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Teacher

B.C. Safe Schools Week October 15–21, 2000

A safe and caring environment



L-R, Jona Xhepa, Ally Sheane, Kyle Franklin, and Jordy Tam are members of the leadership program at Clinton Elementary School, Burnaby. The yellow vests identify members of the peer-mediation program who play a proactive role in supporting their peers in resolving conflict.

by Terry Waterhouse

Visit Kim Clark's intermediate classroom at Clinton Elementary School, in Burnaby, and you immediately pick up on the positive energy. Surrounded by displays of youthful art and exemplary work, her students are engaged, working individually and collaboratively, happy and eager to learn. Clark's classroom, like those of her colleagues at Clinton, reflects a school-wide commitment that links academic success with a safe, caring environment.

Clark's personal commitment to school safety arose from a strong belief that academic success can occur only when students feel safe and cared for. Her belief has been strengthened over the years through her frontline view of the negative short- and long-term effects of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. "Sometimes it's subtle, but the impact is undeniable," says Clark. "A safe, supportive environment is as important as the ABCs if you want a child to be successful."

Over the last several years, Clinton, like other schools around the province, has utilized resources available through the provincial *Safe Schools, Safe Communities* initiative to develop an overall safe-school plan. Staff at Clinton have worked hard to create a school-wide plan that fits their

needs. They've attended the annual Making Connections conference on effective behaviour support, and have drawn upon resources such as *Focus on Bullying: A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities* and a commercially available program, *Positive Echoes*, to better understand and address issues such as negative behaviour and poor self-esteem.

"Our safe school plan is not static or ironclad," explains Principal Joanne Whitelaw. "It is evolving and part of a long-term commitment." Efforts to date have been multifaceted. Before moving forward, the school surveyed staff, students, and parents about their concerns. Building on the survey results, the staff developed both prevention and intervention plans.

Commitment, collaboration, consistency, communication—it's all part of the plan at Clinton Elementary.

One simple yet effective step was the introduction of a school motto: "Bee Safe, Bee Caring, Bee Respectful," a message delivered by the school's bumblebee mascot. Clark says

the motto has been a highlight of the plan. "We publicize it widely, in school newsletters and on posters in the hallways and classrooms," she says. "It has created a common language and message for both students and staff."

The motto and message are reinforced by a behaviour expectation grid, which articulates clear standards for conduct in all areas of the school. Says Clark, "It's gratifying to see students checking their own behaviour and reinforcing one another's behaviour using the motto."

Consistency among staff is also seen as a key to success. The Clinton staff has developed its own behaviour response plan. Created through a collaboratively defined process, it outlines the chosen strategies for addressing problematic behaviour and reinforcing positive behaviour.

All teachers at Clinton now include the information laid out in the Focus on Bullying program in their classroom teaching, ensuring all students know what bullying is, what the school's expectations are, and what strategies they can use to prevent or respond to bullying. Additionally, staff have been taught behaviour support and problem-solving strategies.

Clinton, like most Burnaby schools, has also introduced a peer-mediation program. Staff and students have found it to be

a great way for senior students to play a proactive role in supporting their peers in resolving conflict. "Now, when students seek help from other students, they know our peer mediators have the skills to be effective problem solvers," says

Crucial to Clinton's safety plan is the involvement of parents.

Arlene Liket, the school's counsellor. The school's popular leadership program has also added to the improved climate. "Leadership provides real ways for younger students to see the older students contributing to the school," says Whitelaw. "We've made it cool to be a leader."

Crucial to Clinton's safety plan is the involvement of parents. The school's Safe School Committee includes a parent representative. Several workshops on school safety have been held for parents, and articles and information are a regular feature of school newsletters. Clark and her colleagues recognize the parallel role parents and the school play in delivering consistent messages to children that reinforce acceptable behaviour.

The school's priorities for this year include developing a mechanism for tracking and

President's message



David Chudnovsky

I recently attended a workshop given by four young activist members of the BCTF. All in their 20s, these colleagues gave us old-timers some advice about how to encourage new teachers to participate in our Federation.

Their suggestions were frank and provocative: Streamline meetings, be sensitive to the fact that teachers on temporary contracts are often afraid to be identified with the union, have more social events, stop talking in BCTF code, do something about low salaries for beginning teachers, take the time to explain how today's rights and benefits were achieved, and get more curriculum materials on the BCTF web site.

It was a great discussion, led by young men and women who surely will sit on the BCTF Executive Committee one day.

That workshop got me thinking about how our young and new members will be key in the coming round of negotiations. For thousands of them, it will be their first experience of collective bargaining, which, with all of its frustrations, is still our single most effective tool for improving the working lives of teachers and the learning conditions of students.

So we all have a challenge. For us veterans, it's to remember that what may be obvious to us—the need for solidarity and mobilization, the value and effectiveness of the union—may not be so obvious to our newer and younger members.

For those of you new to the BCTF, the challenge is even more complex. I want to encourage you—somehow, in the overwhelming crush of demands you deal with every day—to get to know your BCTF better. Contribute your ideas, your passion, your suggestions, and your criticisms. You'll find there is no better way to achieve your dreams for yourselves and your students than to work to strengthen your professional union, the BCTF.

David

SAFE SCHOOLS from page 1

reporting information on incidents of student behaviour, enhancing efforts to support bullied students, and continuing social skills instruction at all grade levels.

Commitment, collaboration, consistency, communication—it's all part of the plan at Clinton Elementary. When asked about the essence of their focus on creating a safe school environment, Clark and Whitelaw echo their school's mission statement: "Developing potential through acceptance and encouragement."

Terry Waterhouse is manager of Burnaby School District's Youth Services.

Safe school resources

Focus on Bullying workshops

These workshops are available by calling the BCTF PD Division at (604) 871-1836 or 1-800-663-9163 (local 1836) or B.C. Safe School Centre at (604) 664-8233, 1-800-224-7233. Schools can book either an introductory workshop or a workshop to begin implementing a school-wide plan.

Challenging Homophobia In Schools

This comprehensive new professional resource produced by Gay and Lesbian Educators of B.C. (GALE-BC) was sent to PD reps in all public schools in September. The resource deals with the complex reality of homophobia and heterosexism in schools and includes lots of practical lesson plans from K to 12 as well as a rationale on why schools need to teach about sexual orientation. A background section includes information on negative myths perpetuated against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, coming-out issues, counselling ideas, violence prevention strategies, dealing with anti-gay slurs and how to support students by starting gay straight alliances in schools.

Teachers are given lots of concrete, practical strategies, and lesson plans written by classroom teachers. The resource section provides a wide range of age-appropriate classroom resources from K to 12, as well as parent and professional resources. Community groups and support services for LGBT people and relevant web sites are also listed.

To order copies of the handbook, contact BCTF Lesson Aids Service, or mail a cheque payable to GALE-BC for \$18.50 per copy to GALE-BC, Box 93678, Nelson Park PO, Vancouver, BC V6E 4L7. Local presidents who would like free copies for the alternate schools in their locals/sublocals can contact Steve LeBel at (604) 688-0924.

Making Connections 2000

The 3rd annual conference on effective behaviour support will be held November 2-3, 2000 at the Robson Square Conference Centre. For more information, call Kathy Champion at (604) 668-6063, F: (604) 668-6191.

In memoriam



Frances May Worledge

January 12, 1922–August 24, 2000

by Maureen MacDonald

Frances Worledge didn't like to be praised for her work. She was, in her own words, "just an ordinary classroom teacher." It would be unthinkable, however, to let her pass on without telling something of her long history of service to her profession.

Frances Worledge did not enter teaching until 1957. Before that, she had many adventures. She had a mind of her own. She was born in Victoria and showed an early athletic skill. She was a good student and her sense of humour was never lost.

After high school, she headed for England, stopping at the New York World's Fair in 1939 on the way. She spent the World War II years in the army. She regaled friends for hours with fascinating stories of those days. She turned down proposals from dashing young officers and continued her business career abroad after the war, returning to Vancouver in 1952. She ran a finance company and taught adults at the Y.

Somehow she managed to find time to get a university degree and was offered two jobs in the Vancouver School District in 1957. One was teaching business education in a secondary school, but she chose the other: a position teaching PE at Nightingale—a position she held until her retirement in 1987.

Worledge's organizational and speaking skills were immediately recognized as an asset to the local association and to the BCTF. She served on virtually every committee and was an outspoken advocate for teachers' and children's rights.

Her guidance on the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association and the BCTF Executive Committee helped many a president to avoid pitfalls and to seek solutions to problems. As president of VESTA, in 1964-65, she taught full time and led the association too. As a negotiator, she was VESTA's chief spokesperson, along with Charles Arthur, from VSTA, when VESTA/VSTA achieved the first contract with the VSB in 1969. (This was also

the first teachers' contract in B.C. at a time when teachers did not have the legal right to bargain anything but salaries and bonuses.) Many Vancouver teachers remember the huge turnout at the board meeting when the agreement was signed. It was a proud day.

Worledge was vice-president of the BCTF 1969-71, when Jim Killeen was president. Although she could have had full release time in 1970-71, she didn't want to leave her teaching entirely, so she taught half the week and spent the other half travelling all over B.C. trouble-shooting for the BCTF.

Worledge was the darling of the BCTF Representative Assembly. People instantly paid attention as she strode to the microphone, usually wearing at least four layers of clothes because we met in icy, air-conditioned rooms. She had a way of sorting through the points made in debate, pointing out historical references, and clarifying the stand we should take. (Even people who knew she would oppose their motions came to her for help in wording them so they were clear.)

At BCTF AGMs, Worledge was the chairperson who could handle the thorniest procedural wrangles with a sense of humour and make everyone there proud to belong to such a democratic organization. As a debater at AGMs, she commanded instant respect for her uncanny ability to see the issues clearly.

For these and many other reasons, the BCTF conferred upon her its two highest honours: the G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award, in 1976, and Honourary Life Membership, in 1986. VESTA awarded her Honourary Life Membership in the year of her retirement.

It is impossible to do justice to Frances Worledge's life or career in one newsletter column. There are too many facets to explore fully: her work on teacher certification and boards of review, her tireless work on VSB committees, advocating for adequate funding, minority rights, and learning and working conditions, as well as her mentoring of many teacher leaders and activists in the BCTF and locals. Her contribution to education has been enormous. During her retirement years, Worledge found ways to continue to use her talents and skills to make things better for children and teachers, including volunteer work in educational programs of the Vancouver Museum.

The legacy of service and dedication is what Worledge leaves to all teachers; those who knew her as colleague, mentor, and friend, and those who didn't know her but who now reap the benefits of her huge contribution to the profession.

Maureen MacDonald is president of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association.

History of Vancouver's inner-city schools

A comprehensive history (1975-2000) of the evolution of inner-city schools in Vancouver is being compiled under the auspices of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association (VESTA).

Reaching back to the North East Sector Project (NESP) in 1975, the history will detail the development of programs and services for children and families living in poverty over the past quarter century.

Work has already begun on this important project, and a VESTA committee is currently collating primary and secondary documents (briefs, memos, letters, minutes, newspaper clippings) related to inner-city school communities.

Oral history submissions will also play an important part in the writing of the document.

The committee is appealing to both current and retired teachers, principals, area counsellors, school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, family advancement workers, childcare workers, community health nurses, and project teachers who have any information or documentation that they feel would be useful in this work to contact the VESTA office at (604) 873-8378.

Parent advisory committees and community organizations or groups working in the inner city will be contacted.

The VESTA committee will also examine future directions for inner-city schools. It plans to include a blueprint for future growth as part of the document. The committee hopes to complete its work in the spring of 2001.

For more information or to contribute to this project, contact Sam Phillipoff, at (604) 713-4663 or fax (604) 713-4665.

BCTF Winter holiday closure

The BCTF building will be closed from December 27 to December 29, 2000 as per the June Executive Committee decision, following consultations with the UTFE/IWA Local 1-3567 and the ASU.



Write to us

Letters to "Readers Write" may be edited for reasons of legality, taste, brevity, and clarity. To be considered for publication, they must be not more than 150 to 200 words, signed, and include a home phone number for verification.



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All advertisements will be reviewed and approved by the BCTF. They must reflect BCTF policy and be politically, environmentally, and professionally appropriate.

New teachers

Meet-the-teacher night

The first formal introduction to parents/guardians will usually be a meet-the-teacher activity. This is a time to introduce yourself and your curriculum.

- About parents/guardians—you will want to talk to colleagues to find out what parents/guardians expect from the session. Also seek information regarding the parent population.

- About you—as a first-year teacher, many parents/guardians will be coming to “check you out.” Be prepared to instill confidence regarding your instructional abilities. Communicate about your relevant experiences. Let your enthusiasm show!

