

Teacher

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I can be happy at this school

Creating a socially responsible learning community



The goal of Blakeburn Elementary School in Port Coquitlam, in its first year of operation, is social responsibility. The staff, parents, and students are building a community where everyone is treated with respect. The students are welcome to enter the school when they arrive, sit in the foyer, work in the computer lab, play board games, or play with constructive toys as they wait for the school day to begin.

by Blakeburn community
and Linda Laidlaw

The school day begins. Several children sit on the circle of couches gathered in the foyer. One reads a picture book; the others quietly converse. Others join them as children, parents, grandparents, and caregivers enter the school. There are more books and more conversations as some children rouse themselves from the sleepiness of early morning. Some choose to play board games or work with Lego or computers as a way into their day. Eventually, most of the students and a number of parents are in and around the foyer in an atmosphere of calm anticipation. It is hard to believe that more than 300 are present and that every school day begins with this joyous collective event.

As 09:00 nears, the singing begins. Most join in; others observe quietly. This school ritual began in September as one of the whole-school activities creating community. After several songs and a clapping game, a few students ring the hand bells, which signal the move to classrooms. The children do this in the same way as they have entered the building, spontaneously, without structured adult intervention or the jarring punctuation of electronic bells. Each classroom has the responsibility for ringing the bells. Without outdoor lineups

and entry scuffles, positive, natural relationships are fostered. Everyone moves on "as real people do when they are out in the world." With the final hugs and goodbyes to family and friends, the children begin their day at school.

After everyone is settled in, a

...a common goal is social responsibility for the whole school...

student leader reads the morning messages for the whole school. There's a reminder about choir practice, as well as an invitation for everyone to bring in materials and artifacts for Chinese New Year. At the end of the announcements, as happens every day, there is a reminder about the school's goal of creating a socially responsible learning community. This week's focus is to treat others with fairness and respect and to include everyone (not just those you like) in the games and activities during the day.

At Blakeburn Elementary School, a Port Coquitlam elementary school, which opened in September 2000, a common goal is social responsibility for the whole school: children and caregivers, teachers, administrator, non-teaching support staff, and volunteers. Parents have noticed the difference. "There is a different atmosphere at this school," one parent

reports. "There's a sense of mutual trust. The expectation is that the kids will manage and get along, and they do." The kids are learning the language to problem solve, respect diversity, and contribute to the classroom and the school. They are expected to include one another. "It is a common understanding among the children when they are playing at recess or lunch that they don't have the right to say "You can't play." says another parent, "I think that they try to live up to having more responsibilities, to having that trust."

Teachers also notice a different atmosphere in their new school. Though there were questions about implementing alternative practices like turning off the automatic bells and increasing expectations about student responsibilities and involvement, the results have

been positive. "It feels so welcoming here—for students and for teachers. The focus is on learning opportunities and developing supportive, caring relationships among colleagues, with parents, and between students. There's consistency and modelling at every level. We are all working from the same page."

Students can articulate the philosophy of their school. According to Komal, "We learned about how to be gracious—that means, like, if someone offers you something, you don't go, 'I don't like this colour,' but you learn to be happy with what you get instead of complaining." Brayden adds, "We know about caring for people, like when someone's hurt, or asking people not to chase." Students talk about

See BLAKEBURN page 4

Funding applications

Blakeburn Elementary School received \$1,000 from the BCTF Ed May Social Responsibility Education Fund to assist them with their project, Creating a Socially Responsible Learning Community. The fund was established at the 1994 BCTF AGM to support teachers in promoting socially responsible teaching practices in the province. A brochure describing the criteria and procedures for applying for funding is sent to all schools in September of each year.

The fund has been fully expended for this year. Applications for the school year 2001-02 may be submitted at any time. The deadline for submissions is November 30, 2001. For further information, please contact Dan Blake, BCTF PD Division, (604) 871-1851, toll free 1-800-663-9163, local 1851, or dblake@bctf.bc.ca.

President's message



David Chudnovsky

Last fall BCTF asked the then Minister of Education Penny Priddy if government would continue to fund the Kindergarten to Grade 3 class-size reductions beyond this year. We were worried that the primary class-size limits were set to disappear at the end of June. The minister responded positively.

Then we approach the B.C. Public School Employers' Association. We asked if they had an interest in moving these provisions into the collective agreement. This would guarantee the class-size limits into the future. BCPSEA representatives said they wanted to assure stability in primary class sizes and to ensure funding stayed in the system for that purpose.

BCPSEA expressed two concerns. First, they needed a guarantee that funding would be forthcoming from government to pay for the necessary teachers. The new minister, Joy MacPhail, made clear to them that the money was indeed available. Second, they wanted "flexibility" in exceptional circumstances to exceed the class-size limits. BCTF was willing to talk, but our concern was that what is presented as "flexibility" often really means abandoning class-size limits.

After many weeks of discussions, the parties finally signed a tentative agreement on February 7. It will be submitted to school trustees and to BCTF local association presidents before ratification.

This process has been an important dress rehearsal for our coming round of bargaining. The lessons are obvious. When we are united in our goal, when members and local leaders are involved and take the lead in articulating that goal, when the BCTF speaks clearly and with one voice, we are successful.

This important step forward could not have been achieved without you. Hundreds of members wrote and phoned school trustees, superintendents and administrative officers to express their support for primary class-size limits. As a result, class sizes for our youngest students are no longer in jeopardy. This victory belongs to you, the members of the BCTF, and to your students.

David

Board members needed

The World AIDS Group of B.C. (WAG) is seeking individuals with an interest in youth and sexual education to join its board of directors.

The World AIDS Group of B.C. began as a community initiative to launch Vancouver's first World AIDS Day commemorative event on December 1, 1988. WAG supports public education and community development through the use of popular theatre, art projects, and peer-education initiatives that give youth and young adults the tools to talk about their sexual health and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Our current programming includes an AIDS-themed theatre project, which every year since 1996 has entertained and educated 4,000 secondary school students in the Lower Mainland; the peer education program, in which youth attend skills training workshops and then make presentations to their peers; the Pen Pals International program, in which classrooms around the world exchange information about the impact of HIV/AIDS in their communities; and the annual World AIDS Day poster project and exhibit. Programming cycles complement the school year; thus board work may be less intensive over the summer months.

WAG is seeking to build on past successes and expand its international focus by recruiting new board members. We are therefore particularly looking for individuals with experience in either arts-based educational programming and/or international development work. Interested individuals should be committed to alleviating the impact of HIV/AIDS around the world with original and youth-oriented programming.

Board members are requested to commit approximately five hours a month to the organization and to be involved with both project development and

fundraising efforts. Potential candidates are invited to reply with a letter outlining their qualifications and interest in the organization to wagbc@vcn.bc.ca

Stephanie Kellington

Board Member WAG B.C.

Cassiar...do you remember?

I am building the virtual community of the now-closed town of Cassiar, B.C. online. Cassiar...do you remember? is at www.armourtech.com/~cassiar.

We are also planning a large Cassiar Reunion in July 2001. Of course we would like to get word out to all the former school teachers of Cassiar.

If you, or anyone you know, taught school in Cassiar, please contact me at cassiar@dsata.power.ca

Herb Daum

Cassiar

Looming teacher shortage?

I read the article in *Teacher* newsmagazine about the looming teacher shortage. A beginning teacher, I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones. I happened to be in the right place at the right time and have some of the right skills and personality to help myself land a continuing contract. I only had to go to two other districts. I would have stayed in my first district, but I couldn't get enough hours to support myself—there were a lot of more experienced teachers. I might have stayed in the second district if I could have landed another contract—they were suffering job loss due to a rapid attrition of the population. When I couldn't get enough work in my third district, I got another job because I did not want to move again.

Although I am now safely tucked away with my continuing contract clutched in one hand, I see the same worried lines on the faces of the TOCs I meet. There is that feeling of never-ending days

of subbing (if you can get enough days to support yourself with so many people on the TOC list) and the pressing need to get a second or third job to help support yourself and pay your student loans. When you finally land that limited-duration contract, you try furiously to make ends meet to make up for the one or two or three years that you have not been able to fully employ yourself. Then, after you have "paid your dues" (love that phrase), you might land a contract after being out of university for two or three years.

Why don't people want to be teachers? I was attracted to teaching because I felt passionate about teaching others to love poetry, art, athletics, cooking, sewing, socials, whatever. However, because of the difficult time I have had landing a job, keeping up with the stressful workload, dealing with the lack of noticeable support, and a number of other negative issues, I am ready to look for greener pastures. And I do mean greener—greenbacks, moola, dollars, dinero, or whatever you want to call it. If the U.S.A. wants to pay me to spend my time doing what I already do and give me double the pay, I am gone!

If Canada wants to attract people to teaching, then do something that makes sense—give grants to those who will go into teaching, provide support, create networks/mentoring programs, invest more solidly in education, recruit appropriately and actively, and pay better wages.

Caralee Jones

Prince George

Join the BCRTA

If you are a recipient of a B.C. teachers' pension and have not joined the B.C. Retired Teachers' Association (BCRTA), please consider becoming a member and enjoy these benefits:

- *Maintenance of pension*

Our reps on the Teachers' Pension Plan Advisory Committee represent the interests of BCRTA members. Your membership in

the BCRTA is the support those people need.

- *Communication and collegiality*

Branch meetings are informal, with a strong emphasis on the social rather than the business. The *RTA Bulletin* is another regular contact.

- *Maintenance of benefits (Medical EHB and Dental)*

A greater membership boosts our capacity to sway the other members of TPPAC. A committee is investigating medical procedures and prescription drugs. Our agreement with Johnson Inc. guarantees members competitive travel and home insurance plans.

- *Retirees as seniors*

We recently staged a two-part Aging Conference on aging, representation agreements, medication addiction, and estate planning. We are a member of the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers and the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C.

The message is simple. We need your support. Your membership strengthens our collective voice. Today would be a good day to join. Please phone Kristy at 1-877-683-0243, or contact your local president for details.

Owen Corcoran

BCRTA first vice-president

Antibullying presentation for parents

Because of the increased concern regarding children bullying and being bullied, the BCTF is offering a free one-hour antibullying presentation to each school PAC. The session will help parents understand bullying and how to help children stay safe and bully-free. A memo to local presidents, BCCPAC, DPACs, and PACs outlining the new workshop was mailed on January 4, 2001. A poster was sent to all schools.

If you are interested in becoming a presenter, or for further information, contact Piera DiTomaso at (604) 871-1883 or pditomaso@bctf.bc.ca.

What's new on the web?

www.bctf.bc.ca/isdept

- The BCTF Information Services' Department web site.
- Bullying, class size, teacher workload and stress, full-day Kindergarten, education technology—these are just some of the topics we research and monitor. Bookmark our web research profiles for the latest information on issues that are important to classroom teachers—www.bctf.bc.ca/isdept/research.html
- Professional reading time is a rarity! Our electronic journals web page links you to the latest professional literature that is free on the web—www.bctf.bc.ca/isdept/Ejournals.html

- Search our online videotape database to find videos for professional use or classroom viewing—www.bctf.bc.ca/cgi/videoDB.exe

- The New Videos link on our web site alerts you to new titles available for borrowing—www.bctf.bc.ca/isdept/Newvideos.html

- On our search page, you will find news about popular search engines, links to recommended engines, education guides and people finders—www.bctf.bc.ca/isdept/Search.html

- Visit our web site, the virtual library for BCTF members.

— Diana Broome



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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LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

Annual convention swimming gala. Following the Tuesday afternoon session there will be a swimming gala at the Crystal Gardens. There will be an opportunity for all who desire to enjoy a swim in the magnificent indoor salt-water baths. Three swimming events will be arranged and prizes awarded for the same. There will also be an exhibition of diving. In connection with the function, afternoon tea will be served in the Gardens. Special prices for swimming and for general admission have been arranged.

