equipped kitchen, F/P, TV/VCR, jetted tub, htd. outdoor pool & secure undergrd. parking. Toll free 1-877-596-1615 or lorne_hains@bc.sympatico.ca

FOR SALE

MANUAL FOR PARAGRAPH & ESSAY writing. Designed for teachers/parents of weaker or remedial students. To order send \$10.75 plus \$1.50 postage to Avstan Publications, 8850c Young Rd., Chilliwack, BC V2P 4P5. Phone/Fax: (604) 792-0839.

4x4 TRUCK & UTILITY TRAILER. 1992 4-runner truck & 14 ft. 1999 utility trailer: \$24,000 for both or best offer. Truck: 96,000 km, V6, cruise-control, automatic, lady-driven, no off-road, no accidents, new hidden-hitch/equalizer-bars/wiring. Ruth 250-315-4494 or Peter 604-977-7366.

SASKATCHEWAN NATURALLY magazine. Learn about Saskatchewan in spectacular photography and captivating story. New quarterly magazine available now. Subscriptions \$21.35. Call 1-888-861-8311 for more information.

TEACHER'S RESOURCE package for Crossroads text. 147 pages of copy-ready assignments, tests and answer keys. (250) 392-4696.

FOR RENT

VANCOUVER. Kits, 1 bd. condo near beach, with fireplace and washer/dryer. Avail. from Dec. 11 until Jan. 02. 604-737-7181.

WHITE ROCK/OCEAN PARK family home avail. to responsible persons, walking distance to Crescent Beach, hot tub. Avail. from Dec. 17 to Jan. 3, 2000. 604-535-3447.

VANCOUVER SHORT STAY SUITES. 2 night min., Point Grey, fully equipped. Easy access to downtown, min. from UBC. www3.bc.sympatico.ca/cyberwest/suite/CasaMoraPenthouse \$95-\$120/night based on dbl. occupancy. 604-228-8079.

VANCOUVER. Large deluxe condo on Robson nr. Blue Horizon. Daily rate \$75, weekly rate \$450. 604-608-4268.

VANCOUVER/UBC. Sublet, beautiful character home, 2nd wk. Dec. 8-Jan. 13/2000. Mainfloor & penthouse suite (kitchen, bathrm., living/bdrm. with fireplace), or mainfloor only (L/R, 2 bdrm., 1 bthrm., gourmet kitchen, hot tub, fireplace). Negotiated price. N/S, N/P, 604-228-8079, mbnevwest@bc.sympatico.ca

MISCELLANEOUS

HOMESTAY/TUTORING. CF Educational Services needs experienced, certified teachers in Vancouver, N. Vancouver, W. Vancouver, Burnaby to host short-term and long-term programs. (604) 683-4375.

ENRICH YOUR INUIT UNIT! Experienced teacher presents dynamic 2 hr. classroom presentation: slides, music, games, more. Hands on! Authentic Inuit tools, clothing, toys. Okanagan, Kootenays, Lower Mainland. \$199 includes presentation, supplies, and teacher's kit. Classroom Expeditions (250) 352-3598.

PETER AUSTEN'S EVEREST EXPERIENCE, is THE state of the art leadership and team building seminar for professional development. T/F: (250) 564-9397, www.mag-net.com/austen **REGISTERED EDUCATIONAL SAVINGS PLAN** Federal government grant \$16,200 max., 100% guaranteed investment, tax sheltered, highest interest earnings, RRSP rollover, free information, Chuck Lipp F: (604) 327-1413.

TALKING ABOUT WRITING, a six-text, sequential, English language program of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and usage for Grades 8-12 incl. answer key. Links writing to language study. Self-explanatory. Excellent for beginning teachers and home school. Order at sales@trafford.com

TRAVEL-TEACH ENGLISH. 5 day/ 40 hr. March 20-24. TESOL teacher certification course (or by correspondence). Thousands of jobs available now. Free information package, toll free 1-888-270-2941.

RETIREMENT! Can you afford to retire? Confused about your teachers' pension plan benefits or purchase of service? Confidential, individual retirement counseling available. No product sales. Call Cherith Cayford CFP, RFP, PRP at Camelot Management Group (604) 913-0090, or cherith_camelot@bc.sympatico.ca **EXPAND YOUR CURRICULUM.** Reach more students in more ways. Group workshops: private consultation. Contact Kelvin Beckett, PhD in Education. 12 yrs. experience working with BC teachers. (604) 222-7811 or kgbeckett@sprint.ca

ESL TEACHERS urgently needed in Korea, Taiwan and China. Positions available immediately and throughout the year. Accommodation & return airfare provided. Fax resumes to: Lawrence Fast, Century College, 731-8830 or lawfast@centurycollege.com

TEACHERS/EDUCATORS! 25 recorded stories of the Canadian West. History is fun. Motivational & inspirational entertaining! Singing, storytelling and trick roping. Cowboy "Sky Floyd Drew" (250) 836-5327. References available.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION SCHOOL SHOW. The Buddy System brings the Personal Planning Program alive! Dynamic, fun, musical presentation. 604-990-4033, www.festival.bc.ca

TEACHER EXCHANGE

SUNSHINE COAST, QUEENSLAND Exchange wanted for teacher, primary or intermediate. Phone 250-652-1814 for information.