- All about your classroom—consider discussing rules and operating procedures, the subject(s), goals of the curriculum, expectations for students, instructional materials.

- Your presentation—be well prepared for the session. Some of the following may help: handouts of curriculum, grading procedures, homework criteria, use of overheads, sample lessons, outline of what you are going to address (watch your timing to be sure you hit all relevant points).

- Working together—identify how home and school can work together. Inform parents/guardians of when, where, and how you can be reached, and discuss how parents/guardians can best support their child’s learning out of school.

- Cautionary notes—don’t let one parent monopolize the discussion or sidetrack you; have a conference sign-up sheet available so that parents/guardians may speak with you about their children individually.

Once you have opened the doors of communication with parents/guardians, you are on the road to developing a trusting relationship. Use several ongoing means of communication such as phone calls, newsletters, progress reports, notes, “happygrams,” volunteering, and conferences (informal and formal). The BCTF pamphlet, *Parent Involvement in Schools*, is an additional source of information.

Excerpts from the *BCTF Handbook for New Teachers*. To obtain a copy, contact the BCTF PD Division, or check our web site: www.bctf.bc.ca/beginning/handbook.



Yours for the asking

Teacher wellness is free

Dr. Martin Collis, a Canadian authority on teacher health and wellness, is inviting all teachers to visit his free newsletter *Well* at www.speakwell.com. The newsletter is issued quarterly, and the current issue is on teacher wellness. In the lead article, Dr. Collis’ reminds teachers of the importance of the profession and the profound influence teachers have on their students’ lives. To be effective, teachers must take care of both mind and body. Collis proposes several steps teachers can take that will lead them to high level wellness and high level personal and professional performance.

Other highlights include Collis’s original song lyrics to *Just a Teacher*, teacher web sites, teacher wellness cartoons, and wellness poetry. Check it out, for free

Dr. Collis, former university professor, has been recognized as a pioneer of wellness in Canada, and has taken up communicating his message of health and wellness full-time to educators, administrators, and educational organizations all over North America.

Camp Jubilee

Camp Jubilee is a B.C. labour unit project devoted to community service. For meeting and social planners looking for a unique rental facility, Camp Jubilee is the Lower Mainland’s most modern, multipurpose camp that provides a remote retreat atmosphere, encouraging productivity and relaxation.

On Indian Arm, the wilderness/seaside Orломah Beach is away from city pressures and demands. Camp Jubilee facilities include commercial kitchen, winterized sleeping accommodation for 130, lounge with fireplace, laundry and first-aid room, wash house, cabins, private boat dock, fire pit, and undeveloped beach, volleyball court, ropes course, and three hiking trails. The camp, ideal for outdoor education programs, offers a competitive price.

For more information, call (604) 432-7529, Fax (604) 435-7760, write Box 80128, Burnaby, BC V5H 3X5, or visit campjubilee.bc.ca.

Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

1 Challenging Homophobia in Schools. GALE-BC, 256p. 2000. Resource book for K–12 educators, counsellors, and administrators, written to aid in support of, and education about, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth and families. Sections deal with rationale (Why is this work important? What are the issues for LGBT youth and families?) Background info about heterosexism, identity development, homophobic myths, terminology, the impact of systemic oppression, etc. Strategies for change in each class, staffroom and school, lesson plans and activities for K–12. Resources for educators (books, videos, web sites, community groups/ services, student brochure and poster. LA 2218—\$15

2 Does the News Media provide an accurate picture of the Global Village? A co-operatively planned unit for Social Studies 11 (The Global Village) on the news media. Judith Coffin & Debbie Swain, 150p. ©1999. Includes six lessons on media survey, statistical overview of media habits, reported and unreported stories, the filters, content analysis and alternatives/conclusion. Also included is a 97-page copy of *Project Censored Canada—1996 Yearbook*. Grade 11. LA 2018—\$10.95

3 Novel Projects for Social Studies 8. Judith Coffin, Phyllis Simon and Ramona Sousa. 13 p. 2000. Includes a list of 86 novels relating to Medieval and Renaissance history and current event topics, an annotated bibliography of each novel and two handouts outlining novel projects. The goals of the unit are to have students choose and read two novels, develop a critical view of the information in the novels and create a critical book review from the history of each novel. LA 2092—\$2

4 Novel Projects for Social Studies 9. Judith Coffin, Phyllis Simon and Ramona Sousa. 12 p. 2000. Includes a list of 71 novels relating to The Industrial, French and American Revolutions, Asian

and Canadian History and Slavery and the Underground Railway, an annotated bibliography of each novel and two handouts outlining novel projects. The goals of this unit are to have students choose and read two novels, expand their knowledge of historical events that fall between 1730–1899, expand their knowledge of current event topics and develop the ability to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a historical fiction book. Grade 9. LA 2093—\$1.50

5 Learning by Designing—Pacific Northwest Native Indian Art, Volume 1. Jim Gilbert and Karin Clark, 226 p. 1999. This reference book gives the reader some understanding of the highly developed, sophisticated Pacific Northwest Coast First Nations two-dimensional art styles. These styles have evolved over thousands of years, from crude pictographs on rocks to the highly stylized and abstracted designs we see today. The authors have attempted to keep the text and the illustrations simple and clear. A glossary is included. Grades 4–12. LA 3213—\$34.95

6 A Potpourri of PE Games—Volume 1. Compiled by Coquitlam School District Physical Education. 52 p. 1990. Each of the 44 lessons includes introduction, skill development and game development. Progressions include individual and partner. LA 8309—\$5

7 A Potpourri of PE Games—Volume 2. Compiled by Coquitlam School District Physical Education. A follow-up to LA 8309 (see above). Includes 35 lessons, many in inventive games format and others are more direct teaching. Progressions include individual, partner, and small group. K–3. LA 8310—\$4.75

8 Daily Math Practice, Grade 4. Produced by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers. 112 p. 1999. Based on current mathematics standards and designed to support curriculum that is used in the classroom. Divided into a 36-week progressive program (5 min.

a day is required to practice four or five math essentials). Scope and sequence charts and answer keys are included. Worksheets are reproducible. Format is also appropriate for remedial, adult literacy, and ESL use. Grade 4. LA 9427—\$19.95

9 Daily Math Practice, Grade 6. Produced by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers. 112 p. 1999. Based on current mathematics standards and designed to support curriculum that is used in the classroom. Divided into a 36-week progressive program (5 min. a day is required to practice four or five math essentials). Scope and sequence charts and answer keys are included. Worksheets are reproducible. Format is also appropriate for remedial, adult literacy, and ESL use. Grade 4. LA 9429—\$19.95

10 Experimenting with Light and Colour Gordon R. Gore. 48 p. ©1999. Illustrated resource book includes hands on science activities for use by individual students who wish to experiment with light and colour. Includes pinhole images, shadows, reflections, refraction, waves, and colour. Grades 4–7. LA 9549—\$11.

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.

NOTE: The French text on the front page of the Lesson Aids Catalogue was printed incorrectly. It should read:

FECEB Leçons modèles
Ressources pédagogiques
préparées par des enseignants
pour des enseignants

LOOKING BACK

Janet Amsden
Fairview Elementary School
Maple Ridge

70 years ago

Judgment by examination results. Since the school and the teacher are both judged, under present conditions, mainly on examination results, teachers are forced, regardless of all other considerations, to coach and cram their pupils, to pound and drill the prescribed subject-matter into them. University professors protest that they are absolutely opposed to such methods—that on the contrary they want pupils to be trained to think for themselves; but such protests are vain so long as examinations are such that they cannot be passed without protracted and intensive drill, and so long as the teacher has to get his pupils through or be branded a failure.

- BC Teacher, December 1930

50 years ago

Of all the subjects that help to break a teacher’s heart, English grammar seems most likely to effect a compound fracture in the shortest space of term-time. Like the word education, it has a forbidding aura about it, and a strong suggestion that it is one of those academic animals that bark and bite simultaneously. No amount of top dressing will disguise its predatory appearance: call it by names such as language, functional composition, verbal discipline, or writing technique, and it will smell as sour. From the start, then, the teacher is faced with a high nominal resistance to this necessary creature of evil with its fussy, persistent snort, and its long, pedantic tail. No pupil who values his freedom will believe that dear little grammars is, in fact, a harmless pup with perfectly good manners and an even temper, particularly fond of boys.

- BC Teacher, November 1950

30 years ago

A new jargon will shortly cross the border. Its forerunner is accountability, its followers are performance contracting, educational engineering, management support group, and independent auditing. Even if in fact these exact phrases do not travel from their birthplace, the USA, their intents and some of their implications certainly will.

- BC Teacher, Sept./Oct. 1970

10 years ago

Teachers in Southern Okanagan scored a clear victory in knocking out the school board’s lockout on October 1. After 50 days of almost continuous bargaining and 21 days of school closure, the longest teacher lockout in B.C. history was over. Southern Okanagan teachers did not cave in to the board’s demands for a substandard collective agreement. Supported by teachers across the province, and buoyed by CUPE solidarity, they held firm.

- Teacher Newsmagazine, October 1990.

Lift those caps

by Noel Herron

The month of September can be an organizational nightmare for the principals and staffs of many schools as they struggle to reorganize classes (without disrupting large segments of their schools) to meet local board and provincial requirements.

Last year, with the introduction of the new ESL funding cap, the number of students recognized for support in Vancouver dropped dramatically...

But nowhere is the organizational struggle more pointed and poignant than in the case of accommodating the needs of two groups of vulnerable children: special education and English as-a-second-language students.

For more than 10 years, Victoria has imposed funding caps on a range of special education students, and last year it added yet another cap, on ESL students.

Behind all the official and, to parents, mind-numbing, terminology for special education students (i.e., a high-incidence, low-cost student) and behind the new, restrictive criteria for ESL support are two groups of children shortchanged in the public school system.

When the enrolment numbers are crunched at the end of September and the restrictions emanating from provincial funding caps are applied, with no special classes or no supporting services available in local schools, the frustration and anger of parents of special ed and ESL children emerges.

It is particularly acute for parents of autistic children. A local example illustrates this point. A friend of mine, whose autistic child was entering Kindergarten in a suburban school at the start of the school year was informed that the school would not be able to provide consistent, one-to-one help in the form of a special ed assistant. My friend suggested to the principal of his school that in order to help out he would be willing to take time off work to accompany his child while the school endeavoured to provide some sort of organizational stop-gap service. But his anger at the inability of our school system to meet the needs of his child knew no bounds.

Combined, B.C. school districts currently spend \$54 million over and above Victoria's capped funding level for special ed.

The recent high-profile court case, in which the provincial government decided to appeal a judgment in favour of autistic children, dramatically highlighted the cost and agony of parents when appropriate services are denied.

But the situation in which parents of children with less serious disabilities or varying types of learning and developmental difficulties find them-

selves can be almost as disturbing.

One has to witness first hand the crushing disappointment parents experience when they are told that the school has no program, that no back-up support service is available, or that they may have to wait a year or two for a formal assessment of their child's needs. In the case of immigrant parents of ESL students, they often face a formidable language barrier, are confused by the organization of public schools, and are unable to serve as advocates for their children.

The five-year enrolment cap on ESL funding imposed last year by then Education Minister Paul Ramsey has denied thousands of legitimate ESL students access to appropriate instruction. Ramsey's arbitrary and absurd assertion, that it takes about "three years" for a beginning ESL student to acquire full fluency in English, is belied by both practice and research. In fact, it takes at least double that time.

Vancouver School District, which has the largest enrolment of special ed and ESL students in B.C., is a good example of how school districts across the province have suffered under Victoria's funding caps.

All of this stems from the double-whammy policy of rigid centralization and cutbacks.

Last year, with the introduction of the new ESL funding cap, the number of students recognized for support in Vancouver dropped dramatically from approximately 28,000 to 17,000. This meant a \$4.9 million loss for the VSB, and even with a transitional grant, the board still lost \$2.4 million. It stands to lose a further \$4.6 million in 2000-01.

Also last year, even after cutting \$4.5 million from special education services, the Vancouver board still had to spend \$5.8 million more on special ed than the targeted funding provided by the province. (To add insult to injury, the 15-month, provincial special ed study tabled in June ignored the funding issue entirely.)

Combined, B.C. school districts currently spend \$54 million over and above Victoria's capped funding level for special ed. And despite this, specialized staff—itinerant teachers, special ed assistants, school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, and child-care workers—continue to be laid off.

All of this stems from the double-whammy policy of rigid centralization and cutbacks.

The integration of students with special needs and ESL students into regular classrooms requires patience on the part of the parent, skill and training on the part of the teacher, and an appropriate range of supportive services from the school board.