- BC Teacher, March 1931

50 years ago

"Now swing your honey but hold her tight." Such calls might not usually be associated with BCTF conventions but they will be this year. A convention sub-

committee under the direction of Mel Henderson and Stan Kennett, working with Miss Mernie Summers and Brian Creer, has been busy of late planning for a Modern and Old-Time Dance to be held in the Alexandra Ballroom on Wednesday, March 28.

Here's the program: 1. Waltz (modern) 2. Fox Trot; 3. Mixer (Rig-a-jig-jig) 4. Old-time Waltz 5. Square Dance 6. Bingo mixer (Fox Trot) 7. Spanish Circle 8. Square Dance 9. Pat-a-Cake Polka 10. Supper Waltz.

- BC Teacher, March 1951

30 years ago

Many children in low-income, city families have only the streets and aesthetically bare sterile school grounds on which to play...

We can, to some extent, provide play areas in the city and on school grounds that have

the advantages of the woods. They are called Adventure Playgrounds. The forms they can take will be as varied as their designers' imaginations will permit. The philosophy, however, is the same.

- BC Teacher, February 1971

10 years ago

January looked a lot like September to some teachers, as all elementary schools welcomed children whose fifth birthday falls between November and April. These dual entry children will remember the first day of school as a mid-winter event, not as the unofficial end of summer.

- Teacher Newsmagazine, Feb./March 1991

Janet Amsden
Fairview Elementary School
Maple Ridge

New teachers

Asking for help

You are a trained teacher with new ideas and information. Situations or concerns may come up that you do not know how to handle. Ask others, and ask early. It is not a sign of incompetence to ask questions. Other people have experience in areas that you may not have. Asking early may save a lot of grief and a lot of time. Ask for support. Be honest about how hurt or how excited you are about a situation or project. Ask your local president, a mentor, other beginning teachers, a

school counsellor, or your staff rep for help or advice.

Saying yes and saying no

It is all right to say no to too many extra-curricular activities or assignments. First-year teachers often think they have to do everything that is asked of them and do it well. There are only so many hours in a day, and you have only so much energy. If something is too much for you, say so. It doesn't help anyone for you to be so

stretched that you cannot do anything well or you are not getting the sleep you need.

We tend to manage the symptoms of stress rather than make changes in the source. If you cannot figure out how to get into balance, get support from friends and staff members.

For more information, check with your staff rep or local president, and seek out information about employee-assistance programs.

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

Diversity 2000: Students take action in North Vancouver schools

by Tricia Gardner
and Val O'Leary

Forty-six students and seven teachers from five North Vancouver secondary schools participated in Diversity 2000 at Camp Squamish, November 16-18, 2000. Diversity 2000 was the second such camp sponsored by the Multicultural and Antiracism Committee (MAR). The youth shared their ideas and enthusiasm through participating in the Bafa Bafa game, cultural sharing, and a workshop dealing with strategies to deal with incidents of name calling in a school environment.

Over the three days of the

camp, the group built friendships, understanding, and support to help fight racism and promote an acceptance and understanding of multiculturalism and diversity in North Vancouver schools.

As the camp finale, students developed action plans for an event to be implemented back at their schools. Camp participants have been busy.

- Argyle students celebrated the holiday season with an international bake sale featuring Kushali (Israeli/Muslim), Kwanzaa (African), Christmas with a Brazilian and Canadian flavour, and Hanukkah.

- Carson students are planning a travelling road show, featuring 10 different cultures,

to visit humanities classes.

- Students at Handsworth will be recognizing various cultural and religious celebrations over the PA.

- Seycove students decorated their front entrance with multilingual holiday greetings.

- Windsor students hosted a traditional costume day, complete with prizes.

With the momentum gained from those events, Diversity 2000 participants have many plans for 2001.

Tricia Gardner teaches at the Outdoor School, North Vancouver and Val O'Leary teaches at Argyle Secondary School, North Vancouver.



VAL O'LEARY PHOTO

Diversity 2000, a camp sponsored by the Multicultural and Antiracism Committee, builds friendships, understanding, and support to help fight racism and promote acceptance and understanding of diversity in North Vancouver schools.

Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

1 Helping Parents Help: Your Child's Edge. Garth Holmes. 91p. ©1993. The purpose of this book is to help parents help their child in school. It is a toolbox that gives over 110 strategies. The book is organized under the following chapter headings: You Can Help, How You Help, Helping Your Child Study, Helping Your Child Review, Helping Your Child Take Tests, Helping Your Child Read, Helping Your Child Write Essays, Cooperating with Teachers, Troubleshooting Curriculum Problems and Resources Available. Grades 7-12. LA 9921—\$10.95

2 The NESAs Activities Handbook for Native and Multicultural Classrooms, Vol. 3. Compiled by Don Sawyer and Wayne Lundeberg. 128 p. ©1993. This third volume of activities is a response to the continuing demand for effective, experience-based exercises appropriate for Native and multicultural learning situations. The 23 activities contain both original and borrowed exercises. Many of the original activities were drawn from a variety of curriculum projects for use at all levels, especially secondary and adult. Activities include precise instructions and supplementary materials. LA 2621—\$16.95

3 White Jade Tiger. Julie Lawson. 170p. 1993. This historically-based novel is a tale of intrigue and adventure about the building of the great Canadian Pacific Railway. In the novel, Jasmine is not sure she likes the idea of being stuck in Victoria while her father goes to China for a year. But on a field trip to Chinatown, she explores a curious shop in Fan Tan Alley and accidentally passes through a hidden door. She finds herself in Victoria's Chinatown of the 1880s. Mistaken for a Chinese boy, she is soon caught up in a race through the Fraser Canyon to find a tiger amulet. The author of this novel is the winner of the Sheila A. Egoff Award for Children's Literature, 1994 and the novel is a Canadian Children's Book Centre Choice. Grades 5 to 8. LA 9075A—\$8.95

White Jade Tiger—A Teacher's Guide. Julie Lawson. 34p. 1999. Contains novel ideas and activities encompassing all areas of language arts, as well as social studies, science and art. Novel worksheets, archive photos, maps, crossword puzzle and word searches are also included. Grades 5 to 8. LA 9075B—\$5.95

4 Basketball: Instructor's Resource Manual. Wilf Wedmann, Bryna Kopelow, and Jennifer Fenton, Premier's Sport Awards Program, 84p. ©2000. This manual includes 13 lesson plans with illustrations and diagrams, basketball drills and games supplements, mini-basketball rules, and information and forms for use with the Premier's Sport Awards Program. Recommended by the B.C. Ministry of Education. Ages 8-13. LA 9844—\$15

5 The Lives of Renaissance Women. A co-operatively planned humanities unit on Renaissance women for the late intermediate level. Judith Coffin, Marlowe Irvine and Ramona Sousa. 83p. 1994. The purpose of this unit is to illuminate the lives and contributions of all classes of women who lived between 1350 and 1650 in Western Europe and England—the Renaissance. Ten activities with resource materials. Grade 9. LA 9245—\$8.75

6 Lumberyard—An Inclusive Measurement/Building Unit. Margie Klassen and Rika Ruebsaat. 31p. 2000. This unit covers PLOs from the Math, Personal Planning, Language Arts and Applied Skills IRPs. Designed for Grade 5, it can be adapted for any intermediate grade. Possible adaptations for students with special needs are also included in each of the 11 lesson plans. Lesson plan topics include measuring classroom objects, perimeter, area, volume (part 1 and 2) pricing lumber, planning the building project, buying wood, using tools/preparing to build, building the project, and a learning log. Grade 5. LA 9428—\$3

7 Exploring the Ant World: An Early Primary Co-operative Unit for Teacher and Teacher-Librarian. Jean M. Coe, Sharon M. Mombourquette. 49p. 1990. This unit involves students in an experiential approach to the biological sciences. It is a ready-to-use, thematic approach that integrates language arts and sciences through the processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. This unit lends itself to large and small group and individualized instruction, as well as the use of centres supported by the full spectrum of library resources. LA 8544—\$5

8 All the Angles: A Primary Geometry Theme. Pat Corder. 66p. 1991. An integrated theme unit specifically designed for early primary, which can also be used in years three and four. Math lessons include activities in language arts, art, and physical education. K-4. LA 8447—\$7.70

9 Window on the Fraser: Fraser River Action Plan. Environment Canada, Fisheries & Oceans Canada. 15-min. video, 6p. teacher's guide. ©1994. Includes a video, teacher and student background information, and pre-post classroom activity suggestions. The video provides an overview of the Fraser River Basin and the need to protect its valuable resources, as well as an introduction to some of the programs carried out by the federal government to improve the basin's health. Available in French (FEE212). Grades 6-10. LA EE212—\$11

10 Creative Comparative Civilizations. Fred Schoenrock and Naomi Waken. 25p. ©1997. Invites students to set out on a great adventure—an exploration of humanity's potential as seen through the accomplishments of past civilizations, the present challenge facing humankind's very survival, and the incredible vision of what it means to live responsibly as a member of an emerging global community. A thematic approach is outlined. Blackline masters include quotes and questions on: civilization; nature, environment, ecology; health well-being; economics, science technology; global civilization; philosophy, theology, mythology and human nature; social structure, political order; art, architecture, communication. Reproducible for classroom use. Grade 12. LA 2003—\$13.95

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

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

BLAKEBURN from page 1 feeling safe, included, and happy to be at school.

Creating the kind of community that is now visible in the day-to-day routines at Blakeburn, didn't happen automatically. The philosophy and structures had to be a shared vision, and they required many levels of involvement. Initially, in late spring, the leadership team talked about how to create a caring and socially responsible learning community. The B.C. Ministry of Education Social Responsibility Performance Standards framed common language, common expectations, and a starting place for meaningful conversations. The conversations continued throughout the summer as new staff were hired. The children and their families were then included during the first week of school. The entire first week focussed on creating a "caring, creative, intelligent school." That became the mission statement for Blakeburn. As one teacher commented, "we began to develop shared values and beliefs for what creating a socially responsible community means to all of its members."

Students participated in multiaged "family" groupings with relevant activities. Throughout the process, staff realized that such work must be multifaceted, woven through the curriculum, and part of all interactions at school. For example, the Christmas concert focussed on "caring for each

Living the principles of inclusion and responsibility to one's school community, through modelling and consistency, must happen all day, every day.

other," the creation of a community quilt represents the diversity in the community, the children use the Social Responsibility Performance Standards to evaluate characters in literature, and all staff, including the new noon-hour supervisors, use the same language when interacting with children. As one teacher said, "It is far more

powerful when we are using common language." It required all adults to "buy in" to notions of social responsibility at all levels. That included breaking down the "norms" of competition or isolation.

Even with the rising public stance against bullying and violence in schools, creating a positive school climate requires more than a pre-packaged antibullying program for a scheduled time in the day. Living the principles of inclusion and responsibility to one's school community, through modelling and consistency, must happen all day, every day. We believe that creating a socially responsible learning community is a lifelong journey, and we know we've just begun. As one student said, "I am happy and lucky to be at this school. I feel safe. Everyone treats me good. I love coming to school!"

The Blakeburn community consists of parents, children, special-education assistants, teachers, secretaries, caretakers, and the administrator. Linda Laidlaw is a B.C. teacher, currently working on her doctorate at York University, Toronto.



At Blakeburn Elementary School, the whole school community is living the principles of inclusion and responsibility through modelling and consistency, all day, every day.

Time to pay nurses what they're worth

by Debra McPherson

Like teachers, nurses are determined to achieve significant compensation increases in this round of bargaining to address a growing shortage of professionals, caused by years of belt-tightening in the public sector. B.C.'s unionized Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses are determined to use this year's round of collective bargaining to achieve recognition for what we are truly worth to the health care system and the people of B.C.

In the face of persistent cutbacks in services due to an international nursing shortage, it's time for B.C. to pay wages and premiums that are globally competitive.

Increased compensation will encourage senior nurses to stay on the job, because when their wages go up, their future pension benefits increase. Increased compensation will encourage new graduate nurses to remain in B.C. Increased compensation will enable B.C. to compete to attract new nurses here from other jurisdictions, and will encourage nurses who have left B.C. to return.