SWITZERLAND. Exchange 2000-2001 or later. Teach mainly Geography in French at secondary school in Geneva. I can teach French/Geography in French or English. House and car swap. Contact, mfaure@awaycom.ch

VANCOUVER/LANGLEY exchange to Prince George for 2000-2001, or for shorter periods earlier. High school Art/ESL teacher (5 classes of art and 2 of transition ESL). However this could change to more art next year. I do not need a place to live. Contact Kathleen MacRae, 2291 East 10th Ave., Vancouver BC V5N 1Y3, 604-255-6989 or Kathleen_MacRae@bc.sympatico.ca

JANUARY

20-21 Vancouver. B.C. Alternate Education Association conference, Challenge and Change 2000, Sheraton Wall Centre. Contact Joyce Pauls, (604)859-3015, joyce_pauls@sd34.abbotsford.bc.ca.

26-27 Edmonton. Level I: Solution-Focussed Counselling, with Nancy McConkey, MSW. Contact Solution Talk, (403)216-8255, f: (403)949-3321, soltalk@telusplanet.net, www.solutiontalk.ab.ca.

28 Edmonton. Solve School Problems Quickly and Effectively, with Nancy McConkey, MSW. Contact Solution Talk, (403)216-8255, f: (403)949-3321, soltalk@telusplanet.net, www.solutiontalk.ab.ca.

FEBRUARY

2-3 Calgary. Level I: Solution-Focussed Counselling, with Nancy McConkey, MSW. Contact Solution Talk, (403)216-8255, f: (403)949-3321, soltalk@telusplanet.net, www.solutiontalk.ab.ca.

4 Calgary. Solve School Problems Quickly and Effectively, with Nancy McConkey, MSW. Contact Solution Talk, (403)216-8255, f: (403)949-3321, soltalk@telusplanet.net, www.solutiontalk.ab.ca.

10-12 Vancouver. Transitions: Moving from Here to There, B.C. Art Teachers' Association Annual Conference, co-sponsored by BCATA and Delta district art teachers in collaboration with the University of British Columbia. Contact Julie Johnston, Delview Secondary School, (604)594-5491, f: (604)597-4374, jjohnston@infomatch.com.

17-18 TBA. Schools, Crisis, and the Community: Planning for Effective Response, a conference on school-based critical-incident response, critical-incident debriefing, and colleagues' responses to crises in their schools. Visit www.educ.sfu.ca/cirt.

17-20 Vancouver. BCBEA/ WBITE (B.C. Business Education Association and Western Business and Information Technology Educators) international conference, Building Global Connections: Technology, Business, and Economics, Sheraton Wall Centre Hotel. Contact Harriet Tuey, (604)524-2021, f: (604)540-

8583, tuey_h@hotmail.com, www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/BCBEA/index.shtml.

17-19 Richmond. B.C. Music Educators' Association conference, Regenesis 2000, McMath Secondary School. Conference hotel is Executive Inn. Contact (604) 882-9561, www.bctf.bc.ca/bcmea.

APRIL

3-4 Calgary. Level 2: Solution-Focussed Counselling with Difficult Clients, with Nancy McConkey, MSW. Contact Solution Talk, (403)216-8255, f: (403)949-3321, soltalk@telusplanet.net, www.solutiontalk.ab.ca.

6-7 Edmonton. Level 2: Solution-Focussed Counselling with Difficult Clients, (see information above).

14-15 Whistler. B.C. Science Teachers' conference, Catalyst 2000, Whistler Resort and Conference Centre. Contact David Barnum, c/o PO Box 220, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0, (604) 885-2825, dbarnum@sd46.bc.ca, or Susan Martin, c/o 4900 96th Street, Delta, BC V4K 3N3, (604) 596-7101, smartin@deltasd.bc.ca.

JUNE

1-3 Vancouver. 10th International Nursing Conference, Ending Violence Against Women: Setting the Agenda for the Next Millenium. Contact Elaine Liau, UBC Interprofessional Continuing Education, 105-2194 Health Sciences Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3, (604) 822-4965, f: (604) 822-4835, elaine@cehs.ubc.ca.