To characterize the province's ongoing funding caps as unfair to parents and children is an understatement. Victoria needs to be reminded that the disruptions and crises in the lives of these families are far from over.

It's time to lift these inequitable caps.

Noel Herron is a retired Vancouver elementary school principal.



by Lynne Sinclair

Occupational Health & Safety Regulation 3.12: A person must not carry out or cause to be carried out any work process or operate or cause to be operated any tool, appliance, or equipment if that person has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person.

The right to refuse unsafe work is one of the three basic health and safety rights of workers around the world. It is the most important right because if all else fails, the worker may refuse unsafe work and thereby be protected from injury or illness. Refusing unsafe work is the exception to the "work now, grieve later" rule of labour arbitrations. The right to refuse unsafe work is enshrined in legislation because society recognizes that occasions and circumstances will arise in which workers must make decisions on the spot; the health and safety of workers is paramount in these situations.

In British Columbia, refusing unsafe work is actually an obligation. This is an important distinction for teachers who must be responsible not only for their own health and safety but also for that of their students'. The obligatory nature of the regulation means that teachers do not have to bear the weight of making a decision—they must not carry out work they believe is unsafe. In addition, the regulation includes the phrase "an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person" (emphasis added), which includes students.

Teachers have refused unsafe work in a variety of situations. In many cases, simply the notice to the administrative officer has

Health and safety

caused immediate action and results, eliminating an actual refusal of unsafe work.

Refusal of unsafe work can regard one aspect of an assignment, not necessarily the entire assignment. For example, an art teacher may refuse to fire the kiln until it has been inspected and found safe but continue to teach all other aspects of art. Another example is a refusal of unsafe work which results in keeping a student who has been violent out of a class or school until a risk assessment, an investigation, and proper safeguards/resources are put in place. This ensures the safety of the teacher and the other students and the continuity of instruction, and it also ensures that the student receives the necessary care and attention.

...the refusal-of-unsafe-work provision is there to protect us and our students...

A refusal of unsafe work can produce other positive results, such as a safe, new location. For example, a refusal to teach in a classroom with mould may result in a protective reassignment to another classroom or location until the unsafe condition is remedied. Teacher refusals of unsafe work have also resulted in increased staffing—teachers or teacher assistants. In addition, school security has been improved when teachers refuse to continue to teach without adequate protection in the face of violent threats; cell phones, additional supervision aides, a dedicated phone line, a security camera, and even security guards have been provided.

A refusal of unsafe work involves four steps. The first step is to inform your administrative officer of the unsafe condition and that you are refusing unsafe work. The other steps are outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, a copy of which must be in your workplace, and in the BCTF Health and Safety manual, which is online at www.bctf.bc.ca/education/health/OHandS-Manual/. It is strongly suggested that teachers who refuse unsafe work seek union support and assistance from the outset. Should the refusal not be resolved at the first three steps, a WCB officer will investigate and decide whether the situation is unsafe. A worker cannot be disciplined for complying with the refusal-of-unsafe-work regulation.

A teacher who becomes ill as a result of exposure to toxins in the workplace is entitled to benefits under WCB, which are obtained by filing a claim. However, once the teacher has recovered, the situation may change from a claim to a refusal of unsafe work. For example, the teacher may be well again but unable to be in the workplace where the toxins remain. The administrative officer must be notified of a refusal of unsafe work in this situation.

The threat of a refusal of unsafe work has, in many cases, resolved the problem because it catches the immediate attention of management, administrative officers, health and safety committees, and the WCB. The bottom line is that the refusal-of-unsafe-work provision is there to protect us and our students; it works when we don't.

Lynne Sinclair is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division.

David Yorke retires



David Yorke retired from the staff of the BCTF on September 30, 2000.

Yorke is not a teacher, but a lawyer. Most B.C. teachers would not recognize his name, Yet David Yorke has had a very significant and positive impact on the rights and working conditions that we all accept today as part of our employment relationship with our employers.

Yorke joined the staff of the BCTF in 1980, at a critical time in our struggle to achieve full bargaining rights. He introduced us to many of the aspects of full collective bargaining that were not part of our experience under the limited scope in place at the time. His "Yorke Report" described the bargaining rights that other teachers in Canada and

other employees in B.C. enjoyed at the time and provided a case and a direction for us to pursue in the quest for full bargaining rights. His work assisted the Federation in shaping a number of very important "expanded scope" campaigns in the early 1980s, and in 1983 he played a pivotal role in helping us achieve seniority, severance, and layoff language in all of our local agreements.

When the provincial government introduced Bills 19 and 20, in 1987, Yorke provided the BCTF with the advice and assistance necessary to mitigate some of the potential problems of the legislation and, more important, guided us through the mechanics and logistics of organizing the sign-up and certification campaign in the fall of 1987. That campaign essentially rebuilt the BCTF into a Federation of 75 local bargaining units. We had indeed become unions with full bargaining rights.

When we moved to co-ordinated local bargaining, with full scope and the right to strike, Yorke co-ordinated the production of what became known as the CBH, the *Collective Bargaining Handbook*. The CBH contained the language for a myriad of rights and working conditions provisions that local bargaining teams used to shape

their proposals in district after district; they still exist in collective agreements in every local in the province.

When government imposed provincial bargaining on us in 1994, Yorke was there again to provide the necessary advice to restructure and reorganize ourselves for bargaining and contract implementation.

Yorke would be the first to downplay his role in the BCTF. He is right when he says it was the teachers of B.C. and their leaders who waged the campaigns and struggled to achieve full bargaining rights. And he is right when he credits the willingness of teachers to take action through their locals with the achievement of solid collective agreements in the early rounds of local bargaining some 10 to 12 years ago. But Yorke was there at all of the critical moments in the last 20 years of our development as a strong and proud union of professionals. And it was his advice and counsel that helped guide us as provincial leaders, as local leaders, as staff, and as members along the paths that would achieve our goals.

We will all miss David Yorke's wise counsel, but his retirement is well deserved, and the legacy of his work with teachers will carry on.

—Ken Novakowski

Under protest, accreditation continues

This chart sets out what teachers are required to do and what teachers are NOT required to do, according to the Ministry School Accreditation Policy (Interim)

Teachers ARE required to:	Teachers ARE NOT required to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work on accreditation in Year One (the year the external team visits) for up to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – five hours of meeting time – the Implementation Planning Day (the sixth non-instructional day) – additional release time with TOCs paid from school accreditation funds work on accreditation in Years Two to Six (the years the school works on its school growth plan) for up to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – two to three hours of meeting time – the Implementation Planning Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> spend any other time, including the other five non-instructional days (PD days) on accreditation activities volunteer for specific committees or positions (e.g., chairing and/or membership on accreditation committees or sub-committees)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collect and record student assessment information, “report card data (generated in accordance with legislation) is adequate for accreditation purposes” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “collect or compile data beyond what they do as part of their regular classroom activities for report card purposes” report whether students are “below expectation,” “meet expectations,” or “exceed expectations” have students complete surveys, read questions aloud to students, distribute parent surveys to students, or ensure that surveys are completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze the evidence collected for the accreditation process (do satisfaction ratings, and overall judgments for summary statements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use data beyond the required sources for each topic question indicated on the chart in Appendix 4 of the Accreditation Manual for Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a growth plan for the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follow this growth plan exactly for five years; it can be revised
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include the following statement anywhere that FSA data is reported: “This information provides a snapshot of how our students performed on the most recent Foundation Skills Assessment. However, we do not yet have enough years of data to determine whether performance on FSA is improving, decreasing, or staying about the same in the school.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze trends in provincial assessment data as such trends are not known yet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include the following statement when comparing school performance with district or province: “The difference between the average performance of students in this school and the average performance of students in this district is/is not statistically significant.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in discussions comparing results when the differences are not statistically significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> report student participation rates, success rates, and trends over time when reporting Grade 12 exam results “only report improvements in exam scores if the school has been able to achieve that increase without lower participation rates or lower pass rates” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop plans for improving exam scores in ways that may result in lower participation rates or success rates

Teachers should keep a log of all time spent on any accreditation activities.

No one would ever assess schools that way!

by John Taylor

“My dentist is great! He sends me reminders so I don’t forget check-ups. He uses the latest techniques based on research. He never hurts me, and I’ve got all my teeth. So when I ran into him the other day, I was eager to see if he’d heard about the new government program. I knew he’d think it was great.

“Did you hear about the new government program to measure the effectiveness of dentists with their young patients?” I said.

“No” he said. He didn’t seem too thrilled. “How will they do that?”

“It’s quite simple,” I said. “They will just count the number of cavities each patient has at age 10, 14, and 18 and average that to determine a dentist’s rating. Dentists will be rated as Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and Unsatisfactory. That way,

parents will know which are the best dentists. It will also encourage the less effective dentists to get better,” I said. “Poor dentists who don’t improve could lose their licence to practise.”

“That’s terrible,” he said.

“What? That’s not a good attitude,” I said. “Don’t you think we should try to improve children’s dental health?”

“Sure I do,” he said, “but that’s not a fair way to determine who is practicing good dentistry.”

“Why not?” I said. “It makes perfect sense to me.”

“Well, it’s so obvious,” he said. “Don’t you see that dentists don’t all work with the same clientele; so much depends on things we can’t control?”

“For example,” he said, “I work in a rural area with a high percentage of patients from deprived homes, while some of my colleagues work in upper-middle-class neighborhoods. Many of the parents I work with don’t bring their children to see me until there is some kind of

problem, and I don’t get to do much preventive work.”

“Also,” he said, “many of the parents I serve let their kids eat way too much candy from a young age, unlike more educated parents who understand the relationship between sugar and decay.”

“To top it all off,” he added, “so many of my clients have well water that is untreated and has no fluoride in it. Do you have any idea how much difference early use of fluoride can make?”

“It sounds like you’re making excuses,” I said. I couldn’t believe my dentist would be so defensive. He does a great job. “I am not!” he said. “My best patients are as good as anyone’s, my work is as good as anyone’s, but my average cavity count is going to be higher than a lot of other dentists because I chose to work where I am needed most.”

“Don’t get touchy,” I said.

“Touchy?” he said. His face had turned red, and from the way he was clenching and

unclenching his jaws, I was afraid he was going to damage his teeth. “Try furious. In a system like this, I will end up being rated average, below average, or worse.

“My more educated patients who see these ratings may believe this so-called rating actually is a measure of my ability and proficiency as a dentist. They may leave me, and I’ll be left with only the most needy patients. And my cavity average score will get even worse.

“On top of that, how will I attract good dental hygienists and other excellent dentists to my practice if it is labelled below average?”

“I think you’re over-reacting,” I said. “Complaining, excuse making, and stonewalling won’t improve dental health. I am quoting that from a leading member of the DOC,” I noted.

“What’s the DOC?” he said. “It’s the Dental Oversight Committee,” I said, “a group made up of mostly laypersons to make sure dentistry gets improved.”

“Spare me,” he said. “I can’t believe this. Reasonable people won’t buy it,” he said.

The program sounded reasonable to me, so I asked, “How else would you measure good dentistry?”

“Come watch me work,” he said. “Observe my processes.”

“That’s too complicated and time consuming,” I said.

“Cavities are the bottom line, and you can’t argue with the bottom line. It’s an absolute measure.”

“That’s what I’m afraid my patients and prospective patients will think. This can’t be happening,” he said despairingly.

“Now, now.” I said, “Don’t despair. The state will help you some.”

“How?” he said.

“If you’re rated poorly, they’ll send a dentist who is rated excellent to help straighten you out,” I said brightly.

“You mean,” he said, “they will send a dentist with a wealthy clientele to show me how to work on severe juvenile dental problems with which I have probably had much more experience? Big help.”

“There you go again,” I said. “You aren’t acting professionally at all.”

“You don’t get it,” he said. “Doing this would be like grading schools and teachers on an average score on a test of children’s progress without regard to influences outside the school—the home, the community served, and stuff like that. Why would they do something so unfair to dentists? No one would ever think of doing that to schools.”

I just shook my head sadly, but he had brightened. “I’m going to write my representatives and senator,” he said. “I’ll use the school analogy—surely they’ll see my point.”

He walked off with that look of hope mixed with fear and suppressed anger that I’ve seen in the mirror so often lately.

John Taylor is superintendent of schools, Lancaster County School District, South Carolina.





SURREY LEADER PHOTO

PUBLIC EDUCATION NOT FOR SALE

That's where the kids are

by Chris Bocking

Alex Molnar is a passionate and outspoken critic of the way corporations are bullying their way into public schools. He uses colourful analogies and real-life anecdotes to underscore his message that students are no longer thought of as citizens but as consumers-in-training.

Molnar is a professor at the University of Wisconsin. He has dedicated his career to investigating the spread of commercialism in public education and trying to come up with alternatives to the corporate agenda.