The same way teachers and public education suffered severely during years of belt-tightening and deficit-fighting by governments, nurses and other health care professionals have watched our economic status and our workplaces deteriorate steadily over the last decade.

Just like teachers and other defenders of the public education system, nurses feel growing pressure to bring more private money and private control into public health care because governments chose to starve the system for funds.

As the recent report by the Tommy Douglas Institute points out, between 1992 and 1997, "total health care spending per capita in Canada, when adjusted for inflation, fell by 1.1% from \$2,469 to \$2,442—an unprecedented decline. Occurring entirely in the public sector, it brought the share of the national income spent on

Despite recent spending increases, per capita spending on hospitals is still below 1992 levels.

health care down by a full percentage point, from 10.2% to 9.2%." Despite recent spending increases, per capita spending on hospitals is still below 1992 levels. While B.C. managed to cushion the blow by trying to make up for federal cuts and providing employment security in health care, this province was not immune to cost-cutting pressures and the resulting damage.

In B.C. today there are more than 1000 vacant nursing positions. More than 4000 experienced, senior nurses are eligible to retire at any time, and the recent expansion of nursing education seats won't graduate enough new nurses to replace them for many years.

An examination of statistics compiled by the Registered Nurses' Association of B.C.

reveals the scope of the problem. More than 900 nurses took the necessary steps to leave B.C. in 1999 by having their qualifications verified to work in other locations. During the last three years more than 800 nurses took those steps to leave B.C. to work in the United States. The numbers seeking to leave B.C. to work in Alberta are even more striking—a steady increase from 45 in 1994 to 262 in 1999. The move from B.C. to Ontario is also growing. It's no coincidence that wages for experienced front line nurses in Alberta and Ontario have surpassed B.C. (\$30.62 in Ontario hospitals, \$26.52 in Alberta, \$26.50 in B.C.) With nurses in Ontario and Alberta negotiating new deals this year, the problem for B.C. will only get worse.

The nursing shortage is a world-wide problem. The competition for nurses is global.

At the same time B.C. nurses are being lured to Washington State, California, and other US locations for wages of \$35 US, the equivalent of \$55 Canadian.

To cut costs, administrators tried to re-engineer health care along the principles of fast-food franchising. In B.C., this slashing of the public sector meant the elimination of hundreds of full-time jobs for nurses and an increasing reliance on nurses working overtime or on a casual or on-call basis. Nursing education programs were cut back. On the wage front, B.C. nurses received increases totaling 3% during the last six years. (0% in 1996, 1% in 1997, 0% in 1998, 0% in 1999, and 2% in 2000).

It's no wonder there's a nursing shortage. Now that governments have decided to reverse course and hire more nurses, the nurses just aren't there.

This nursing shortage is a world-wide problem; the competition for nurses is global. Long-term solutions may be complex, but one step is essential to keep us in the game. Nurses' wages and premiums must be globally competitive to keep our nurses working in B.C., to attract new nurses from other jurisdictions, to bring back B.C. nurses who have gone elsewhere or left the profession, and to persuade senior nurses that it's worth their while to hold on for a few more years until enough new nurses graduate from newly-expanding nursing education programs.

While our proposals may appear dramatic — we want to move the top rate for a front-line nurse from the current \$26.50 an hour to \$42 an hour, increase our vehicle mileage rate to \$1.25/kilometre from 38 cents and increase shift and on-call premiums — they're a critical response to a problem that was allowed to develop and deteriorate for many years.

It's time to pay nurses what we are worth.

Debra McPherson is president-elect, B.C. Nurses' Union.



Members of the BCTF Executive Committee, Representative Assembly, and staff rally at the office of the B.C. Public School Employers' Association, January 26, 2001, to encourage the employer to incorporate the primary class-size limits into the collective agreement.

Class size counts

Small classes = better learning

by Nancy Knickerbocker

The red and yellow pennants stood out beautifully against a blue sky as about 200 teachers from throughout the province rallied at the offices of the B.C. Public School Employers' Association. They were there to urge the employer to live up to its earlier commitment and incorporate the primary class-size limits into the collective agreement.

BCTF President David Chudnovsky told the rally he was deeply concerned that, because the class-size limits expire when the collective agreement runs out in June, it could mean the end of better learning conditions for thousands of children and the potential loss of about 900 teaching positions.

Given that districts now are making staffing decisions for next school year, it's urgent that this issue be resolved promptly to avoid disruptions, he said.

Carol Johns, president of the Primary Teachers' Association, talked about the overwhelming body of research showing that small classes in the primary grades mean improved academic performance in every year, especially for children living in poverty. Not only that, small classes spell improved behaviour and discipline at school, early identification of learning problems, enhanced citizenship, and other long-term benefits.

The assembled teachers each signed a copy of the proposed mid-contract modification. When the hundreds of signed documents were collected, Chudnovsky and Johns went into the office to present them to Ken Denike, chairperson of the board of directors of BCPSEA. They urged him to conclude the agreement with teachers and then work together to hold Victoria accountable for full funding of the class-size

provisions.

Within a week, the board of BCPSEA did indeed approve the plan to move the class-size limits into the contract, and agreed to recommend it to school boards province-wide. Teachers are hopeful that trustees will also approve it, and many are speaking out in their communities to urge this positive change to protect small classes for our youngest learners.

As this drama unfolded, teachers and other British Columbians were awaiting an election call. For her part, Education Minister Joy MacPhail has emerged as a supporter of class-size limits. She had a solid opinion piece in the *Victoria Times Colonist* on how small classes are good public policy because they are good for children. In some locals, teacher activists have been using MacPhail's article in their efforts to urge trustees to support their position.

Meanwhile, Liberal Education critic Gordon Hogg and his caucus colleagues have refused to take a stand on any educational issue except essential services legislation, which they support. Whether it's class-size limits at the primary level or tuition freeze in post-secondary, neither students, teachers nor faculty have had any luck whatsoever in getting the Liberals to articulate their positions.

The organizations representing principals and parents have not been so reticent, however. The B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils has expressed its concerns about what it calls "the high cost and lack of flexibility in implementing the mandatory reduction" of K-3 class sizes. The B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association has been outspoken in opposition. BCPVPA President Stu Dale recently wrote to his colleagues saying, "The BCPVPA supports smaller class sizes if they are designed to improve learning conditions for students—not working conditions

for teachers."

Despite all the obstacles, Chudnovsky said, teachers remain committed to defending and enhancing the class-size limits, which are every child's best protection against getting lost in the crowd.

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.

The research is clear: Class size matters to kids

by Peter Owens

The research is clear. "The number of students in a class makes a difference in students' behaviour and academic performance, participation in school activities, and in parental involvement in schools. Dr. Charles Achilles, one of the researchers who worked on the STAR Project (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) met with the executive of the B.C. Primary Teachers' Association to describe the now-famous study. The study involved more than 11,600 Tennessee children in Grades K-3 and followed their progress to the post-secondary level. It lays to rest any question of the importance of class size. According to Achilles, not one study of class size between 1904 and the present contradicts their findings. There is by far the largest and most comprehensive study.

Achilles points out that a lot of confusion in the debate on class size occurs because people cite studies that mix pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) and class size. Pupil-teacher ratio is the number of students in a school divided by the number of qualified teachers. The number of students in a teacher's class determines class size. Achilles agrees that research is inconclusive on whether or not changing the PTR affects the quality of education, but there is

no doubt that class size matters.

In the STAR Project, students and teachers were randomly assigned to various class-size conditions in Grades K-3: small classes of about 13 to 17, regular classes of about 22 to 26, and regular classes of about 22 to 26 with full-time teacher assistants. The results are clear: the students in small classes for the first four years of school performed better on nationally normed and criterion-referenced tests by the end of Grade 3.

Moreover, students who had been in small classes for K-3 continued to move ahead of their grade level as they continued through to Grade 12. A greater proportion of those students wrote entrance exams for post-secondary institutions.

The study found that students in small classes did the best. Students in regular classes were next, and students in regular classes with a full-time TA were third.

Students do better in academics, their behaviour is better because it can be monitored, and they can be taught behaviour appropriate for school.

The only variable in the study was the size of the class. The evidence is clear that having students begin schooling in classes small enough to have their needs met more than pays off in the long run. Students do better in academics, their behaviour is better because it can be monitored, and they can be taught behaviour appropriate for school. They develop a more positive attitude toward school, and their parents become more

involved. Teachers find it more rewarding to teach small classes.

The Social Security numbers, birth dates, and gender of the students participating in the study were used to track them. That information told researchers how they did in following grades, as well as how many applied for post-secondary institutions, were charged with criminal offenses, or applied for welfare.

Small class size not only benefits the students in the class but also pays dividends to society as a whole.

Being in a small class for the first four years of school had a positive effect on all areas investigated. A greater proportion of students from small classes applied to post-secondary institutions. Beginning school in a small class cut in half the gap between whites and Afro-Americans for the proportion applying to post-secondary. A smaller proportion of students who began in small classes were charged with a criminal offense, and a smaller proportion applied for welfare benefits.

Small class size not only benefits the students in the class but also pays dividends to society as a whole. It is an investment we cannot afford to ignore.

Achilles likened it to the Ministry of Health's asking doctors to eradicate polio but refusing to provide the vaccine. He said we know the importance of small classes and we can't afford to ignore the overwhelming evidence.

Peter Owens is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division and editor of *Teacher Newsmagazine*.

Retroactive payment of salary increments in Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Teachers' Union recently won an arbitration. The ruling directs that teachers affected by the *Compensation Restraint Act (1994-97)* are to be no longer affected after November 1, 1997.

An affected teacher would have been employed by a school board in Nova Scotia as a regular teacher as of August 1, 1994, in at least the second year of service, would have earned at least \$25,000 in 1994-95, would have not received an increment either on August 1, 1994 or January 1, 1995, and would still not be at the top of the increment scale on November 1, 1997. An affected teacher would have been employed in the 1997-98 academic school year or later.

If you are an affected teacher, you were underpaid according to experience increment levels as of November 1, 1997, and you may be owed retroactive salary for the period after November 1, 1997.

If affected, please fax or phone Joan Ling, Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, fax: (904) 477-2517, phone: (902) 477-5621.

Making work

Teaching is always recognized as psychologically demanding work but few of us recognize how physically demanding it is. The Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation require that any identified risk or hazard to the health and safety of a worker be eliminated immediately or reduced as much as possible. The identified risks and hazards for teachers include vocal injuries, back injuries, knee injuries, neck injuries, varicose veins, kidney and bladder ailments, health issues related to pregnancy, communicable diseases, hypertension, and feet problems. Many of these health and safety concerns are not related to critical incidents but to the everyday, repetitive activities of teaching—standing, bending, reaching, talking, and so forth.

The Federation and teachers need to identify what constitutes safe and healthy working conditions for teachers. Class size, class composition, hours of work (including sufficient breaks), facility design, resources in terms of staffing and materials, furniture, and equipment are all aspects of creating safe work. The focus ought to be on rehabilitating the work, not the people. This is prevention.

What is included on these pages are articles written by two teachers that provide personal examples of this kind of prevention and work reorganiz-

ation. When health and safety committees perform their regular monthly safety inspections, they should be examining work practices and processes, not just the building so that real prevention occurs. This is why safety inspections must occur during instructional time so that what we do is examined, not just where we are.

—Lynne Sinclair

The “squeaky wheel gets the oil”

by Gordon Gray

I had to become a squeaky wheel with the Workers’ Compensation Board subsequent to a series of accidents while at school. I hope to give you some insights about the way WCB operates and to encourage you to persevere.

I will provide you with some background information that you will need should you ever be injured at work and subsequently have to deal with the WCB.

November 5, 1991: When the chair on which I was about to sit was accidentally knocked away by a student, I fell backwards to the floor, injuring my lower back, neck, and right shoulder. I hit the edge of the chair as I fell, causing more damage to my lower back. At that time, the neck and back pains were severe, and I was instructed by

my doctor to wear a cervical collar.