JULY

3-6 Calgary. Solve School Problems Quickly and Effectively (4 day Intensive), with Nancy McConkey, MSW. Contact Solution Talk, (403) 216-8255, f: (403) 949-3321, soltalk@telusplanet.net, www.solutiontalk.ab.ca.

4-14 Burnaby. Conceptual Physics with Paul Hewitt and Friends, Burnaby South Secondary School, for teachers of physics and physical science. Lectures, labs, workshops, computer simulations, classroom activities, teaching tips, demos, and tricks of the trade. \$250. Contact the UBC Office of Continuing Professional Education, (604)822-2013.

Future October PD Days

2000-2001	October 20
2001-2002	October 19
2002-2003	October 25

For a complete copy of the BCTF PD Calendar, access our Web site www.bctf.bc.ca/events/PD-Calendar.html

Any additions or changes? E-mail dstagg@bctf.bc.ca

BCTF Beginning Teachers' Conference

February 11 & 12

*Delta Pacific Resort & Conference Centre
Richmond, BC*

Opportunities to learn about:

- Classroom management
- Safe schools
- Grade/Subject specific topics
- Practical tips for surviving your first year
- BCTF support and services

Registration: \$50

Conference brochures will be available in schools and on BCTF web site **www.bctf.bc.ca** Contact your local association for more information.

World Teachers' Day

by Peter Owens

"Teachers, a force for social change" was the world-wide theme for World Teachers' Day 1999. The important social change being highlighted by BCTF President David Chudnovsky was our work with First Nations teachers, students, and communities.

Chudnovsky began the day with a trip to Squamish to witness a log-blessing ceremony performed by the Squamish people. The cedar log had been donated to Howe Sound Secondary School to be carved by the students in the First Nations carving classes. The ceremony was led by Dale Harry, representing the education department for the Squamish people. A blessing is performed to remove any negative feelings or ill will when a life is taken. Four elders washed the log with cedar boughs dipped in water from Kookskum (Shannon) Falls. Harry encouraged all those present to bear witness in the future by passing on their account of the event. Bob Barker, an elder, shared the importance of the cedar in providing the Squamish people with shelter, clothing, medicine and a record of their history through carvings. The 50-foot log will be used by the students to create a number of poles. The first will be an eight-foot welcoming pole depicting the life of the

salmon, which also plays such a significant part in the lives of the Squamish people. Two grandparents and two children spoke of the importance of the event to the different generations of Squamish people. Trustee Constance Rulka spoke for the school board when she pointed out that each culture has its own method of recording its significant events and passing them down through generations. The Squamish people

"It was inspiring to see the level of activity and support for First Nations education and culture in our public schools..."

use the oral tradition of asking people to bear witness as well as recording events through their carvings. Chudnovsky also visited Brackendale Elementary, which has a significant proportion of First Nations students and is in the process of developing plans to encourage their participation and improve their success in school. Before leaving Squamish, Chudnovsky and local teacher representatives attended a luncheon at Totem Hall. The luncheon gave Chudnovsky an opportunity to discuss First Nations education issues with Gina Corpuz, the education director for the

Squamish Nation. The hall, completed last year, is used for education, community events, and ceremonies.

Back in Vancouver for the afternoon, Chudnovsky visited Britannia Elementary School, where students in a Grade 6/7 class took part in a simulated potlatch. Students had studied a map of Canada highlighting First Nations peoples, and learned about their traditional territories, cultures, and ways of life. The Coast Salish potlatch was the culmination of the unit, and the students provided food for one another and the visitors. Sheila Maracle, the First Nations resource teacher who had organized the potlatch, led the students through three First Nations dances. Maracle presented Chudnovsky with a mug and a card signed by all of the students. "It was inspiring to see the level of activity and support for First Nations education and culture in our public schools. It may be only a beginning, but it is a positive start," said Chudnovsky. He ended the day by attending a community celebration of WTD in Abbotsford. More than 200 people came together to honour the contributions teachers make to the community. Chudnovsky told them of the BCTF's commitment to social justice with a special focus on First Nations issues.

Peter Owens is editor of Teacher newsmagazine.

The pole in front of Totem Hall in Squamish carved by Squamish Nation students under the leadership of Chief Floyd Joseph. Clockwise from top left: David Chudnovsky accepts a scarf from Dale Harry, speaker for the Squamish Education Dept. Dale Henry looks on as elder Bob Barker explains the significance of cedar in the culture of the Squamish people. Terry-Ann Harry and daughter Gwen witness the log blessing. First Nations resource teacher Sheila Maracle, teaches students at Britannia Elementary School about the West Coast Potlatch.



PETER OWENS PHOTOS