In the 1920s, a bank robber called Willy Sutton was asked why he robbed banks. "Because that's where the money is," he replied. In much the same way, Molnar stated, that is why business is targeting schools:

"Allowing corporations access to the classrooms is a profoundly immoral act..."

"That's where the kids are."

Twenty-five years ago, Molnar thought he might be interested in curriculum development. Then he saw a McDonald's booth at a professional conference and was stunned to find that the restaurant chain had developed a unit on nutrition. He checked with the students in his university classes and found that they had been given piles of sponsored materials. He decided that his professional time could be better spent investigating how and to what extent business was involving itself in public schools.

He talked about the self-styled "Coke dude" at Colorado Springs, in Arizona. That administrator told principals and teachers to encourage the students to drink more Coke in order to meet the district quota. We applauded the courageous lad in Georgia who was sus-

pending for donning a Pepsi shirt when the entire student body was out on the parking lot forming the word COKE in a bid to win \$10,000 from the soft-drink corporation.

Molnar pointed out how schools are under relentless

"It is the harvesting of our children as a cash crop."

attack, and how the detractors have a lot of corporate money behind them. The "evidence" from right-wing think tanks used to "prove" the shortcomings of public schools does not usually stand up to scrutiny. Academics from the Fraser Institute do not have to submit their findings to a peer jury for verification; instead they tailor their announcements for maximum impact in the media, according to Molnar.

Popular culture has become much more commercialized lately, and people are defined by their possessions more than anything else. Democratic institutions have never been weaker, said Molnar.

Architecture reflects a society's culture. The huge cathedrals of the Middle Ages demonstrated the importance of religion to the people of the time. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, political buildings (think of the provincial legislature) were front and centre, and in our day, the largest and most impressive buildings are trade centres and shopping malls. The market metaphor not democracy has triumphed, said Molnar.

"What is more important than the health of our children?"

"Allowing corporations access to the classrooms is a profoundly immoral act, and represents the colonization of childhood," said Molnar. "It is the harvesting of our children as a cash crop."

Teachers need to shoulder some responsibility for the suc-

cess of business to date in the plan to infiltrate public schools. We have, in general, been "ethically tone deaf and morally blind," he claimed. Increased activism is necessary, Molnar urged.

"Too many of our colleagues are in the malls instead of in the union halls!"

A positive approach will be the most successful. We need to "affirm a commitment to values, and promote healthful lifestyles." After all, he concluded, "What is more important than the health of our children?"

Center for Commercial-Free Public Education

Outrage over the introduction of Channel One in American high schools led to the formation of the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education in 1993. Begun as a student-oriented organization, it now provides arguments for teachers, parents, and school-board members interested in fighting corporate intrusion.

One of the presenters at the *Public Education: Not for Sale* conference in May was Andrew Hagelshaw, the executive director of the centre. Hagelshaw reminded us of Channel One, the 12-minute closed-circuit television pseudo-newscast that includes two minutes of high-energy advertising. Approximately eight million American high-school students must watch Channel One during instructional time on a regular basis. Studies have shown that the commercials have more impact on the students than do the "newscasts."

A version of Channel One for school computers has now also become available. A limited Internet portal, it has advertising running in the lower left corner all the time. And students can accumulate points to redeem for merchandise.

Three parents and a teacher, supported by the centre, successfully fought an 80-million-

dollar soft-drink deal in Philadelphia that would have affected 215,000 students. In Oregon, a petition drive by students prevented a Coke deal, and San Francisco passed strong anti-corporate sponsorship policies recently.

The McGraw-Hill publishing company brought out a Grade 6 math textbook crammed with advertising. Students were asked to calculate the circumference of an Oreo cookie and to figure out how many weeks it would take to save up for Nike runners at so many dollars per week. California has now outlawed advertising in textbooks, and New York is leaning that way.

The centre has developed sample school-board policies that can be used as templates for districts seeking to adopt stricter business-involvement guidelines. Hagelshaw talked about alternatives that boards can offer to companies willing to donate money. For example, a small plaque rather than a huge logo can be mounted on a scoreboard.

The Center for Commercial-Free Public Education can be contacted at its web site, www.commercialfree.org, or by e-mail at unplug@igc.org, or by phone at 1-800-867-5841.

Chris Bocking teaches at Keating Elementary School, Victoria, and is a member of the Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board.

Video available

"Public Education: Not For Sale" now available on video.

You can receive a copy of a 22-minute video that explores the issues raised by corporate involvement in schools. Many of the keynote speakers and workshop presenters from the May 23-24, 2000 conference are interviewed.

To obtain a copy, contact Bev Humphries at 604-871-1875 or e-mail bhumphries@bctf.bc.ca.

Schools providing new food for thought

by Jim McMurtry

My daughter complains about her school lunches, particularly the brown bread and cheese. She says some of her friends get to have candy and pop. One classmate had her mom pack a whole bag of licorice for her recess and lunch snacks. I tell my daughter that her teeth will come in handy when she is older and that a healthy body translates into a healthy mind. But she's not convinced.

I worry about when she will be in high school. Caffeinated pop and fast food are the standard diet. In fact, many high schools are creating fast food courts. At Terry Fox Secondary,

...there are problems when schools peddle something other than knowledge.

in Coquitlam, students can choose among Subway, Pizza Hut, Panagopoulos, White Spot, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Time, and others.

Once there was discussion in schools about instilling good eating habits, but that seems to have been forgotten in the rush for corporate funding. Soon there might not be a bus, toilet stall, team jersey, computer screen saver, or school assembly without a corporate logo or message.

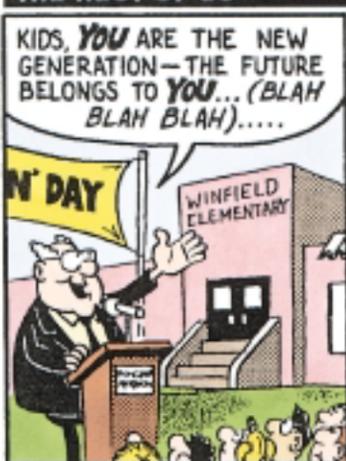
The corporations are the big winners, because they get a captive market of kids at an age when brand loyalties are formed. And school sponsorship is a lot cheaper for them than advertising on television.

The big losers, in my view, are teachers, because they are already dealing with many kids with attention-deficit disorder. When children load themselves up on sugar, caffeine, and food substitutes, there is a lot of bouncing off walls—just like at a birthday party. We are no longer talking about the Pepsi generation, but the Ritalin generation.

If parents were given a choice between paying higher taxes and having schools openly commercialized, many of us might choose the latter. As well, many people remember school cafeteria food as being pretty awful, with lots of mystery meat. A friend once said it was fit for a king—"Here, King, here boy."

Yet there are problems when schools peddle something other than knowledge. For one, fast food is high in fat and harmful food additives, and caffeine in colas and iced tea, is an addictive drug. Indeed, a recent

THE REST OF US



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The youth millennium project

Empowering B.C. school youth and the world



Above left: Canadian children perform plays against bullying and violence, put books on tape for visually impaired youth, make videos deterring littering, and more. Left: Bangladesh children work for empowerment of disadvantaged girls. Here students learn to build a bridge. Above: in Vietnam children raise chickens and sell eggs to raise funds for school equipment.

Johns Hopkins Medical School study concluded that caffeine is added to soft drinks because it is addictive.

Some of the students in my high school classes are clearly addicted to Coke and Pepsi. I am concerned not only because such consumption displaces healthier drinks and can lead to obesity, tooth decay, and bone fractures but also because our schools are pushing consumption. At my own school, our athletic award ceremony in June

There was a time when school was prized for being an open forum of ideas...

was turned into a commercial for Pepsi, with kids being asked by two young Pepsi workers to chug their new product, Fruit Works, in a contest for a cell phone.

I remember award ceremonies being focussed on the kids, but there I was at a ceremony where kids were lined up in front of pop machines for photos, asked to recite the name of the four Fruit Works drinks, handed Pepsi literature, and generally exploited. I coached three teams but I spoke less to the audience than the Pepsi officials did.

We did get a free meal of hamburgers and pop, but Pepsi got a captive audience of hundreds of kids, all potential life-long consumers.

A Montreal firm called Athena recently gave money to schools in six provinces for showing students its daily news bulletin, interspersed with two-and-a-half minutes of commercials.

Closer to home, a girl at a high school in Maple Ridge was told that she was not allowed to publicize her school report on the environmental record of McDonalds, as the company was one of the school's sponsors.

There was a time when school was prized for being an open forum of ideas, and only a few years ago, Craig Kielburger, then a 14-year-old Toronto student, was heralded across the country for his campaign against corporate exploitation of children in Third World countries.

I am now waiting for the day when morning announcements in a Surrey school end with: "Now remember, kids, things go better with Coke." Then again, such an announcement is unlikely—our board is entering a district-wide agreement with Pepsi.

Many of us struggle to get our children to eat and drink well. My mother occasionally wielded a wooden spoon to get her six children to down porridge or vegetables. Her tactics were harsh, but she wanted the right nutrition for her children. In fact she wanted everything that was right for her kids. Shouldn't we?

Jim McMurtry teaches at Princess Margaret Secondary School, Surrey.

In October 1999, we introduced the Youth Millennium Project (YMP), a program that encourages awareness of global issues while fostering communication and personal empowerment among youth. Since then, YMP has taken British Columbia schools by storm, with hundreds of provincial youth taking part!

The Youth Millennium Project asks youth ages 11 to 14 to discuss global issues of concern to them and then create local action plans in response. Involved are almost 6,000 youth, in 60 countries, speaking over 70 languages.

That makes over 160 groups of young people working together worldwide. And every participating group is matched with four companion groups in other countries to foster international communication. If they do not speak the same language, companion groups exchange artwork and music instead of letters.

Of these groups, nearly a sixth reside in Canada. Over 30% of this Canadian participation rate originates from schools in British Columbia. And the ideas and plans of action that our local youth have designed are not only unique, but also

"YMP is an amazing project that allows children to come up with an idea in the form of a dream, and see it become reality..."

incredibly insightful.

At Richmond Secondary School, a group of 30 students created a local plan of action that entailed raising money to design and furnish a new Kindergarten class in Thailand. And the feelings of accomplishment that the students expressed upon completion of their project is proof positive of how YMP allows something local to become an important part of the global community.

Richmond Secondary's companion groups reside in Taiwan,

Macedonia, Burkino Faso, and Armenia. "YMP is an amazing project that allows children to come up with an idea in the form of a dream, and see it become reality," said Lynn Forrest, co-ordinator of the Richmond/Thailand group.

Vancouver's General Wolfe Elementary School expressed the same sentiments of satisfaction and accomplishment. Students there developed learning resources for visually impaired students in former French Guyana. They recorded books in French on audiotape and sent them to Guyana with a nurse who was on her way there.

Part of the original Canadian pilot study, General Wolfe's companion groups included schools across Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia.

When asked whether YMP should become a regular part of school curriculum, all B.C. teachers in the project responded with an enthusiastic "yes!"

"This particular program allowed students to use and develop life skills," explained Emma Bourassa, a group leader at Montgomery Elementary School, in Coquitlam.

Students at Montgomery Elementary raised funds for Covenant House and a local shelter, and they were paired with companion youth groups in Namibia, Ukraine, Madagascar, and Azerbaijan.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to integrate learning in many areas including social studies for mapping and multiculturalism; language arts for letter-writing and report-writing skills using primary sources; and career and personal planning skills such as co-operation, goal setting for the self and team, and interpersonal awareness."

Bourassa is quick to add, "On top of the skills aspect, our students were given an opportunity to connect the idea of community, and how each person can contribute to a positive one, however little time it takes."

Perhaps this is the greatest skill of all that B.C.'s participating youth will learn, for YMP creates a feeling of personal empowerment and encourages the idea that we all play a part

in what type of world we live in—no matter how old we are!

"The Youth Millennium Project is a testament to what young people can accomplish if they are given an opportunity to exercise their ideas," said Dr. Martha Piper, president of the University of British Columbia.

Through YMP, this is exactly what our B.C. school youth are doing! And the timing is ideal.

Participation in the Youth Millennium Project is free, and the YMP registration package provides convenient, step-by-step instructions...

The changing of the millennium is understood as a time to consider our progress as a world community. It is the ideal time for our youth to decide their priorities for the future and make change.

Participation in the Youth Millennium Project is free, and the YMP information/registration package provides convenient, step-by-step instructions to follow. Register soon to ensure that you'll be assigned a companion group.