Several weeks later: A senior student who was considerably larger than I, knocked me to the floor accidentally, when he turned around quickly at his locker, giving me a powerful blow to the back of my neck with his elbow. I was taken to the emergency department at the Royal Jubilee Hospital by ambulance. That was reported as a new WCB injury.

January 1992: I was still experiencing severe back spasms and pain, but I returned to work. My doctor finalized my claim on March 30, 1992. I continued as the head of the Computer Science Department at my school and simultaneously worked for, and received, my master’s degree in mathematics education from the University of Victoria (November 1994).

January 7, 1994: I was working on the floor helping a student debug a computer program, and in trying to raise myself from the floor, I experienced severe pain in the left elbow and left forearm. That injury was reported as a new WCB claim. My doctor prescribed a splint for the elbow. That claim was closed on May 12, 1994.

September 21, 1994: While lifting a computer from a high shelf, I experienced pain in my right shoulder and neck and a sensation of something giving way in my left elbow. The computer fell out of my hands, and I tried to bend over quickly

and wrench it out of the air, before it crashed to the floor. I was not successful. My doctor informed me on September 22, 1994, that I had badly torn muscles in my left elbow and had sustained a new injury to my right shoulder at the same time. That injury was reported under a new WCB claim.

October 20, 1994: I was bending over a drinking fountain at work supporting myself with my left hand raised up leaning on the wall when I was literally pushed into the wall over the drinking fountain by two students fighting. The force of the collision caused so much pain that I lost consciousness momentarily. Then I collapsed. I was in so much pain that I could not make it back to my classroom alone. A teacher and a student who had witnessed the events assisted me back to my classroom. I was unable to drive my car and was driven home by my school principal.

When I filed the report of this accident with the principal, he made me tear it up and submit a watered-down version. He said that he didn’t want my report to cause the school to get a bad name! I was in extreme pain for several days after that incident. My doctor was concerned that I may have damaged a disc in my neck, causing the pain, numbness, and weakness in my arm.

While I was recovering at home, my doctor recommended to my WCB caseworker that I should be given the following list of items to assist me to function in the classroom:

- a computer with a printer
- a data-projection device
- a portable desk
- an ergonomically designed chair.

After asking me to obtain three quotes for the equipment, I never heard from the caseworker again.

My doctor referred me to several specialists, and on August 10, 1995, I had surgery to my neck, during which a badly protruding disc was removed. When I came out of the anesthetic, the numbness in my arm had gone! I was discharged a week later and two days after arriving home, I received a letter from WCB informing me that my case had been closed and backdated to April 1995.

To this day, I continue to experience pain in my lower back, neck, right shoulder, and left hip. I have to use a cane to help me walk.

I am now working at a new less crowded school, but as a result of the pain I experience, I am unable to work full time. WCB’s reversal of my claim caused me untold psychological damage. I have been appealing this WCB decision for six years! The BCTF hired a lawyer to represent me. Three years after that, the BCTF fired the lawyer and hired David Bradshaw, a highly experienced workers’ advocate.

We lost the first appeal, but we won the second appeal on October 16, 2000.

If you have been injured while at work, make absolutely sure that you fill out your accident forms (making at least two

copies for yourself) as soon as possible, see your doctor immediately, and inform the school safety officer. Keep good records in a diary and copies of all correspondence relative to your accident, medical reports, correspondence with your school district, local association, WCB, Great West Life, short-term disability service, and long-term disability service.

I have only recently been given help, thanks largely to Sue Ferguson, my GVTA rep and health officer for SD 61. I have been given a specially designed desk, an ergonomically designed chair, and a data-projection device, and I supplied a laptop computer and all the software I needed for teaching Math 11. I started using the equipment in September 2000, unfortunately five years too late. I am leaving teaching at the end of June. I hope that the WCB disability pension will be sufficient to help me and my body with the hard times ahead!

During this entire six years, I experienced an incredible feeling of loneliness and isolation; however, I also learned that perseverance in fighting for the truth leads to justice.

Gordon Gray teaches at S.J. Willis—Adult Education, Victoria.

Ergonomic teaching tip

by Diane Graham

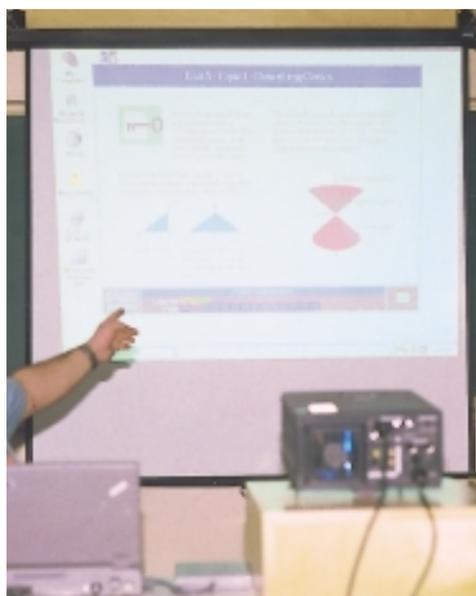
“Oh, my aching back!” If you’re a primary teacher, I’m sure you’ve identified with that end-of-the-day feeling. As a rehabilitation consultant with the BCTF rehabilitation program, I have heard it all too often.

The nature of the primary school program, student’s level of independence and size, in addition to desk height and configuration, make repeated stooping, bending, and twisting a fact of life for the primary teacher. This can be a factor contributing to injury and lost work time.

A small, revolving, wheeled examiner’s stool, similar to one you’d find in a physician’s office, has proved effective for classroom use for those suffering symptoms of low back pain and fatigue, common in conditions of degenerative disc disease, fibromyalgia, and chronic fatigue syndrome. The physical setup in the K–2 classroom usually allows room for manoeuvrability using the feet. This reduces stress to the back, neck, and leg muscles caused from repetitive bending and turning resulting in pain and fatigue. A pneumatic height adjustment and foot rest allows for improved alignment of the hips, knees, and spine. A small backrest for lumbar support can be an added feature. A five-wheel ball bearing caster base is an important antitip feature supplemented with a safety review with students. Teaching materials stored on its surface at all times helps to eliminate



Victoria teacher Gordon Gray, after many years of WCB claims has been provided with a specially designed desk, an ergonomically designed chair, and a data-projection device to aid in his teaching.



GARY ZAK PHOTOS

safer

“joy riding.”

The swivel seat is useful during circle times to eliminate twisting while teaching from an easel or reading to the class.

Though not a replacement for the practice of good body mechanics or encouraging students to come to your comfortable seating level, the small, wheeled, swivel stool can be an important ergonomic addition in the hands-on, centre-based learning environment of the K-2 classroom for those teachers experiencing pain and fatigue.

Diane Graham is a rehabilitation consultant, Spectrum Rehabilitation Services, Kelowna.

Free-field sound systems in the classroom

by John Froess

Life in the classroom using a Free-Field Sound System (also known as Soundfield FM) is wonderful. I recommend it. I have the system because of a diagnosis of “voice dysphonia” by my family physician and my speech therapist, with whom I spent eight months working on new speaking techniques. My voice problems began in the spring of 1997, when I found that my vocal cords felt strained after a day of teaching and that the feeling did not go away after a night’s rest, but reappeared daily. My family doctor immediately referred me to an ear, nose, and throat specialist. I would have a six-month wait for that appointment.

In the fall of 1997, after seeing the ENT specialist, I was diagnosed with “voice stress” and referred to a speech therapist at Victoria General Hospital. After a two-month wait for that appointment, I went for 10 sessions of vocal retraining. To reduce the stress on my voice, the Sooke School District bought a Free-Field Sound System for my use. Immediately I noticed a lessening in vocal strain.

The free-field sound system—

four speakers on the four walls about six or seven feet from the floor—allows the teacher’s voice to be heard from every corner of the room. A teacher need not raise his or her voice or strain it in any way; the amplification carries it completely. A conversational tone works for all students—those with hearing impairments and those with normal hearing. The power pack fits neatly in a pocket or on a belt; the head set sits snugly around the back of the head. It can be turned off with the press of a button for private conversations.

Students need only a day or two to adjust to the surround sound. It is perfect for reading to the class or getting their students’ attention above the din. Several teachers in Sooke are using the system (or something similar) because of voice problems or for the benefit of hearing-impaired students. Each system costs between \$1,200 and \$1,500 dollars; a discount is given when two or more are ordered at one time. Saanich School District’s goal is to install a system in every classroom in the next few years (*Times Colonist*, November 20, 2000) as studies have shown that students learn better with improved acoustics. Furthermore, the B.C. Ministry of Education has funded about 1,300 amplification systems across B.C. since 1995 at roughly \$420,000 a year. (*Times Colonist*, November 20, 2000)

If you need a voice amplification system, check with your local association to find out the path you should follow. If you are having voice strain of any sort, make an appointment with your family doctor, who can refer you to an ENT specialist for further assessment. Voice stress is a growing concern among teachers and other professionals whose jobs require extensive vocal use. Early diagnosis/prevention and amplification assistance can make a difference to the quality and length of a teaching career.

John Froess teaches at Belmont Secondary School, Sooke, with a .8 assignment and a .2 medical leave, which allows vocal rest each day.



Saanich School District’s goal is to install a free-field sound system in every classroom in the district.

Yours for the asking



Evergreen’s curriculum integration workshop

Take the classroom outside and into the school ground. This spring, Evergreen is offering curriculum integration workshops for teachers in the Lower Mainland and Victoria. This three-hour workshop provides teachers with hands-on activities, tools, and information to make best use of the school ground as a rich educational resource. Teachers will leave with a copy of Evergreen’s new curriculum guide *Plants, Patterns, and Playgrounds*.

Evergreen is a national, not-for-profit, environmental education organization that brings nature back to schools.

For more information call Evergreen (604) 689-0766.

Growing Active

Have you ever imagined making nature part of your school? Evergreen is offering “Growing Active,” a workshop series to help you transform your local school ground into a healthy and living learning environment. Evergreen will be in Victoria, North Vancouver, and Surrey to offer Getting

Started, Site Design, Native Plants, and Fundraising workshops.

Phone Life Cycles at (250) 383-5800 or Evergreen at (604) 689-0766 for more information.

EcoEd Workshops

Eco Education BC provides fun and interactive, full-day, environmental education programs for Grades 4-6. The program encourages young people to understand and to respect the environment so that they may help restore and protect it. Program learning objectives meet many of the Grades 4-6 learning outcomes in science, applied skills, personal planning, social studies, and language arts. During a typical day, students use their critical-thinking skills and work together to answer questions about the environment. Four eco education crews are available to visit your school (one class per visit). The crews consist of two or three educators. We offer the following workshops: Grizz Ed, Waste reduction, Water, and Environmental protection.

All the eco education crews are booked on a first-come first-serve basis. Schools may be

limited to one visit per year.

For more information, or to book a crew, call the Eco Education BC office at (604) 683-0127.

G.I. Joe meets Barbie: BCTF releases major study on boys and girls

The Federation has produced an extensive research project into the crucial issues of gender stereotyping in schools and society. The result is “G.I. Joe meets Barbie, software engineer meets caregiver: Males and females in B.C.’s public schools and beyond.”

As well as academic issues, this major research report also examines special needs and gender, physical and mental health, crime and violence, and economic and labour indicators. Data reveal that “a stunning amount of gender stereotyping remains in B.C.’s public education system, from Kindergarten through graduate school.” However, “there is no evidence that this situation is imposed, caused, or condoned by public schools.” The full report is available on the BCTF web site <http://www.bctf.bc.ca/research/reports/2000sd03>.

Le Collège vous en exige trop ?