Youth Millennium Project creators, Rebecca Slate and Justine Wiltshire, designed the program after a pilot survey (1998) revealed that 70% of participating youth felt powerless to change the world. Slate has an education degree from UBC and has travelled the world working on children's issues; Wiltshire has two law degrees and is an internationally renowned debater.

Registered B.C. groups include youth in Castlegar, Burnaby, Prince George, and more. YMP is a joint initiative of the University of B.C. and UNICEF.

Contact the Youth Millennium Project Canada Support Office at (604) 822-5028, or by e-mail at ymp@interchange.ubc.ca, or visit www.youthmillennium.org.

OPINION

So you want to go on an exchange?

by Lennor Stieda

After reading the article by Jacqui Birchall (*Teacher*, May/June 2000), I feel the need to respond.

A year ago, I returned from a teaching exchange to England. Yes, things were different in many ways, *but* the experience broadened my horizons and my perspectives about teaching and curriculum delivery. It further gave us the opportunity to relish historical places in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe.

We were able to teach Canadian art, history, geography, literature to 500 students and their teachers. By the end of the year, they no longer thought of Canada as that country of wolves and snow-covered mountains. As school is still in session on July 1, we had two wonderful Canada Day assemblies, where the children surprised us by singing four Canadian songs with two-part harmony and musical accompaniment. Each grade also had several children talk about what they had learned about Canada. We showed slides of my school in Saanich and of other parts of British Columbia as every child waved a small Canadian flag.

I, too, had to teach a grade level I wasn't used to, but with some ingenuity I was able to give those children the expected curriculum and more. What a joy to get phone calls and letters from now six-year-olds telling me of their past year of school and how they are progressing.

As to the getting together with other exchange teachers at the Nottingham conference, we did not sit around complaining. Instead, my husband and several other house husbands compared shopping experiences—is ASDA or Sainsbury or Tesco the place to get the best laundry soap or the least expensive meat, etc.

We also exchanged phone numbers and thus were able to get together with several other Canadian exchanges throughout the year. For Thanksgiving, we got together with a couple from Dundas, Ontario, a couple from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and a lady from Cambridge, Ontario. We also invited some English acquaintances for their first Canadian Thanksgiving. What fun to try to find pumpkin pie and cranberries for sauce.

I do agree with Birchall that one should not go on an exchange to run away, as the problem goes with you. In our case, it was the 18-year-old son, who caused no end of problems at this end.

In my opinion, the good outweighs the bad, and I would still encourage you to try to do a teacher's exchange. Don't exchange your cars. And make written contracts about everything you can think of and more. The many friendships you make, the many sights you see, and the experiences you have will enrich your life forever. The teaching in a different environment will help you realize how great it is to teach in Canada.

Lennor Stieda is a retired teacher, Saanich.

Bargaining timeline

August 22-24
Summer Conference

September/October
Objectives are developed by
locals and committees

De
De
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PETER OWENS PHOTO

Bargaining Team: Front L-R, David Chudnosvky, president, Lydia Picucha (Nanaimo), Peggy Salaberry (Central Okanagan), Alan Crawford, co-chief negotiator (Vancouver), Brian Porter, staff. Back L-R, Neil Worboys, first-vice-president, Kelly Shields (Surrey), Irene Lanzinger (Vancouver), co-chief negotiator (Coquitlam), George Taylor (South Okanagan), Ray Worley, staff.

Wealth is increasing. Where's our share?

by Garry Litke

This year, Canadians can look forward to an increase of about 5.2% in their disposable income. But if you happen to be a B.C. teacher, your disposable income will continue to diminish because of inflation. This reduction of actual income occurs during a period when the private sector, and even some of the public sector, has begun to take its share of increased economic growth and is making gains over inflation. By contrast, the teachers' 2% raise of April 2000 barely matches the Consumer Price Index for this year. It does not

anticipate the 2% CPI predicted for 2001, and it certainly does not make up for losses to inflation during the last decade.

The only means we have to address this inequity is the negotiation process, which begins next spring.

Premier Ujjal Dosanjh, in an interview with *Provincial*, the BCGEU newspaper, said, "When you have free collective bargaining, you may get 0-0-2 or you may get 4-4-4."

He holds that in the next round of public-sector bargaining, "there will be no negotiating guidelines" and the government will "prepare a negotiating framework for collective bargaining, but you (the unions) would be able to get whatever you bargain for."

The Premier went on to state, "If you (the employers) are not prepared to pay well, you are not going to get the people with the qualities and the skill that you require."

This is a significant statement on the verge of a teacher shortage and in light of the recently passed balanced budget legislation.

The facts support a substantial raise

- B.C.'s economy is growing. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth increased by 1.8% in B.C. in 1999. This year (2000), it is expected to rise by 2.3%; next year, by 2.9%.
- The private sector in B.C. took its share of the new wealth in 1999. The average wage increase of 1.4% was ahead of the Consumer Price Index of 1.1%.
- The public sector is being denied its share of economic growth. In B.C. last year, wage increases averaged only 0.6%. Indeed, public-sector wage settlements across Canada have not exceeded those in the private sector since 1987.
- B.C.'s public-sector wage increases are among the worst in Canada. B.C. was one of only three provinces whose average public-sector wage increase did not meet inflation in 1999. The other two were Ontario and Newfoundland.
- Wage increases in the education and health sectors lag behind the rest of the public sector. National figures show that for the past three years, the rest of the public sector has gained on teachers by 0.1 to 0.3% annually.

When it comes to reaching for a fair share of the increasing wealth, teachers are sitting on the lowest rung of the smallest ladder, while, comparatively, the rest of the public sector climbs

steadily and the private sector climbs speedily.

The economic share that teachers seek resides in the pockets of a government that is well aware that our contracts expire in June of 2001.

The Premier has told us that if we want the money, we'll have to negotiate. If we want to catch up with inflation, to achieve parity with the private sector, to recruit and retain good teachers, and to share in the economic growth of our province and country, we will have to negotiate with strength and unity of purpose. It will take articulate leadership making good arguments to build support for a decent salary increase. It will take union solidarity to create political pressure before we can say to government, "Show us the money!"

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

Reduce the size of all classes

by George Taylor

As the school year began, and all the planning and organization for my 21 Grade 3 students was completed, I felt great knowing that my class size numbers were limited to 22, thanks to the provincial class-size language that sets specific limits on primary class sizes. There is no fudge factor, no room for school boards to play with the numbers.

As a primary teacher, I know that my class size will have very few changes after Labour Day, which gives my primary

colleagues and me great peace of mind. Teaching a primary class that had clear limits was a real treat last year. I was able to do more creative planning of lessons with less stress on myself, as the planning was much easier for the smaller number of students. Intermediate and secondary teachers

Teaching a primary class that had clear limits was a real treat last year.

around the province want to see similar class-size language for all classes. They have classes as high as 34 with no consideration for the many students with special needs in their classes.

The BCTF Bargaining Team, along with Executive Committee members, are starting to gather information and feedback from members around the province to establish the provincial bargaining goals for the next round of bargaining. We have already heard, from the bargaining strategy seminars and summer conference 2000 that both class size and class composition are high on the priority list as bargaining goals. As a member of the provincial team and a primary teacher, I know how important class-size issues are to our members.

There has been a lot of talk in the media that the provincial class-size language does not allow for flexibility in class-size numbers and that school administrators have to move students to different classes or different schools, which can be disruptive. The fact is that any

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The following page should appear:



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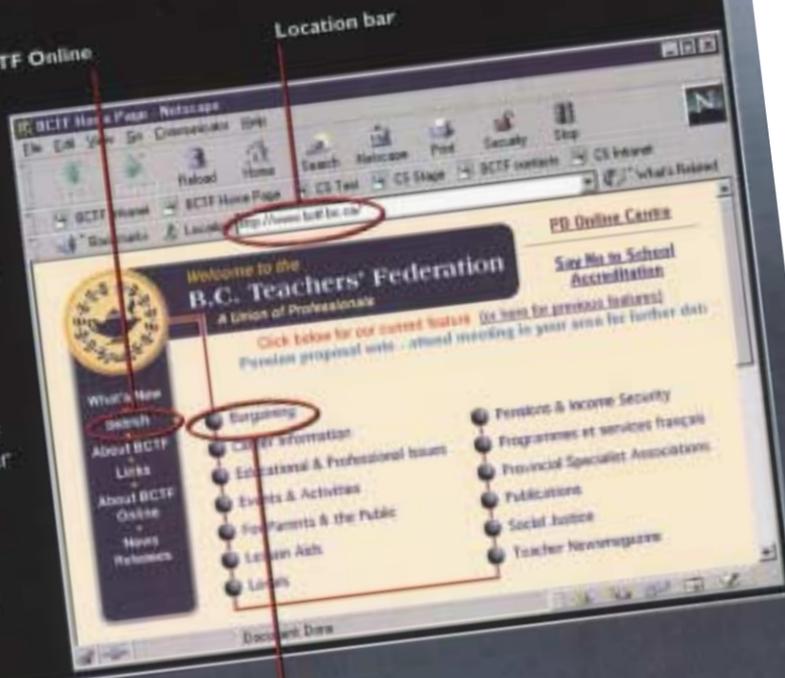
Accessing the BCTF Web Site

Click here to Search BCTF Online

1. Establish your Internet dial-up connection and launch your web browser (e.g., Netscape, Internet Explorer). Note: The following screen shots use Netscape Navigator as the web browser.

2. Go to the BCTF Home Page In the Location: or Address: bar type www.bctf.bc.ca and press <Enter>.

The following page should appear.



Click here for Bargaining Information

December 1
Deadline for locals to submit
proposals to Executive Committee

January 1
Chief negotiator and
team start full-time

February 15-17
Bargaining Conference

March 1
Open negotiations

June 30
Current agreement expires

class-size number would create that same problem as long as administration keeps staffing schools in June with every class filled to the maximum or very close to the maximum, leaving no room for new students when they arrive in September. Administrators can create the flexibility they need by leaving some room in each class for students who arrive after the school year has started.

I look forward to hearing from members around the province on bargaining issues, on how class-size language has worked for them and on what needs to be changed.

George Taylor teaches at Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary School, Oliver, and is a member of the BCTF Bargaining Team.

Teacher-on-call improvements take effect

by Ray Worley

Many teachers on call (TOC) are benefiting this fall from provisions in the current provincial agreement that took effect for TOCs on July 1, 2000. Most will receive an additional payment of \$3 per day in lieu of benefits. This recognizes the ineligibility of some teachers on call for enrolment in the benefit plans in their districts because of restrictions imposed by the carriers. Others may not have enrolled because of the require-

ment that they pay the full cost of benefit premiums. In a few districts, local agreements already had provisions superior to the \$3 per day. Those provisions are continued by the provincial agreement. The improvement is a step toward full benefit coverage for TOCs.

The vast majority of teachers on call are not paid on scale from day one. Only two districts pay TOCs according to qualifications and experience from the first day of their assignment. In all other districts, there is a "waiting period" of between two and ten days before TOCs are paid on scale. During local bargaining, many locals achieved reductions in those days before conversion to scale, and the trend was continued by the last provincial negotiation. From the beginning of this school year all TOCs will convert to scale after three days in the same assignment, retroactive to the first day of that assignment. That represents an improvement over previous provisions in about 50 districts. Of course the status quo remains in place for the three districts that already had shorter conversion periods.

Another achievement in the agreement was the establishment of 1/189 as the factor used to calculate the daily rate after the third day. It represents an improvement in at least 35 districts and is retroactive to the first day of the assignment.

The improvements are in addition to those from the last round that have already taken effect. TOCs were guaranteed the same hours as teachers on continuing contract for the purposes of Employment Insur-

ance calculation. TOCs are now entitled to the transportation costs the teachers they are replacing are entitled to claim. Enrolment in benefit plans is established unless there are limitations imposed by the plan carrier.

Taken together, the improvements indicate the continuing attempts of the Federation to make gains for a group of members who are disadvantaged in many ways. Very significant outstanding issues of equity in conditions and fairness in hiring practices have yet to be satisfactorily addressed at the bargaining table. Those issues should not be forgotten as we prepare for the upcoming negotiations in the spring of 2001.

Ray Worley is an assistant director in the BCTF's Bargaining Division.

Ontario teachers insist public education serve a greater goal than the market

by Peter Owens

The Ontario government is continuing its attack on public education, Earl Manners, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, told BCTF

members attending Summer Conference 2000. In an impassioned speech, Manners outlined the draconian provisions of Bill 74. The bill, passed last June, legislates terms and conditions of work for teachers, increases their workload, overrides minimum labour standards, and mandates teacher participation in unpaid, non-bargainable voluntary activities. It allows the minister of education to investigate, fine, or fire school trustees who oppose decisions of the ministry. What's worse, all decisions of the minister are above the law and cannot be appealed. Soon after the Harris government was elected, in 1995, John Snobelen, its first minister of education, was caught on videotape describing how they would have "to invent a crisis" in order to go ahead with their plans for educational change. "That's not just an act of courage. There's some skill involved," explained Snobelen.

During the election campaign, the Tories promised they wouldn't take a dime out of health or education. The government has subsequently taken \$1 billion out of education alone. "We have lost programs, the services of specialists and seen schools close," Manners said. He described Bill 74 as a "rearview-mirror look at what has happened over the last five years."

The government is attempting to end teacher resistance to its cutbacks. The bill is designed to ensure that there will be no more political protests and that teachers will not be able to negotiate collective agreement

provisions to protect the level of services in the schools. The legislation encourages individuals to charge teachers with counselling illegal strikes if they speak out against government legislation. Manners believes the bill is an acknowledgement by government that teachers have been too successful in protecting public education against the agenda of privatization. He says the government is hoping teachers will go out on strike this fall, but despite having successful strike votes, teachers are providing instructional services and minimizing their participation in extra-curricular activities.

At the same time, they are giving the government the message that it is not "business as usual." Teachers will not be doing fundraising, driving students in their vehicles, or hiring referees. "The government took control under Bill 74; now it can take responsibility," Manners said. The OSSTF will be working with parents and members of the community to elect trustees this fall who will stand up for public education. OSSTF is very appreciative of the support from B.C. teachers last June. Manners said the BCTF poster "A warning from Ontario teachers" is hanging in every secondary staffroom in Ontario.

Manners said that teachers realize the critical role they play in protecting education from those who want to privatize and commercialize it. "Public education has a greater goal than serving the market. It has higher standards. Accountability does not mean accounting. It must be the most equitable institution in Canada."

Peter Owens is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organizational Support Division and editor of Teacher newsmagazine.

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Sample results of search on the text "class size"

Project Overseas 2000 in Ghana

by Sandra Holmes

When I heard from the BCTF office in January 2000 that I had been accepted as a participant in Project Overseas in July, I felt as if I had won the lottery. Now, back home, reflecting on the completed project, I realize that not only did I win the lottery but I also came away with the biggest prize possible. I had a glimpse into another culture in a country I had never expected to visit, and I saw reflected there many aspects of my own country. Our team—three curriculum resource people and three administrative resource people—was sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and by affiliates from across Canada, BCTF being one. The Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) had requested

the conditions in which they worked. The second challenge for me was how to model dedication to teaching and hope for improvement when all the conditions for good learning were, from my way of thinking, missing. Taking courage and hope from the excellent support of my team leader, Tom Muise, from Nova Scotia, I looked around at what we did have at hand. We were able to do a limited amount of photocopying. We had many bottled water containers, juice boxes, buckets for water, and a box of supplies scrounged from a local school. I had brought some magnifiers, scissors, and other basic teaching materials. With these and great expectations and enthusiasm from the participants, I taught science processes and skills. The participants worked on hands-on activities about soil and air. I taught the

required workshop about HIV/Aids and the required workshop How To Conduct a Workshop. The weeks flashed by in the midst of teachers supporting teachers. The laughter and fun with some of the activities brought the realization from one of the participants that what was missing for him in his school was the "play" involved in the learning process. Play stimulates the creative process, and creativity is an element missing from the Ghanaian children's development, he shared with me. With a great sense of pride in our work as a team, I realized that my second challenge had evaporated in the heat of hard work and sharing. Indeed the elements for good learning were strongly there, embodied in the strength and commitment of each teacher I had the privilege of working with.

An unforeseen benefit of being part of Project Overseas 2000 was being able to glimpse Canada from the outside. I was amazed to learn that about 500 Canadians live and work in Ghana. I happened to talk to a group of home economics teachers at a tourist site in Kumasi. They had just participated in the Home Economics World Congress. Two participants from Kamloops had journeyed on to Tanzania. I talked to two students from Thunder Bay studying forestry and two Canadian primatologists studying monkeys in a monkey sanctuary. Several teaching sisters told us about their constant struggle to develop a school for girls. One sister, from Saskatchewan said she had lived in Ghana for six years and had not contracted malaria. That was a good word for the medication we were on, as we had wondered if the disturbing side effects we experienced from the medication were worth the prevention we expected. I often thought about the other 40 Canadian teachers who were concurrently involved in various other CTF projects around the world. Particularly I



Creativity and play provided enjoyment along with the learning experience for participants.



A challenge for teachers in Project Overseas is to share teaching strategies using the materials at hand.

CTF support with in-service for teachers in math, science, and English methods and with administrative skills. We were the second team of a three-year project to work alongside dedicated Ghanaian co-tutors. As part of the curriculum team, I was charged with teaching primary teachers science processes and skills and hands-on science activities. The workshop participants came from all regions of Ghana, to improve their skills in all three areas. Most workshop participants were working in high school settings. Thirty-three participants were selected for each of the two workshops from over two hundred applications. The participants were charged with returning to their areas and conducting workshops for their colleagues based on what they learned from the Canadian Teachers' Federation team. The administrators, working separately from the teachers, were taught leadership skills.

The first challenge for me was how to conduct a meaningful workshop within a context of no teaching materials, a strange climate, and with a lack of understanding of the level of expertise of the participants and

thought of my Kamloops colleague participating in an overseas project in Malawi and a three-member team working two countries away in uncertain times in Liberia.

On several occasions, Ghanaian teachers remarked to me about how much they respected the BCTF. Two men talked passionately to me about a conference they had attended in Vancouver. BCTF is currently involved in a project to help computerize the GNAT offices. I felt very proud to be a BCTF member! I felt thankful to my colleagues who had laid the groundwork of such good relations with the Ghanaian

teachers. The success of our project was in large part a result of the excellent work undertaken and the rapport established by dedicated teachers before us.

The other glimpse of Canada came from working with the five members of our team from Ontario, Nunavut, Nova Scotia, and Alberta. As we went from being complete strangers when we met in Ottawa in early July to being travelling companions and teaching colleagues, we learned one another's stories. I am much more aware of the down-and-dirty struggles of the Ontario teachers, and I will find ways to support teachers there.



*Project Overseas July 2000
Sunyani Teaching Centre, Sunyani, Ghana
Canadian Teachers' Federation team members and co-tutors.*

The Ontario teachers share some of the same struggles as the Ghanaian teachers who are working toward establishing improved working and learning conditions in the schools and benefits for their teachers in a context of economic chaos and government manipulation. I have learned more about Canada's Arctic in five weeks in Ghana than I had learned living in Canada for the previous 40 years. The similarity of the struggles for development in the Arctic with those in Ghana were rather sobering. Much commitment and dedication to education by the teachers and government is needed in both areas of the world to combat the unhealthy influences of multinational corporations. Did you know that the average consumption of Coca Cola on Baffin Island is eight bottles a day per person? Imagine brand new shiny Coca Cola trucks sporting advertising that promises great improvements in lifestyle, travelling the same difficult Ghanaian roads as a few poorly maintained and often unusable school buses. Nova Scotia calls to me, now that its beauty has been shared. All things are cured by salt water: tears, sweat, and the sea. Wise words shared by a wise man in a foreign place. I wonder if this will be true for Ghana. So many tears have been shed. So much hard work has been undertaken. The sea so steady. Linking our part of the world to theirs. And Alberta, my next door province. I will go there sometime for the rural experience, knowing I will be welcomed with good old-fashioned country hospitality.

"Participating in this project will change your life." I was told before I left. This multilayered experience sits fresh and full within me. What a precious prize I won! I will certainly be applying for another project next year.

Sandra Holmes teaches at Bert Edwards Elementary School, Kamloops.

New Aboriginal education workshops

Aboriginal History and Culture

This workshop is based on the content of First Nations studies and is aimed at providing background for teachers at all grade levels to better understand the situation of Aboriginal students and current issues, such as the treaty process.

Inclusive Schools and Teaching

This workshop is based on implementing the concepts in the inclusive schools and teaching practices recommendations from the Task Force on First Nations Education. Each workshop will focus on a limited number of the many items included in the Task Force Discussion Guide. The workshop will conclude with developing plans for continuing work on inclusive practice.

Beyond Words: Creating Racism-Free Schools for Aboriginal Learners

This workshop will be based on the handbook that is being developed.

For further information, contact Merle Williams: (604) 871-1854, 1-800-663-9163 (local 1854), fax: (604) 871-2291, mwilliams@bctf.bc.ca.

Who should teach reading through the grades?



by Nola Godinovich and Rosaleen MacFadden

In the last few decades within North America, a greater emphasis has been placed on increasing reading instruction in schools. Under the headings of *Reading Recovery*, *Success For All*, and similar programs, early reading intervention has been addressed, mainly in primary grades. Additional personnel have been employed in some districts to teach reading to at-risk children

Whose responsibility is literacy anyway?

on a one-to-one basis (e.g., reading recovery teacher), while other districts have utilized parent volunteers to provide regular reading practice for young children.

These solutions address the early school years, but students may also develop reading difficulties in their adolescent years. Students in middle and senior grades whose reading ability is not at their designated grade level have poor comprehension of many subject textbooks. Reading instruction *per se* is not readily available for students in the higher grades because it is assumed that students acquired basic literacy by the end of Grade 3. Learning assistance teachers at the secondary level are often obliged to focus on supporting students to pass grades through a tutoring emphasis rather than on a diagnostic or developmental model.

Who should be instructing students in reading? The obvious answer is the teacher. But which teacher? a Grade 1 teacher? a Grade 6 music

teacher? a Grade 9 science teacher? a Grade 12 PE teacher? Are all these teachers equally equipped to address classroom literacy problems? Should they be? Whose responsibility is literacy anyway?

With these questions in mind, the BCLCIRA (B.C. Literacy Council of the International Reading Association) began investigating the degree to which pre-service teachers in B.C. are required to take reading courses for certification. Ideally every teacher should be a teacher of reading, but certainly all English teachers need to have such training as a base line.

Data was collected primarily from UBC, UVic, SFU, and Okanagan University College. Although a range of literacy courses is available in the above-mentioned institutions, a minimal number is prescribed for certification, particularly for middle and secondary education teachers. UBC professor Jim Anderson notes that elementary teachers take two courses called Reading and Language Arts, and Curriculum and Instruction. But secondary teachers in training have no such requirement! They may choose related topics: Language Across the Curriculum, Oral and Written Language Development, English as a Second Language, and Content Area Reading, but exposure to theories of the reading process is minimal. A reading specialist himself, Professor Anderson has been part of a teacher education program review committee. He would welcome an essential reading component in the secondary program. Some teachers in the middle and senior grades state that they are not trained in basic reading techniques and therefore do not feel competent to address the

reading difficulties that occur in their particular subject areas.

The teaching of reading beyond the primary grades increasingly becomes the domain of learning assistance teachers and reading specialists, for whom additional reading/literacy courses are mandatory. As numbers of students needing assistance increase, other solutions are attempted by classroom teachers, e.g., programmed instructions such as Corrective Reading or packaged learning such as SRA kits. Such programs are often administered by teachers who have had no previous training in basic reading instruction. Furthermore, the classes are often taught in other rooms, not in the subject area classroom, where the actual reading difficulties occur.

...should all teachers be trained to teach reading, regardless of their subject area?

Have any other solutions been attempted? It was reported in the B.C. College of Teachers' *Report to Members*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Winter 1999-2000, that UBC has put together a proposal to "revise their entire teaching education program." To this end, a program approval team, consisting of various members of the community, would be charged with reviewing the changes to the program and making recommendations to college council.

While this review of teacher education programs seems long overdue, a more alarming development could eclipse the current reading education issue. In Vol. 11, No. 3, Spring 2000, the college *Report to Members*, alludes to the "aging of the teaching force in B.C. (creating) a teacher shortage," which could result in "an individual without teacher qualifications (being) placed in the classroom." The implications of that scenario don't bear thinking about.

Whose responsibility is reading education? Should all efforts go toward educating more reading specialists, or should all teachers be trained to teach reading, regardless of their subject area? The International Reading Association, a 90,000-member non-profit

professional organization dedicated to improving reading instruction and promoting literacy world-wide, has established a commission on adolescent literature. In July, IRA produced a policy update advocating more reading specialists. They are considered vital. Across Canada, the diagnostic reading centres, from McGill to UBC, who used to train specialists have an integrated model of contextual literacy. While acknowledging that literacy levels in general have been improving, our preliminary review shows an imbalance between the reading demands in B.C. schools and the number of reading courses mandated for pre-service teachers.

So what can the colleges, school boards, professional development departments, and the Ministry of Education do?