Si, afin d’obtenir votre certification permanente pour l’enseignement, le Collège des enseignants de la Colombie-Britannique exige que vous suiviez un nombre considérable de cours, ne pliez pas bagage tout de suite. Il est peut-être possible de réduire considérablement les exigences du Collège. D’abord, il est essentiel de connaître à fond votre dossier. Revoyez le document provenant du Collège vous avisant qu’il vous manque un certain nombre de crédits. Analysez vos relevés de notes d’université et de collège et faites une liste des cours suivis en les regroupant de façon séquentielle, par thème ou spécialité reconnu par le Collège des enseignants de la Colombie-Britannique. Sachez que certains cours du collégial (si vous êtes du Québec) peuvent être considérés comme des « cours juniors » ou de niveau 100 par le Collège, surtout si ceux-ci sont reliés à votre domaine d’étude universitaire ou votre spécialité. Si, à la suite de votre analyse, vous croyez que votre dossier mérite une révision, demandez-la ! Vous serez peut-être agréablement surpris. Il vous faudra écrire une lettre expliquant votre

situation à la personne responsable de votre dossier. Joignez à cette lettre les documents reflétant votre analyse et permettant de clarifier votre dossier. Si vos relevés de notes sont en français, faites-en la traduction et ajoutez une description des cours dont le titre ne rend pas compte du contenu. Notez les cours préalables car cela indique que votre cours n’est pas de niveau « junior ». La plupart des universités et des collèges ont un site Internet contenant ces informations.

Il faut aussi savoir que les codes de cours des différentes universités canadiennes n’ont pas tous la même signification. Par exemple, la plupart des cours de l’Université Laval commencent par le chiffre « 1 » et le Collège interprète ces codes comme des cours de niveau 100 ce qui n’est pas le cas.

Après une révision, il vous faudra peut-être encore compléter quelques cours. Assurez-vous d’obtenir, du Collège, une approbation écrite de votre sélection de cours. Enfin, demandez comment vous pouvez obtenir un délai supplémentaire afin de compléter vos cours. Si vous n’êtes toujours pas satisfait de la

réponse du Collège, il est toujours possible d’aller en appel. Communiquez avec la personne responsable de votre dossier qui pourra vous renseigner davantage. N’oubliez pas de tenir la coordonnatrice des Programmes et services français de la FECB au courant de vos démarches pour qu’elle puisse vous aider s’il y a lieu.

Note: Pour les cours de littérature anglaise (6 crédits) il n’y a pas grand chose à faire pour le moment, à moins que vous soyez à l’emploi du Conseil scolaire francophone.

Guy Dugas, Enseignant au programme d’immersion, Merritt Secondary School, Merritt.

Synopsis of article ‘Le Collège vous en exige trop?’

In this article, the author offers practical suggestions for presenting documentation to the B.C. College of Teachers in a certification process. Guy has had experience with certification and his advice will help teachers work through the process.

85th Annual General Meeting Agenda

Saturday, March 17	Sunday, March 18	Monday, March 19	Tuesday, March 20
<p>FIRST SESSION</p> <p>19:00 Welcome Preliminaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adoption of chairpersons, scrutineers, tellers, Resolutions Committee b. Adoption of agenda c. Adoption of 2000 AGM Minutes <p>President's Report Executive Committee Leadership Report Recommendations 1, 2, 3</p> <p>20:30 – Timed Item Greetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.C. School Trustees Association, • B.C. Federation of Labour • B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils <p>Continuation of Previous Items</p> <p>21:30 – Timed Item</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Statements from Candidates for Table Officer Positions • Call for Nominations <p>22:00 Adjourn</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please note: An evening session will be scheduled Tuesday, if required.</p>	<p>SECOND SESSION</p> <p>09:00 Health and Welfare Recommendations 23-43 Resolutions 136-139</p> <p>11:00 – Timed Item College of Teachers' Report Resolution 113</p> <p>Unfinished Business</p> <p>12:30 Lunch</p> <p>THIRD SESSION</p> <p>14:00 Report of the Executive Director, Ken Novakowski Constitution and By-laws Recommendation 4, 5 Resolution 101-104</p> <p>Affirmative Action Resolutions 105-106</p> <p>Social Justice Resolution 147</p> <p>Teacher Education Resolutions 151</p> <p>Unfinished Business</p> <p>16:30 – Timed Item Election Statements from Candidates for Member-at-Large Positions Call for Nominations</p> <p>17:00 Adjourn</p>	<p>FOURTH SESSION</p> <p>09:00 Bargaining Resolutions 107-112</p> <p>Strikes and Job Actions Resolutions 148-150</p> <p>Teacher on Call Recommendation 44 Resolutions 152-153</p> <p>Unfinished Business</p> <p>12:30 Lunch</p> <p>FIFTH SESSION</p> <p>14:00 Merilies Rettig, President, Canadian Teachers' Federation</p> <p>14:30 Canadian Teachers' Federation Recommendation 6</p> <p>Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards Resolution 146</p> <p>Organization of the BCTF Resolutions 140-144</p> <p>17:00 – Timed Item Honourary Membership Recommendations</p> <p>Unfinished Business</p> <p>17:25 Final Call for Nominations</p> <p>17:30 - Dinner</p>	<p>SIXTH SESSION</p> <p>09:00 Elections</p> <p>09:30 Minister of Education</p> <p>Education Policy Recommendations 7-12 Resolutions 114-130</p> <p>10:30 – Timed Item Pensions Resolution 145</p> <p>Continuation of Education Policy</p> <p>12:15 Questions on Committee Reports</p> <p>Unfinished Business</p> <p>12:30 Lunch</p> <p>SEVENTH SESSION</p> <p>14:00 Finance Report of the Financial Statements Recommendations 13-22 Resolutions 131-135</p> <p>Unfinished Business</p> <p>Late Resolutions</p> <p>New Resolutions</p> <p>17:15 Closing courtesy motion</p> <p>17:30 Adjourn</p>

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

For President



David Chudnovsky

Over the last couple of years BCTF members have been encouraged to have a greater involvement and control over their union. This has especially been the case in the preparations for collective bargaining this spring. Consultation at forums, focus groups, general meetings, seminars, conferences, and through bargaining surveys, has helped us understand what you the members see as your priorities.

Now we need to translate that information into a bargaining campaign that provides results for all of us. A significant raise for teachers, progress on

class size issues, support for students with special needs, improvements for TOCs, and other key concerns will be at the centre of our energies.

The most important objective for this round of bargaining is our unity. The collective involvement, support, and, if necessary, action of our membership is the most significant single factor in achieving a fair contract. We need to put aside our differences, the internal squabbles of the past, and work together for this common goal.

My track record is clear. I facilitate respectful and productive debate. I listen and learn from the diverse views of B.C. teachers. I help bring members together.

I would be honoured to continue as your president for one more year.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF president (2 yr.) Executive member at large (5); 2nd Vice-president (2); LR (2); Staff rep trainer (3); Substitute teachers' association; Committee Against Racism; Association for Community Education; Adult Basic Education

Association; Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society (board of directors). *Local:* Surrey president (2); Surrey grievance officer (3); Vice-president; Secretary; Chair of anti-racism & bargaining committees; WLC committee and economic welfare committee member; chief negotiator (5); Strike coordinator (2). *Teaching:* Nursery school, elementary, secondary and university level in Ontario, England, and B.C. *Education:* BA (honors) York University; B.Ed. U of Toronto.



Linda Watson

Teachers deserve an Executive Committee that will stand up for them, truly listen to them, and work hard to make their lives better. They deserve leadership that is visionary most often, and pragmatic when necessary. With provincial bargaining upon us, we need strategy over confrontation, and bargaining over bluster.

Our bargaining priorities should highlight a serious salary increase, a reduction in intermediate and secondary class sizes, and more support for students with special educational and behavioural needs.

I also believe that we must have a proactive plan to protect our right to strike and our scope of bargaining after a provincial election.

As our professional voice, the BCTF must be in the forefront of educational debate in B.C., regaining lost ground in public discussions on curriculum and education policy. We need leadership that can identify problems, propose solutions, and make thoughtful decisions, working in consultation with members and in harmony with the efforts of our locals.

I have extensive experience in local and federation work. I have a broad perspective on the BCTF and its potential to be the best union it can be for all members across the province. It would be an honour to serve as your President.

EXPERIENCE: *Local and BCTF Experience:* BCTF Second Vice-President (3 yrs.); BCTF Member at Large (6); Local President, North Vancouver (3); Local Executive Committee (10+); Local Representa-

tion; Provincial Bargaining Team; Pension Plan Joint Trusteeship Negotiating Team; Local Negotiating Teams and Bargaining Committees (10+); CTF Alternate Director; CTF AGM delegate; Chairperson, BCTF Pensions Committee and Teachers' Pension Plan Advisory Committee; Trustee, Teachers' Pension Board; BCTF Finance Committee; Capilano College Labour Studies Advisory Committee. *Teaching:* 27 years in the profession, elementary classroom teacher, grades 2-7, elementary learning assistance teacher, grades K-7, secondary learning assistance teacher, grades 8-12.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

For First Vice-President



Alice Rees

The members have clearly articulated that their BCTF must deliver a substantial salary increase and reasonable working conditions that maximize their ability to provide sound educational environments. A concise package, clearly defined and strongly supported by the membership, is paramount to the success of bargaining.

I have spent my teaching career as an activist in professional development, social justice and, for the last ten years, in bargaining. My experience as local president, on BCTF committees, on provincial and local bargaining

teams, and as a BCTF executive member attest to my dedication, ability, and understanding of the complex tasks ahead.

The turbulent year ahead demands our focus remain on promoting and supporting professional and social justice initiatives in classrooms and in communities. These initiatives, combined with bargaining, are the means by which all teachers dedicate their talents to promoting and defending public education.

I have worked on the governance review to ensure that members have access to decision-making processes of the Federation through the locals/committees. Our strength lies in our continued ability to accept differences, overcome divisions, and translate them into organizational creativity and unified resolve.

These goals require leadership that is competent, innovative, decisive, and energetic. I seek your support to help lead the next Executive team.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Governance Review Cttee. (2 yrs); CTF delegate (3); Finance cttee. (2); Bargaining Structures review; Staffing Review/Class-size cttee. (1); Provincial Negotiation Team (2); Interim cttee. on provincial bargaining (1); Legislative team; Task Force on roles and responsibilities (2); Teacher Ed Cttee. (4); BCTF appointee to the BCCT external review of education programs (1); Staff secondment (0.5); Ed policy associate; Project Teach; *Local:* COTA executive (11); President (6); Vice-president (3); Local bargaining cttee. and team member; Social Justice cttee.; Grievance cttee.; Staff rep, PD rep.; Joint ed change Cttee.; Mentorship cttee.; Pre-service/beginning teacher Cttee. *Teaching:* 27 yrs. Classroom, LA teacher, DL teacher. *Education:* B.Ed (Uof Alberta), M.Ed (Gonzaga)



Neil Worboys

This year brought many opportunities to continue my major goal of building a strong union through increased membership involvement. I am proud of my record of listening to concerns and seeking advice from members. Our expanded Summer Conference successfully focused on involving and training new potential leaders for our organization. This year's newly established Health and Safety and First Nations Advisory committees provide strong sources of information and networking in areas of top priority for members. Our Federation's focus must

be to continue to build member commitment through involvement, understanding and caring for each other's concerns in a time when it's tough to be a teacher.

I value your commitment to democratic bargaining principles that you have demonstrated through building bargaining objectives and strategy that include teachers' goals. Our bargaining objectives must address members' needs, be understood and supported, and, if necessary, become the unifying force for collective action.

I look forward to serving you as the EC member on the provincial bargaining team using my 28 years of successful bargaining experience to provide a powerful advocacy for contract improvement. I ask for your continued support as we move together into a proud future.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 1st Vice-President (1 yr.); BCTF Executive Member-at-Large (4); CTF Director (1); BCTF Bargaining Division Staff (4.5); North Coast Agreements/Bargaining Co-ordinator (8); Provincial Agreements/Bargaining Cttee. (8); Provincial Bargaining Cttee. Chair (4); AGM Delegate (24); Summer Conference Participant and Workshop Presenter (12); Bargaining Council Rep. for Local #80 (Kitimat); Alternate Bargaining Committee Member (Zone 19); LR or Alternate (9). *Local:* President (6); Bargaining Chair and Member (24); Staff Rep. (8); Grievance Cttee. (14); Personnel Cttee. Chair (8), Local Advocacy Committee (2); Interim Council member (5); Negotiator Interim Council (1). *Teaching:* 32 yrs. Secondary and Elementary. BSc. & Teacher Training (UBC)

For Second Vice-President



Jinny Sims

I am dedicated to continuing to build a relevant and responsible BCTF. As your second vice-president I have been part of a team that has strengthened our democratic processes by facilitating membership involvement in a variety of venues: forums, think tanks, local school visits. The Summer, Bargaining, and Social Justice conferences have been expanded to increase member participation. Our commitment to local leadership has resulted in increased training for local activists, including mentorship and training of new leaders in support of the long-term health of our union.