- Assign mandatory reading courses in theory and practice for all teachers in training.
- Establish partnerships with universities and schools so that both institutions can be better informed about current reading problems and solutions.
- Design reading courses for middle/secondary school teachers (especially basic reading and content areas). Locate these in schools/district offices convenient for travel.
- Invite teachers from different subject areas to plan team teaching projects that would include classroom reading, e.g., teacher librarian and social studies teacher, English teacher, and science teacher.
- Offer incentive other than credit points since many teachers have finished formal training.
- Consider class time release for planning and project completion.
- Develop suggestions for working together with adolescents and their families.

Rosaleen MacFadden teaches at Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary School, Surrey and Nola Godinovich is a retired teacher, Central Okanagan.



18 Tips for dealing with stress and tension

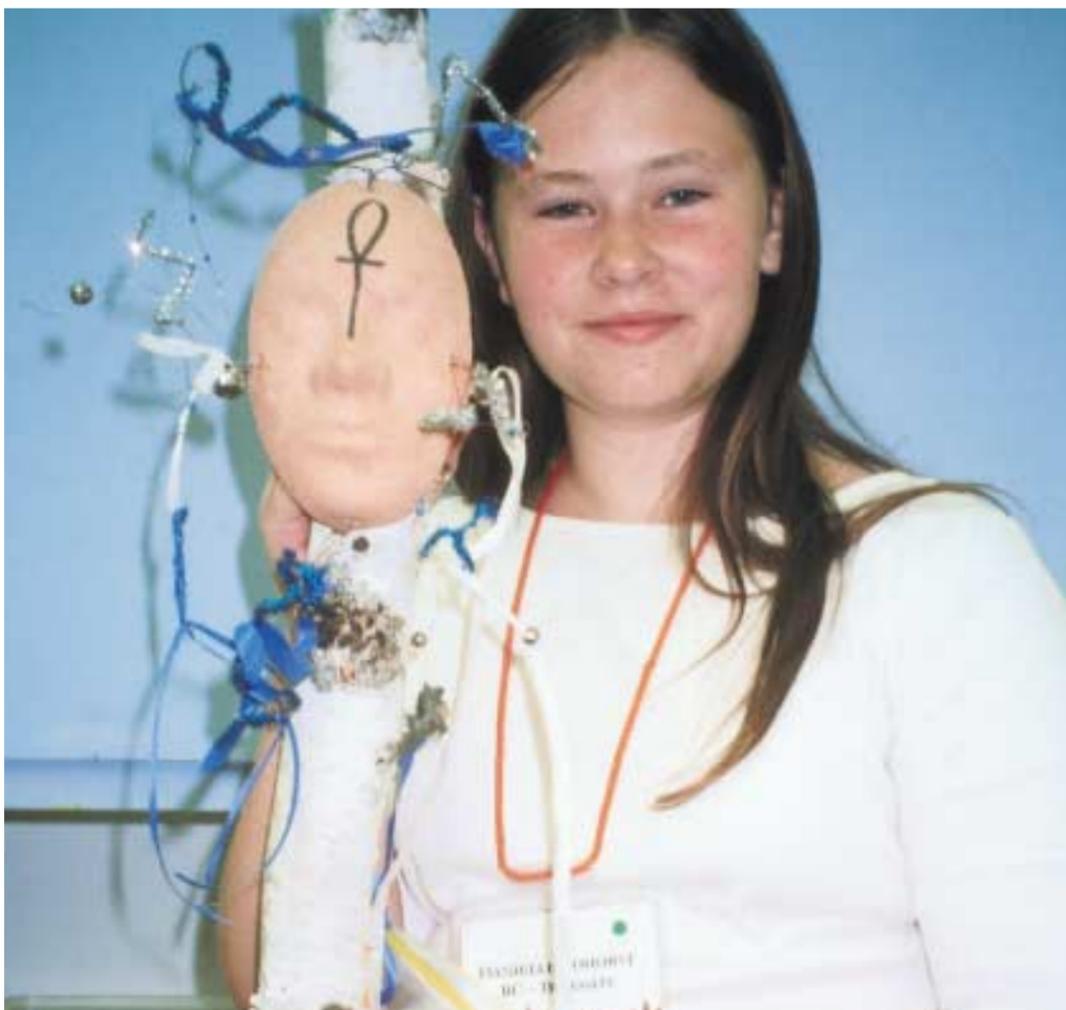
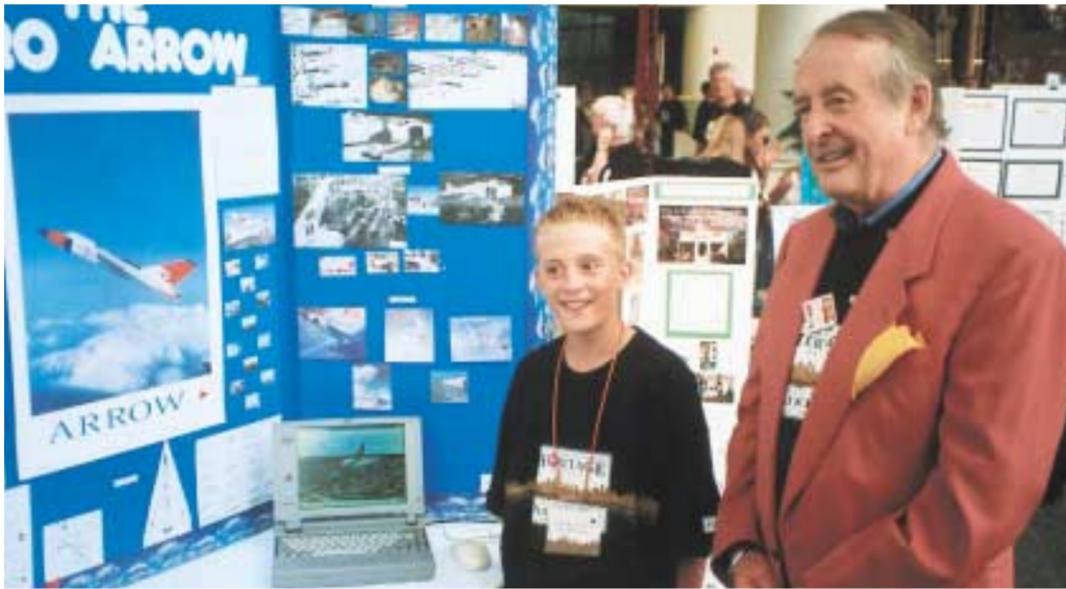
Recognize your symptoms of stress:

- Don't be too competitive.
- Don't try to be perfect.
- Ease up on criticism of others (and yourself).
- Exercise. Physical activity is one of the most effective stress remedies around.
- Get away. Read a book, watch a movie, play a game, listen to music, or go on vacation.
- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Give in occasionally. Avoid quarrels wherever possible.
- Have some fun. Laugh and be with people you enjoy.
- Help others. Volunteer work can be an effective and satisfying stress reducer.
- Leave yourself some time that's just for you.
- Look at your lifestyle. See what changes you can make in your work situation, your family situation, or your schedule.
- Make the first move to be friendly.
- Manage your time. Do essential tasks and rank the others. Consider family and friends who may be affected by your decisions. Use a checklist so you will receive satisfaction as you check off each job as you do it.
- Tackle one thing at a time. Don't try to do too much.
- Talk with others. Friends, professional counsellors, support groups, and relatives can help you gain perspective on what is bothering you.
- Use relaxation techniques: yoga, meditation, deep breathing, or massage.
- Watch your diet. Alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fats, and

tobacco all strain your body's ability to cope with stress. A balanced diet of fruits, whole grains, vegetables, and foods high in protein but low in fat create optimum health and protect against heart disease and stroke.

- Work off your anger. Get physically active. Dig in the garden, start a project, get your spring cleaning done.

From the Canadian Mental Health Association, Richmond Branch. Reprinted from *B.C. School Counsellors' Newsletter*, Spring 2000.



Top: Scott Rounville, Cranbrook, talking with Laurier LaPierre, chairperson of the Heritage Fairs Program, about his project "Avro-Arrow." Above: Danielle Dohorst, Cranbrook, displays her thunder stick, called a Manikana, which was made at one of the workshops during our visit to Ottawa/Hull for the National Fair.

An unforgettable experience

by Laura Wilson

Each May, heritage fairs take place across Canada, and this year more than 110,000 students participated. In some areas, there are school fairs, followed by district and regional fairs. Each July, a National Heritage Fair is held in a different province. Each province may send 15 student delegates and five counsellors, and each of the territories, including Nunavut, which was formed on April 1, 1999, may send five students and a counsellor.

For nine days during the summer, I attended the National Heritage Fair, in Ottawa/Hull, as a counsellor from B.C. Our group flew from Cranbrook to Vancouver and met the other delegates and counsellors from B.C. The next day, we flew to Ottawa and stayed in Philemon Wright Junior Secondary School, in Hull, Quebec. We enjoyed tours of the National Art Gallery, War Museum, RCMP stables, Rideau Hall (where the Governor General, the Queen's representative, resides), and Parliament Hill.

The trip to Parliament Hill was one of the highlights because we had an audience with the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Hon. Gilbert Parent. We walked into the House, down the main aisle with the benches of the Government on one side and the Opposition on the other (delegates and counsellors were wearing the T-shirts of their province/territory), and took our seats.

The speaker made us feel welcome, and he quickly developed a warm rapport with everyone. He told us how at one time it would have seemed very unlikely that he would ever have become the speaker. He explained that his grandmother was born on a native reserve. His father was Métis. His father was gassed in the First World War, and when he returned home, he got a job as the custodian of the theatre in Welland, Ontario. "And here I am, I am the custodian of the House of Commons of Canada." There was pride in his voice.

After a short question period, one student from each province/territory spoke briefly about his/her province/territory.

On Friday, the students set up their projects in the Museum of Civilization, in Hull, with its grand setting by the Ottawa River opposite Parliament Hill in Ottawa. The fair took place on Saturday and Sunday.

Students from Cranbrook had done a project on the Frank Slide, which took place in 1903. At that time, the town of Frank, near the B.C./Alberta border was a frontier coal-mining town. During the night on April 29, Turtle Mountain crashed down on the town, killing about 70 people.

Students developed a play based on what they had learned. When I saw them perform for the first time, I knew that all my efforts had been worthwhile, because they had brought history alive. Their project was one of three chosen to go to the National Fair, and the students spent a great deal of time preparing a short video of their play for the fair.

Laura Wilson teaches at Steeples Elementary School, Cranbrook.

2000-01 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, except where noted * (16:00 to 20:00). 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
October 28, 2000	Campbell River, Coast Discovery Inn
November 4, 2000	Kamloops, University College of the Cariboo
November 18, 2000	Vancouver, Plaza 500
December 2, 2000	Richmond, Richmond Inn
January 13, 2001	Coquitlam, Westwood Plateau G&C Club
January 20, 2001	Abbotsford, Inn at Kings Crossing
January 27, 2001	Nanaimo, Coast Bastion Inn
February 3, 2001	Burnaby, Radisson Hotel Burnaby
February 17, 2001	Surrey, Sheraton Guildford Hotel
February 24, 2001	North Vancouver, Holiday Inn
March 3, 2001	Prince George, Coast Inn of the North
April 7, 2001	Chilliwack, BW Rainbow Country Inn
April 21, 2001	Castlegar, Sandman Inn
April 28, 2001	Kelowna, Ramada Lodge Hotel
May 5, 2001	Victoria, Victoria Conference Centre

Should I stop my long-term SIP?

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.

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.

T-shirts available



"Public Education Not For Sale" and

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Making history on the web

Who was the first schoolmaster at Fort Victoria? Why did the government appoint a Rural Women Teachers' Welfare Officer in the 1920s? When did school radio broadcasts commence? When did Vedder Mountain School first open?

Answers to these and many similar questions can be found at "The Homeroom," www.mala.bc.ca/homeroom, a web site of information and resources on the history of education in British Columbia.

British Columbia's History of Education, The Homeroom was launched in 1997 to mark the 125th anniversary of the province's public school system. The web site was created by Dr. Patrick Dunae, a history instruc-

tor at Malaspina University College in Nanaimo and an adjunct professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria.

The Homeroom includes historical material on the history of public schools, independent schools, universities and colleges, and school administration.

The Homeroom features a timeline, chronicling key events in the evolution of the education system from the 1800s to the 1960s. Topics are interlaced, interconnected, and, in many cases illustrated with historical pictures from the British Columbia Archives. For example, the Timeline notes that home economics courses were introduced into the school curriculum in 1903 and that such courses were promoted by Victoria school trustee Margaret Jenkins (d.1923). From The Homeroom Timeline, researchers can connect to an overview of the development of the home economics curriculum and to a biography of Margaret Jenkins, which in turn connects to a page on the architectural history of Margaret Jenkins' School (1914) and the school web site.