Members must be con-

nected with and listened to if we are to succeed in this round of bargaining. During my visits to locals, members told me that they need a substantial salary increase and control over their ever-increasing workloads. I am committed to continuing what we have started: an open, inclusive, democratic, and member-driven bargaining process. We must celebrate the diversity of our views yet remain united.

We must continue to address other pedagogical and professional concerns of teachers by building broad-based coalitions with education partners, labour, and community groups.

I am committed to achieving our goals and objectives within the budget framework.

I commit my passion, energy, experience, and proven leadership to building a strong, democratic Federation.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 2nd Vice-president (1 yr.); BCTF Executive member-at-large (1); CTF delegate (2); Ministry for Children & Families (1); Coalition for Public Educa-

tion (1); Rehab Expansion (1); CUPE Liaison (1); Social Justice (1); PDAC (1), PSA/PSAC (1); Health & Safety (1); Income Security (1); Summer conference workshop presenter & facilitator; Advisory council of local presidents; intensive pension plan training; Bargaining training; AGM delegate (11); LR (5); Bargaining council rep (2). *Local:* Nanaimo DTA (12); President (3); 1st Vice-president (2); Bargaining cttee. & team (7); Negotiating team (2 rounds); Grievance cttee. (6); S/W member and chair (3); ProD cttee. (2); Program Against Racism (2); Staff rep (10); Staff committee chair (5); member (15); Malaspina College partnership cttee. (2); EAP advisory board (4); District resource allocation cttee. (3); Co-ordinator for multicultural inner-city students (3); ESL advisory board; Facilitator for conflict resolution; Nanaimo Labour Council; Counsellors, Social Studies, and English PSAs. *Teaching:* 24 yrs., English, social studies, counsellor, social studies dept. head (3). *Education:* B.Ed, UVic & Manchester, UK.



Kathleen Thomson

During times like these, when the principles of universal access to education and the right to free collective bargaining are threatened, the future of our teachers' union depends on the courage, conviction, and creative intelligence of its elected leaders.

Courageous leadership requires the understanding that success at the bargaining table—that is, achieving key salary and workload improvements identified by teachers as absolutely essential—will only be realized if we mount a co-ordinated provincial campaign based on unassailable unity among all teachers from Metro to Kootenay,

and from Chilliwack to Peace River. We must achieve this common purpose, not at the expense of local diversity, but through the strength that diversity provides.

In equal measure with courage, leaders must show conviction and creative decision-making in helping teachers overcome obstacles not directly linked to the bargaining table. We must redefine the prevailing public definition of "accountability," a definition that currently makes teachers vulnerable to unfair complaint and unreasonable judgment of their professional competence. To this end, we must build stronger alliances with partner/labour groups, and cultivate dialogue aimed at promoting the worth of every member within our profession.

I would be honoured to dedicate my experience and commitment to helping build a strong, compassionate, united federation of teachers.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive member-at-large (1 yr.); CTF delegate (1); Staff pension plan advisory committee (1); Negotiations training; Bargaining conference; Summer conference delegate and workshop presenter (4); Chair, Metro West zone council (1); Advisory council of local presidents (4); AGM delegate (7). *Local:* President (4); Vice-president (1); Executive committee (5); Grievance panel (2); Staff rep (5); Negotiation, job action, policy & procedures, wellness, partners' advocacy committees; many other diverse committees and workgroups. *Community:* Co-chair Municipal planning committee (2); Co-chair, Municipal environment protection committee (2); SFU senate (2). *Teaching:* Secondary English, French, German (11); SFU Teaching Assistant (2). *Education:* BA, PDP, Ph.D (courses and comprehensives) SFU.

For Members



John Chisamore

As a long time teacher activist from the East Kootenays with many years of experience at the bargaining table, I am putting my name forward as a candidate for member-at-large. I can bring to the Executive Committee my knowledge of the past and enthusiasm for the future as we strive for improvements to our collective agreement.

What do teachers want? The answer boils down to two major issues: better working conditions for teachers and better learning conditions for students. To answer the question more specifically, requires unwavering preparation and comprehensive research. An executive that continues to listen to the membership is extremely important in our quest to find those answers. Once we have them, we can effectively present our members' concerns at the bargaining table.

As a candidate for the BCTF Executive Committee I have both the experience and desire to work hard for the membership on all issues. I believe that by working together we can build the consensus and have the support to achieve our goals.

At the 2001 AGM I seek your support to work on an Executive Committee that will be receptive to membership concerns, and be proactive in defending our important role in education.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Income Security Committee (6 yrs.); LR (13); AGM delegate (19); Bargaining Council/Bargaining Committee (1 round); ACLP (4); *Zone:* East Kootenay President (4); East Kootenay Vice-president (3); East Kootenay Secretary-Treasurer (3); Kootenay Zone Chairperson (1). *Local:* President (9) (1981-82, 1983-85, 1995-2001); Bargaining Committee (16); Negotiating Team (3 rounds); Grievance Committee (13); Information Technology Steering Committee (5). *Teaching:* Physics/Science/Computer Science/Math (20 years BC); Science/Math (2 years ON). *Education:* B.Sc., B.Ed.



Bill Ferguson

The BCTF, as a union of professionals, has established for itself clear purpose: raising the status of the teaching profession and promoting the welfare of teachers and the cause of public education. Many leaders say that in order to realize this purpose we must listen to our membership. I agree. However, if all we do is listen we leave ourselves open to the tyranny of the urgent. We find ourselves pushed and pulled in all directions reacting without thoughtful action. We find ourselves responding to, rather than planning for, challenges.

Vital in choosing your leadership is electing people who take diverse points of view expressed by teachers and link them into collective purpose. Leaders are agents of change: they serve in providing focus, vision, and clarity that captures the collective voice of teachers. Purposeful action founded in insightful vision, carried forward through thoughtful planning will engage teachers. This is how we build membership commitment. As we open negotiations we need a vision not only for this round of talks, but for future negotiations as well. We need more long range planning around the educational issues articulated by the democratic structures of the BCTF such as this AGM. It would be an honour to serve you and the Federation as Member-at-Large.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM Delegate (8 yrs); Chair, Metro West Zone Council (1); Advisory Council of Local Presidents (4); Summer Conference (4). *Local:* President West Vancouver Teachers' Association (4); Vice-president (2); Grievance Committee (6); Local Representative (6); Staff Rep (8); Virtually all committees within the WVTA and school District. *Teaching:* 25 years. *Education:* BA (SFU); PDP (SFU); MEd (UBC); EdD in Educational Leadership (SFU, in progress).



Cheryl Halsted

Strong, consistent and fair leadership, with an ear to the needs of members, is what I envision for the BCTF. We must have a credible and persistent voice in shaping of Provincial Educational Policy. The BCTF voice of reason and influence must continue its defence of Public Education.

We are in a bargaining year. There are many issues, but the key ones are: the need for a significant salary increase, workload, reductions in class sizes, accreditation, ESL and Special Needs students, and improved benefits. Bargaining at the Local or Provincial level must always involve the members whose input must be sought and then key developments must be conveyed to them.

Members' fees underpin the BCTF. We must be fiscally responsible, using their money wisely. Contingencies must be anticipated and appropriate financial provisions made.

The Federation must continue to build its network of strong locals and share ideas with its members—new and experienced, 'contract' and TOC's. As local president I have learned to defend the rights the members and support the Collective Agreement. As Member-at-Large, I would be proud to work for all our members with diligence, patience and creativity.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM Delegate (7 years); Advisory Council of Local Presidents (4); TOC Advisory Committee (2); LR (4); LR Alternate (3); Summer Conference Delegate (6); *Local:* President-Southern Okanagan (4); Vice-President (3); Staff Rep. (2); Status of Women Rep.(4). *Teaching:* 20 years Elementary level, TOC (3); *Education:* B.A. Anthropology (UBC); Teacher Training (McGill Univ., Quebec)



Mike Hayes

I have been a teacher activist at local and federation levels for 25 Years. To every task I undertake, I bring enthusiasm, commitment, an ability to communicate, respect for the views of others, a strong work ethic and an essential sense of humour.

This year will be as challenging as any the BCTF has ever faced. We must build membership support and commitment to a round of bargaining that promises to test our passion for public education, our dedication to teaching and our courage. We know that teachers need better salaries and more on-the-job support; but we also know that good contracts are good for kids. To be successful, we must build stronger links with members, through effective school leadership training, issue-focused involvement and better use of technology. We must reach out to our education partners and be prepared to listen if we expect to be listened to. If we are to find allies in the public and among the stakeholders in education, the strong, articulate, intelligent voice of teachers must be heard and respected.

Yes, we face another tough year, but we face it together. I seek your support and the opportunity to use my experience and commitment in representing you again at the BCTF executive table.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* South Island Barg Coordinator (5 years); BCTF Bargaining Advisory Cttee (5); BAC co-chair (2); AGM delegate (13); GR/LR or alternate (13); Summer Conference training (12); Federation Appeals Board (6); Judicial Council (6); LPAC (1); BCTF Interim Bargaining Structures Cttee; CTF delegate (3); Task Force on Future Bargaining Structures (chair); *Local:* staff rep (6); staff cttee chair (5); many local executive positions, including: Gulf Islands T.A. Bargaining Cttee (8); Chief Negotiator (87/88); President, GITA (4); Saanich T.A. Bargaining Cttee (5); Chief Negotiator (95/96); President, STA (5); Service: elementary school teacher (27) Prince George, Saturna Island, Salt Spring Island, Saanich; rural multigrade (6), French Second Language (14), Teacher-Librarian(2), administration (3).



Dave Harper

We are at a moment in BCTF history where we are taking a hard, critical look at our internal structures and policies. At the same time we must also unite ourselves around a common goal—achieving a provincial collective agreement that will "deliver the goods" for our members.

As a candidate for member-at-large, I stand for a pragmatic approach to union operations, including provincial bargaining. In 200 words or less, most candidates' philosophies will seem the same. I encourage you to contact me directly dave.harper@crn.net or to meet with me at the AGM to discuss how my ideas are different and could be implemented.

We have great challenges ahead of us. We will see many retirements and many new members enter the profession over the next decade. I believe it is the role of both the local and the BCTF to support all of them in their desire to implement a progressive and inclusive public education program, regardless of who sits in the minister's chair.

Quality public education and union principles are not mutually exclusive. I seek your support to bring forward these values as a member-at-large on the BCTF Executive Committee.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (8 years); Advisory Council of Local Presidents' Chairperson (2), ACLP (4), Bargaining Council Rep (1), Income Security Committee (1). *Local:* Campbell River DTA President (4); First Vice-president (1); Bargaining Chair (1); TOC Chair (2), PD Core Committee (4); many other committees and working groups. *Teaching:* 5 years classroom (full and part-time), 3 years TOC, 1 year assistant de langue (France) *Education:* BA (UVIC), PDP (SFU), Diplôme de Langue Française (Angers).



Murray

In my six years as President, I have fully addressed communication created by geographic dispersion. I believe that membership areas are kept active through union activities and voice in their business. Through years of local efforts, I have successfully rallied the support of members, particularly through the press in our struggles with the Board. This approach has informed members into a rally public support to successful now and in the future. I believe these efforts are a much needed contribution to the Federation level.

I believe we need new ways to increase member involvement in membership is the product of communication time for thoughtful response, and reflects the wishes of members in the

Our Federation respond to emerging issues in a thoughtful organized way. Members need to examine and alternatives to current practices. We have an advantage of expertise to examine aspects of the issues before we can face them and fully prepared to bring these issues to the Executive Member-At-Large

EXPERIENCE: AGM Delegate (4); BCTF TOC Advisory Committee (4); Justice Review Committee, Federation Education Steering Committee, BCTF Education Finance Group. *Local:* Vice President (Cariboo-Chilcotin); Bargaining Committee (3); CTA Executive Rep (3). *Teaching:* 15 years, International

Member-at-Large



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Chris Johns

I have decided to run for the position of Member-at-Large because I believe that I can make a positive contribution to the leadership team of the BCTF. I have been an involved educator and teacher-activist throughout my entire career. I have significant experience as a teacher-leader in working/learning conditions, and, collective bargaining. The last four years as a local president has further enhanced my leadership skills as we have faced professional issues such as accreditation and FSA. I bring knowledge, commitment and energy to the BCTF Executive table.

I have bargained contract language through many rounds. I've been on picket lines, both our own as well as others. I've implemented collective agreements, monitored the collective agreement for members, filed grievances and gone to arbitrations on numerous occasions. I know what it takes to get the job done! And, all of this as part of a 'professional team'.

My leadership style is to build consensus through the active involvement of the membership. As we move into the next round of bargaining it is critical to develop strategies for mobilizing the membership that builds upon the all important lessons we have learned from bargaining at the local level and adapt them for the provincial experience.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial:
Summer Conf. facilitator (6 yrs.), participant (15), Alternate LR (4), ACLP (4); FLI-10 courses completed; AGM Delegate (15); BCTF W/LC Co-ordinator N.Is. 77-80; BCTF W/LC Cttee. 85-88, Chair 86-88; Staffing & Class Size Subcttee Chair 85-88; BCTF TF for Children with Special Ed. Needs. *Zone:* East Kootenay TA Pres. (2); local delegate (9). *Local:* Bargaining Cttee., Chief Negotiator (4 rounds); Strike Coordinating Cttee. during 11-Day Strike; Grievance Cttee. (12); WLC Chair (8); PD Cttee. Chair (1); workshop presenter on N.I. Days; Joint Implementation Cttee. (4); Local/Regional Science Fair Cttee. & Chair (10); delegate to EK Dist. Labour Council; Staff Rep., PA/PR Cttee, Vice-Pres. (3); President (86-88; 97/98-present). *Teaching:* Ft. Nelson; TOC Vancouver/Coquitlam; Alberni 73-80; Cranbrook 80-present gr. 6 & 7. *Education:* B.Ed., S.F.U. '72. Geography/P.E.)



Suzie Mah

Building a strong and vibrant union requires the active participation of its membership. The leadership in the BCTF must make commitments to develop and offer activities that are meaningful and help to improve the working lives of teachers.

We have the opportunity to involve teachers in a process that will have a significant impact on their working lives. During the bargaining process, we must remember to broaden the scope of membership involvement. We must develop a collective consciousness that will become our strength in achieving a collective agreement that all teachers have ownership of and can be proud of.

From my work on the BCTF executive and as a local leader, I have come to believe that it is absolutely essential for the federation to involve new teachers in union activism, to recognize the needs of urban and rural teachers, and to support teachers' professional work. The BCTF must continue to make its voice heard in the promotion and defense of public education. It is important for the BCTF to balance its fiscal responsibilities with the members' needs for services. We must make the best use of our union dues.

As Member-at-Large I will work hard on your behalf to achieve these aims.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial:
Member at Large (1 yrs); Exec rep on BCTF/ASU Negotiating Cttee. (10); Exec rep on Pensions Cttee. (1); Pensions Cttee. (4); Assistance Society President (2); VP (1); Local Rep (1); BCTF Review of Bargaining Structures and Procedures Ad Hoc Cttee. (1999); Provincial Job Action Cttee (1); member of the Educators for Distributed Learning PSA (2). *Local:* Chief Negotiator VTF Adult Education (current); Past President (1); President (2); VP (2); Bargaining and Collective Agreement Implementation Chair; Grievance Cttee; VTF Negotiating Team (1); VTF Summer School Negotiating Team (1); Status of Women Cttee. Chair (1). *Teaching:* 14 years; elementary distance education (K-7); ESL reception class and non-enrolling (4-7); primary classroom (1/2).



Troy Marshall

The issue facing teachers in British Columbia are complex and demanding. Accreditation, FSA, IEPs, bargaining, increased workload, salary inequity—the list goes on. We all know the issues are there, the question is how do we deal with them? When we are united our voice is significant and powerful. We must combine that united voice with a strong leadership to take us forward. As an executive member, I would work on your behalf to better the professional lives and images of teachers across British Columbia.

Fiscal responsibility is key. We must make some hard choices as to which issues are priorities. Our members value the work the Federation does in areas of bargaining, professional development and social justice; however, they will not accept increases to their dues and expect us to manage resources wisely. I commit to fiscal responsibility. The Federation must live within its means.

Beginning teachers are frustrated with low starting salaries and a ten to twelve year apprenticeship period. This issue needs to be addressed as well as the issue of attaining a significant salary increase for all teachers.

I seek your support as I commit my passion and energy to work on behalf of all teachers.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial:
Social Justice Zonal Contact, Staff Rep Trainer, Parent Workshop Facilitator, Bargaining Communicator, Health and Safety Representative. *Local:* Vice-president, Staff Representative, Social Justice Committee, Executive Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Grievance Officer.



Barb Parrott

As a result of recent BCTF initiatives more members have become involved in our union, shared their experiences, and had their contributions valued. More new leaders were invited to our summer conference, we established the Aboriginal education advisory and health and safety Cttees. Think Tanks on globalization, technology, and labour affiliation were held. A respected and involved membership is a committed membership.

Members need to feel that our union is addressing their issues at the bargaining table. As a result of bargaining forums and the objective-setting process, members have been more involved than in the past. This involvement must continue through all phases of bargaining, up to and including successfully negotiating a collective agreement that meets our members' needs.

We must continue our efforts to improve the process for school assessment and highlight the damage the provincially mandated Foundation Skills Assessment causes. We must build the social and political momentum needed to eliminate poverty and achieve social and economic justice.

As a member of the EC for the past four years, I have advocated for a union that listens to its members. I ask for your support and involvement as we continue to build our democratic, inclusive, and vital union.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial:
BCTF EC member-at-large (4 yrs.); EC rep to: Staff Pension Plan (3); ASU Ed. Leave (3); Finance (current); Governance Review Steering (current); AGM delegate (22); LR (11); Bargaining Cttee. and Council; Staff Rep trainer (4); Bargaining Adv. (3); G. A. Ferguson Award Trustee (4); CTF AGM delegate (3); RA Agenda (2); TF on Membership of P&VP in BCTF 85/86; Newsletter Ed. Bd. (2); Political Action (3). *Local:* VESTA EC (11); incl. 2 years as Pres.; Bargaining & Collective Agreement Implementation, chair; Negotiating Team; Rep on many VSB committees and grievance joint cttees.; Langley TA EC (11); 2 yrs. as full-time Pres.; Chair, Sign Up/Certification; Neg. team. *Teaching:* 27 years classroom, teacher-librarian, & LA (elem). *Education:* B. Ed (UBC), completing a Masters on Urban Learner.



Linda Shuto

Our major challenge is to successfully negotiate a collective agreement that meets the needs of teachers. Members want a significant salary increase and relief from increasing workload. These demands are not new but this round of bargaining must be different than the last two provincial rounds. We must turn member alienation from the past, into member involvement in the entire bargaining process.

We have begun. Members have participated in healthy discussions over many forums and this has resulted in greater unity. We will be tested during bargaining to maintain that unity through the active involvement of members.

Our ultimate goal is to have a strong, effective, member-driven union. Bargaining is critical, but we must also be visible advocates for students and teachers in social justice, professional development, and health and safety issues.

Strong unions require effective leaders who can create the conditions for members to be in control. Two years ago, I was elected on a platform to build a strong, member-driven union. I ask for your support to continue that work.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial:
BCTF Executive (2 years); BCTF staff S/W co-ordinator (2); PD Division (2); Bargaining Division (1); Social Justice Committee; AGM delegate (27); S/W Task Force; Commission on Governance; Judicial Committee; W.R. Long Committee; Local Representative (5); PD Associate; Staff Rep trainer. *Local:* President, Burnaby (2); Bargaining, Public Relations, Resolutions, Pensions, Executive Council (14). *Teaching:* Elementary in Burnaby (31). *Education:* BGS, SFU.

Special Resolutions to the 2001 AGM

Recommendation 4

That By-law 3.4 be amended to read: That if two or more school districts amalgamate, locals in those districts shall be supported by the BCTF as the locals determine the governance structures that best meet the needs of their members.

Recommendation 5

That By-Law 8.2 be amended to read:

The voting body of an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting shall consist of the local representatives, the members of the Executive Committee, and delegates from each local elected in accordance with By-law 8.2. Except as set out below, each local shall have the right to representation at the meeting in the proportion of one voting delegate for each 0.2%, or fraction thereof, of the total voting membership of the Federation as of December 31 who are voting members of the local. When a local includes one or more sub-locals, each sub-local shall have the right to representation at the meeting in the proportion of one voting delegate for each 0.2% or fraction thereof, of the total voting members of the Federation who are voting members of the sub-local, without prejudice to the rights of representation of the members of the local who are not members of

the sub-local. Effective July 1, 2001, until decisions of the 2002 Annual General Meeting respecting governance are in place, locals that amalgamated in or after 1996 shall have the same levels of representation as they had in 1996.

Resolution 101—Nicola Valley Teachers' Union

That the B.C. Teachers' Federation be renamed the B.C. Teachers' Union.

Resolution 102—Cranbrook District Teachers' Association, Creston Valley Teachers' Association, Kitimat District Teachers' Association

That By-law 3.4 (page 19) be deleted.

Resolution 103—Burnaby Teachers' Association

That By-law 6.1 (page 21) be amended by adding "The Representative Assembly may amend, alter, delete, or replace existing Representative Assembly or Executive Committee policy or procedure statements." after the second sentence.

Resolution 104—Burnaby Teachers' Association

That the AGM adopt a new by-law as follows:

8.8 The Annual General Meeting is the sovereign body of the BCTF, and policies and procedures adopted by it shall

guide the actions of both the Representative Assembly and Executive Committee.

Resolution 138—Burnaby Teachers' Association

That Salary Indemnity Plan deductions be made on the ten month annual salary of teachers.

Resolution 139—Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association

That Policy 13.C.24.5 (page 84) be amended to read:

Costs incurred by the medical review committee in adjudicating any claim shall be borne equally by the claimant and the plan if the appeal is denied. If the appeal is granted, the costs incurred shall be borne entirely by the plan.

Recommendation 24

A. That the Salary Indemnity Plan be amended to allow for BCTF employee participation in the plan.

B. That the following amendments to the Salary Indemnity Plan regulations be adopted: (*amendments are italicized*)

1.1 The following people shall participate in the plan:

(a) all active members of the Federation employed by a school board or a local association on a regular full-time or regular part-time assignment.

(b) *all employees of the Federation except those specifically exempted from participation in the plan by the Federation; and*

(c) all affiliate administrative members not participating in a wage loss replacement plan may participate in the plan, providing they do so within 90 days of appointment as an administrative officer.

1.2 For the purposes of these regulations, the word "member" includes the following:

(a) an individual who became disabled from employment while a contributor to the plan; and

(b) *except for the purposes of the Salary Indemnity Plan Short Term portion of the plan, employees of the Federation participating in the plan pursuant to regulation 1.1(b).*

2.1 Add a paragraph at the end, as follows:

Employees of the Federation participating in the plan pursuant to regulation 1.1(b) are not eligible for benefits under the Salary Indemnity Plan Short Term portion of the plan.

3.2 (c) an employer record signed by an official of the employing school board or local association or the Federation.