The Public Schools section of The Homeroom features organ-

izational charts showing the historical development of the Ministry of Education from the 1850s, education ministers from 1871 to date, full text copies of documents such as the 1865 *Common School Act* and the *Rules and Regulations of the Public Schools* (1874), plus information on the city and municipal school districts that existed prior to the creation of modern school districts.

Patrick Dunae is encouraging students and teachers to write the history of their schools and send the information to him. The team will convert text and attach the files to an appropriate place on the site.

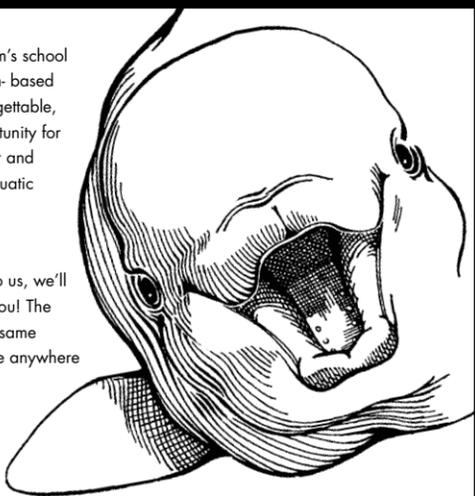
An annex to The Homeroom, called "Making History on the Web," provides a step-by-step guide to writing a school history. It offers directions on using library resources, tips on locating archival records, and links to on-line collections of historical photographs. Links are also provided to other key resources, such as the British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association. Making History on the Web is located at <http://web.mala.bc.ca/dunae/template/>.

Additional information is available from Patrick Dunae at dunae@mala.bc.ca or padunae@home.com.

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MISCELLANEOUS

WANTED: Someone to take over successful 20 yr. Travel guiding business, leading cultural tours once a year or more to Mediterranean countries, or elsewhere, call RTA member Karin or George Storey, (604) 922-0689, F: (604) 925-4170. Reasonable cost, profitable, rewarding. Tours are self funding, sponsored by Continuing Ed. Institution.

RETIREMENT! Wondering if you can afford to retire, and when? Confidential, individual retirement counseling available throughout B.C. No product sales. Call Mrs. Cherith Cayford, CFP, RFP, PRP (Professional Retirement Planner) at Camelot Management Group, Financial & Retirement Consultants & Educators, in West Vancouver at (604) 913-0090, or e-mail cherith_camelot@telus.net

PETER AUSTEN'S EVEREST EXPERIENCE (R) is THE leadership/teambuilding seminar for professional development. Web site: mag-net.com/austen email: austen@mag-net.com. Toll free 1-877-307-6116.

www.teachersafety.com
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Cost is 70¢ a word plus 7% GST. Ads must be in writing and prepaid. Fax or e-mail your ad to (604) 871-2289 or ksmith@bctf.bc.ca and mail your cheque made payable to the BCTF and send to #100 - 550 W 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2, attention Kathleen Smith.

NOVEMBER

2-3 Calgary. Level 2: Solution-Focused 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.

2-3 Vancouver. Making Connections 2000, Third Annual Conference on Effective Behavioural Support. Robson Square Conference Center. Contact Kathy Champion, (604)668-6063, f: 668-6191, kchampion@richmond.sd.bc.ca.

2-4 Vancouver. Violence and Health 2000 Conference, Sexual Assault, Child Abuse, Relationship Violence Medical Assessment and Intervention, sponsored by Inter-professional Continuing Education, UBC, at the Parkhill Hotel, Vancouver. Contact (604)822-0054, f: (604)82-4835, rachel@cehs.ubc.ca.

3-4 Richmond. British Columbia Assn. of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists Conference 2000, Executive Inn Airport Plaza hotel. Contact Lisa Prokopowich (250) 562-7370, lprokopowich@pgrhosp.hnet.bc.ca, www.bcaspa.bc.ca.

5-6 Vancouver. Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education—Literacy, hosted by the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the B.C. Ministry of Education, Hyatt Regency Hotel. Teaching reading through co-operative games, developing culturally relevant curriculum materials, strategies for teaching teens reading skills, and family literacy. Also features a First Nations authors panel and a racism panel. Contact Lou-ann Neel (250) 383-1342, lou-ann@home.com.

16-17 Vancouver. Gestalt Body Process, outlining developmental stages of recovery, Michael Clemmens. Contact Gestalt Training Institute, 2360 Waterloo Street, Vancouver, BC V6R 4M6, p/f: (604)733-9123.

18-19 Vancouver. Long-Term Recovery from Addiction, enhance a sense of wholeness with the Gestalt body-centred approach, Michael Clemmens. Contact Gestalt Training Institute, 2360 Waterloo Street, Vancouver, BC V6R 4M6, p/f: (604)733-9123.

18-22 Amman, Jordan. International Conference on Mathematics for Living, sponsored by The Mathematics Education into the 21st Century Project. \$250-300 US. Contact arogerson@vsg.edu.au or Mathematics Education into the 21st Century Project, 22 Violet Grove, VIC 3122, Australia.

23-24 Edmonton. Level 2: Solution-Focused 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.

23-25 Edmonton. Safe and Caring Schools and Communities Conference, Shaw Conference Centre/Westin. Six pre-conference sessions, 130 conference sessions, and 12 featured speakers. Contact Brenda Sautner, (780)434-8418, F: (780)432-5998, bsautner@netcom.ca, <http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/safeschools>.

JANUARY

Vancouver. Gestalt Experiential Training Institute, 17-month core training program starts January 2001. Contact Geoff Lyon, p/f: (604) 873-5708.

18-20 Richmond. B.C. Association of Student Activity Advisors' Conference, Working Together To Empower Youth, Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel. Contact Gloria Solley, p/f: (250) 477-8592, gloria@bcasaa.bc.ca, www.bcasaa.bc.ca.

25-26 Vancouver. B.C. Alternate Education Assn. (BCAEA) Conference, Challenge and Change 2001, Sheraton Wall Centre. Downtown Eastside tour of sites and services for street kids and runaways. Contact Dorothy Joyce Pauls, (604) 859-3015, dj_pauls@sd34.bc.ca.

FEBRUARY

8-9 Vancouver. Teaching the Holocaust: An Educator's Conference, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. \$90. Contact Frieda Miller, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7, (604)264-0499, holedctr@direct.ca.

9-10 Richmond. New Teachers' Conference hosted by BCTF, Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre. \$50. Contact Elizabeth Lambert, (604)871-1837 or 1-800-663-9163 (local 1837).

15-17 Kelowna. B.C. Art Teachers' Assn. (BCATA) Conference, 2001: An Art Odyssey. Contact Sharon McCoubrey, (250) 766-4406, f: (250) 470-6001, slmc-coub@okanagan.bc.ca.

22-24 Victoria. British Columbia Music Educators' Assn. (BCMEA) Annual Conference, 2001: A Music Odyssey, Victoria Conference Centre. \$170 before January 15, \$185 thereafter. Contact Inez St. Dennis, (250) 595-0058, w: (250) 721-7870, f: (250) 472-4641, iastd@uric.ca.

23-24 Langley. Association of B.C. Drama Educators (ABCDE) Conference, 2001: A Drama Odyssey, Langley Fine Arts School. Contact Terry Olsen, (604) 534-4171.

22-24 Vancouver. FAS and Other Drug-Related Disabilities: Building Hope, Coast Plaza Suite Hotel at Stanley Park. Contact Inter-professional Continuing Education, 105-2194 Health Science Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3, (604) 822-0054, f: (604) 822-4835, rachel@cehs.ubc.ca.

MARCH

15-16 Vancouver. Special Education Assn. (SEA) Conference, Crosscurrents, Westin Bayshore. Keynoter Richard Lavoie. Contact Pearl Wong, (604)576-1528, pearlw@uniserve.com.

APRIL

TBA Kamloops. B.C. Business Education Assn. (BCBEA) Conference. Contact CorrieMacdonald, cmacdon2@cln.etc.bc.ca.

TBA Lower Mainland. B.C. Science Teachers' Assn. (BCScTA) Conference, Catalyst 2001. Contact Kitty Morgan, kmorgan@telus.net, www.bctf.bc.ca/psas/bcsccta.

27 Kelowna. Learning Assistance Teachers' Assn. (LATA) Conference, Informal Assessment of Reading, Grand Okanagan Lakefront Resort. Contact Lynda Mawer, 8614 Foster Road, Vernon, BC V1H 1C9, f: (250) 558-1065, lmawer@sd22.bc.ca.

MAY

11-12 Nanaimo. B.C. Rural Teachers' Assn. (BCRTA) Conference, Small Schools/Small Communities/Recreation, Malaspina University College. Home/School/Community Links/Celebration. Contact Linda Myres, (250)728-1220, lmyres@sd70.bc.ca.

PD Calendar web site

www.bctf.bc.ca/events/PD-Calendar.html

Direct links:

- Alberta Teachers' Association, www.teachers.ab.ca/conference/index.html
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Conferences, www.ascd.org/
- Justice Institute Training, www.jibc.bc.ca

Additions or changes? E-mail Debby Stagg, PSA services co-ordinator, Professional Development Division, BCTF, dstagg@bctf.bc.ca

The big little science centre



by Gordon Gore

Vancouver has Science World. Kamloops has The Big Little Science Centre. It is little because it is situated in a single room at David Thompson Elementary School, in Kamloops. It is big because the students at DT and at other local schools love visiting it and exploring its many "hands-on" physical science exhibits.

The response to the centre has been good; most of the displays are very low cost, low technology, simple physics demonstrations. Most are homemade, but some are commercial products. More elaborate equipment could be added with public support, but youngsters seem to enjoy the "touchable" simpler displays most.

Gordon Gore is a retired science teacher, Kamloops.

...local schools love visiting it and exploring its many "hands-on" physical science exhibits.



Clockwise from top left: Kyle Hayes experiments with a dancing flower and a space phone; Samantha Mathers learns about balancing and centre of gravity; Roland Carson uses a hand generator to light some lamps; Maymle Tegart has a hair-raising experience with a static electricity generator; Frankie Nash tries out the test tube dive; Philip Charbonneau is an expert with the tornado tube; Morgan Hoot shows her mother Tracy how the dancing flower works.

Fewer cars at school

Nowhere is traffic congestion more intense than in front of school three minutes before the morning bell. A 1995 Vancouver-area study showed that the number of car trips to schools had increased by 53% within a decade. This trend is worsening our air quality. Short drives, when cars' engine-pollution-control systems are cold and ineffective, together with idling cars in the pick-up zone are major contributors to greenhouse-gas emissions. Also, the increasing car traffic on the residential streets around schools has encouraged many walkers and cyclists to use cars instead, for safety. Without education and

incentives to promote alternatives, our definition of driving distance to school is getting closer and closer.

These relatively short, local trips to school offer the best opportunity to encourage car-free travel. To this end, a Vancouver-based non-profit organization, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST), is in the middle of a two-year pilot to develop a secondary school car-trip reduction program called *off ramp*. BEST's *off ramp* coordinator is providing support, resources, and site visits to the leadership or environment club and student leaders in nine schools in Vancouver and Victoria and their suburban neighbours.

Goals of car trip reduction

The *off ramp* program has two main goals: to increase teens' awareness of transportation issues and climate change, and to reduce the number of student vehicle trips to school by 20%. BEST's has three broad objectives:

1. Develop and support curriculum related resources for teachers around transportation issues and climate change.
2. Design and develop fun and engaging school events around alternatives to the car that can be adapted and promoted in their schools by student leaders.
3. Facilitate infrastructure improvements to support an

increase in walking, cycling, carpooling, and taking transit to school.

Any school group can use this program framework to develop car-trip reduction strategies suited to their community.

"We have been a member of the BEST initiative for two years now," said North Surrey Secondary School sponsor teacher Gavin Hainsworth, "and we have already seen remarkable results." North Surrey saw a reduction in single occupancy-vehicle (SOV) usage last year of over 30%, and have stabilized that change this year—all the more remarkable given its commuter community.

The long-term goals are to reduce automobile traffic around schools, develop life-long

walkers, cyclists, and transit-users, and create an aware (and physically fit) population who think twice about getting into a car for a short trip. "If we can do it, with poor transit service, and a heavy commuter 'I love my car' mindset," says Hainsworth, "imagine what can happen elsewhere?"

For more information about *off ramp*, contact Arthur Orsini (604) 669-2860, arthur@best.bc.ca, www.best.bc.ca.

BEST's *off ramp* program has been selected as one of three finalists in an international competition in the Communication Awareness Raising category and will be presented at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Conference in Vienna in October 2000.