3.3 The plan administrator is empowered to secure from the employing school board or local association president or the Federation, information in

regard to accumulated sick leave, number of days' absence, or other information which the plan administrator may require in connection with the payment of benefits.

7.1 Insert a new subparagraph (b) as follows and re-letter the last two subparagraphs as (c) and (d):

(b) *the premiums paid by the employees of the Federation participating in the plan pursuant to regulation 1.1 (b).*

7.3 The fee allocation or premium is waived for each member in receipt of benefits from the plan.

18.1 Subject to the other provisions of the plan, a claimant, who is not an employee of the Federation and who becomes disabled through injury or illness shall be eligible for benefits immediately following the termination of sick leave and Salary Indemnity Plan Short Term benefits, when no fewer than 120 days of benefits have been paid for that claim.

18.2 Subject to the other provisions of the plan, a claimant who is an employee of the Federation participating in the plan pursuant to regulation 1.1(b) and who becomes disabled through injury or illness shall be eligible for benefits immediately following the termination of sick leave benefits.

A progress report on the priorities adopted by the 2000 AGM

1. To establish a bargaining climate with members and the public which supports the negotiation of a collective agreement that reduces member workload and provides for a significant salary increase.

- Bargaining strategy document has been prepared and discussed at Executive Committee, Advisory Committee of Local Presidents, locals have completed objective setting process.
- Bargaining survey prepared to assist locals with objective setting process.
- Day of focus on bargaining for all participants at summer conference.
- Special emphasis on salary case.
- On the agenda of all SPDRT, PD zone meetings, and PSA council.
- Strategies considered to bring bargaining issues to the forefront.
- Summer Conference training for local communicators and/or bargaining chairs and others on bargaining issues.
- Bargaining related Federation Leadership Institute training for local communicators and/or bargaining chairs and officers September 30 and December 8-9, 2000.
- Introduction of e-mail list for local communicators.
- Public opinion poll conducted and analyzed—included in information for Bargaining Forums in locals.
- Bargaining Forums advertised—scheduling under way.

- K-3 negotiations and action plan.
- To put forward the BCTF's public education agenda and build respect for the teaching profession by:
 - developing and implementing concrete action plans that advance the collective views of teachers on such issues as accreditation, provincial standardized testing, and technology in education.

- Think-tank on Technology held November 17-19, 2000 to develop policy proposals.
- Immersion coalition is discussing a week to "celebrate immersion and the work of teachers."
- B.C. Parents for French are prepared to work on BCTF concerns.

Accreditation campaign

- Labour Relations Board hearing.
- Issue Alert.
- letter to members.
- advice to locals.
- newspaper ads.
- zone meetings.
- Continue to work on Ministry's Accreditation Advisory Committee.
- Early soundings report and feedback process.
- Survey of members paper work.
- Member meetings.
- Report—"Time to Teach: Less Paperwork and More Support."
- Meetings held with NDP and Liberal caucus committees on issue of West Vancouver Kindergarten for pay.
- Ad taken out in all community newspapers re LRB order/teachers complying under protest.

- Op ed piece submitted to community newspapers.
- pressuring political parties to make clear commitments on education issues, and informing our members of these views prior to and during the provincial election campaign.

Foundation Skills Assessment

- Issue Alert, Staff Alerts.
- Did You Know public education flyer.
- Teacher newsmagazine articles.
- Advertisement for locals to use in community newspapers.
- E-mail address set up for parents and other members of the public.
- BCTF convinced the ministry to change the wording of the script teachers were to read to students, deleting a statement that erroneously implied that the tests had a diagnostic purpose and would be used to determine which students required extra help.
- BCTF took concerns to Advisory Committee on Provincial Assessment in May and October.

3. To implement the strategies and directions adopted by the BCTF arising from the work of the Task Force on First Nations Education and the social justice program.

- Continuation of on-going meetings with education partner groups on Aboriginal education issues.

- Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee holds first meeting.
- First Nations PSA conference.
- Trained 15 associates to provide aboriginal Education workshops.
- Aboriginal education workshops at Social Justice conference.
- Merle Williams a panelist at Canadian Teachers' Federation on Teacher Supply and Demand.
- Informed ADEF PD chairs of SJ programs and directions during SPDRT.
- Social Justice conference, workshops.
- Social Justice on-line newsletter.
- Social Justice monthly newsletter to contacts.
- BCTF/BC Fed antiracism poster contest.
- Human Rights Champion Award campaign.
- Liaison with community groups, etc.
- Establishing a consortium with BCSTA, FNEESC, and universities to work on Aboriginal teacher recruitment and retention.

4. To continue the review of governance and decision-making structures and related matters.

- Governance Review Steering Committee (GRSC).
- Mandate extended to AGM 2002.
- Associated budget amendments to be considered by fall RA.

- All input has been reviewed and analyzed. GRSC has sent out response documents for Phase II.
- Special meeting of local presidents November 2, 2000 to discuss Bylaw 3.
- Member poll conducted and completed
- Special meeting of large locals held October 23, 2000.
- Recommendation on By-law 3 going to 2001 AGM.

5. To initiate discussions with members regarding possible joint trusteeship of the Teachers' Pension Plan.

- A variety of correspondence (Issue Alert, Joint Trusteeship booklet, etc.) was provided to all members commencing in May 2000 through August 2000.
- Summer conference sessions on joint trusteeship were held with representatives from locals.
- Information meetings were held in locals in September and October.
- Ratification vote by locals was completed October 13, 2000.
- Ratification results supported joint trusteeship.
- Finalization of joint trust agreement reached in late December 2000.
- Trustees appointed by plan member partner (BCTF).

The Cuba project

by Jacqui Birchall

The Cuba Project started in March 1997, when BCTF President Alice McQuade visited Havana and met with Luis Abreu Mejias, secretary general of the SNTECD, the 320,000-member National Teachers' Union of Cuba. They spoke of the possibility of collaboration.

BCTF President Kit Krieger accepted an invitation by the Cubans to attend the 1997 Teacher-Day celebration in Ciego de Avila. Krieger met with Mejias and signed a protocol of co-operation:

1. B.C. teachers and students would collect teaching supplies for shipment to Cuba.
2. The BCTF would print the minutes of the SNTECD Congress, its major meeting held every five years.
3. The BCTF would attempt to facilitate teacher tourism: teacher travel to Cuba that would include opportunities to visit Cuban classrooms.

All of those objectives have been met. CoDevelopment Canada, a local NGO, provided two teacher trips to Cuba, in December 1998 and December 2000, as well as a teacher/student trip to Cuba in the spring of 2000. Two shipments of books and pencils that were collected in B.C. schools have been sent to Cuba. A third collection is awaiting shipment. The minutes of the congress have been printed. The BCTF also funded the publication of a

pedagogical magazine called *Escuelas Elementales*, which has been very popular with the Cuban teachers

Luis Abreu attended the 1999 BCTF AGM as a special guest and returned with a draft agreement that would provide the Cuban teachers with English classes taught by BCTF teachers.

The call went out in *Teacher*, and some 85 people applied. Ten were initially chosen, and those who were short-listed were brought into the project as it continued. Five of the original ten travelled to Cuba in July 1999 to help develop the frames of reference for the program. The BCTF team worked with the Cuban team, which was presided over by Dr. Isora Enriquez O'Farrill and included Luz Perez and Amanda Alvarez for the union, and Professors Emelina Perez Herrera, Miriam Lopez, Marta Fernandez Cabrera, and Marta Neufeld for the Enrique Varona Pedagogical Institute. The two teams submitted to the ministry and the union their agreement that:

1. the BCTF would commit itself to a three-year agreement.
2. starting in December 1999, a team of B.C. teachers would provide a university-level in-service to teachers from Havana Province in modern languages methodology and language enhancement.
3. the BCTF would assist in the development of a new curriculum for the teaching of English at the junior high school level by bringing to Vancouver two Cuban speci-

alists in the spring of 2000.

4. the Cuban Ministry of Education would organize the sessions and host the BCTF delegation.
5. Enrique Varona Pedagogical Institute would be the agent for the purpose of this agreement.
6. the BCTF would strive to gather as many educational resources as possible to assist in the teaching of English in Cuba. (Each time the teams go, they also take many other donations—soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. Problems of supply are created by the Helms Burton Agreement, a U.S. government blockade that continues to cause huge problems for ordinary people in Cuba.)

The agreement was signed on July 17, 1999, and approved by the BCTF Executive Committee in the fall. During the fall, three of the ten selected teachers, formed to pilot the sessions. Those team members worked at a frantic pace, on their own time, to design and produce three methodology workshops and English-language-enhancement workshops at three levels. The team travelled to Havana in December 1999 and taught for two weeks. The pilot was a resounding success. Successive teams, in July and December 2000, have modified the workshop contents to suit their own styles and areas of expertise. In December, the third set of workshops showed almost a doubling in registration.

In the spring of 2000, the

BCTF brought to Vancouver Professors Isora Enriquez O'Farrill and Emelina Perez Herrera, who, with the assistance of the Cuba Team, Sharon Jeroski and others, in six weeks produced the framework and the units for a new junior high school curriculum as per the agreement. Since then, we have sent teams in July and in December with increasing success.

The program has developed many other dimensions. The BCTF has provided assistance to bring communications technology to SNTECD, and fax machines for the National Union office and provincial union offices. With CIDA, the BCTF has contributed funds to build a documentation office in Havana that will serve as both an archive for the union and a centre for leadership training.

This is an unusual project by BCTF and Cuban standards. The BCTF does not normally get involved with curriculum development or educational change. On the other hand, Cubans have never allowed foreigners to become so involved in their educational system. The BCTF members in the project return home filled with admiration for Cuban teachers and in love with a country so small, so poor, and yet so highly educated and so full of the joy of life.

As the president of the Cuban Teachers' Union put it, "We have a special relationship with the BCTF. There is a special trust."

Jacqui Birchall teaches at Frank Hurt Secondary School, Surrey, and is a member of the Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board.

Volunteer to teach English in Cuba

The BCTF needs volunteers for its ongoing project with the teachers of English in Cuba. The project consists of a two-week methodology and language-enhancement course. The credit course is offered through the Varona Teachers' College in Havana and is sponsored by the Cuban Teachers' Union, the Cuban Ministry of Education, and the BCTF.

Members involved in the project must speak English fluently, be flexible, have excellent facilitation skills, have experience working with adults, be able to work as part of a team, be able to work with minimal resources and to improvise, and be very knowledgeable of modern/second language methodology and strategies.

In addition, volunteers must be available for either the two weeks of December break or the first three weeks in July, depending on the program's needs. Ability to speak Spanish and specialized training in teaching languages are assets. Teachers are expected to teach in very hot weather conditions. The program pays transportation costs; food and lodging are provided by our Cuban partners.

Deadline is March 26, 2001. Please send a detailed résumé to Leona Dolan, BCTF International Programs, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2, f: (604)871-2294, ldolan@bctf.bc.ca



BCTF Seminars on globalization and education

To be held at
B.C. Teachers' Federation
550 West 6th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
16:00-18:00

March 12, 2001

Think Globally, Teach Locally—
The "No Sweat" Campaign
Miriam Palacios, B.C. program
co-ordinator for Oxfam-Canada

How can issues and actions on globalization be incorporated into the curriculum and school activities? Students Against Sweatshops, the CLC, and various unions, and Oxfam-Canada have developed information and campaign ideas.

April 2, 2001

People's Summit of the
Americas—An alternative to
the Free Trade Area of the
Americas (FTAA)

Steve Stewart, co-ordinator of
the Civil Society Network in
Defense of Public Education in
the Americas, and Larry Kuehn,
director of Research and
Technology at the BCTF

A people's summit in Quebec
City in mid-April will develop
alternatives to the FTAA. Find
out about the education propo-
sals being discussed at an
education forum and about such
topics as standardized testing,
decentralization, gender issues,
as well as a declaration of
principles about public
education in the Americas.

May 12, 2001

Canada and the Asia-Pacific:
APEC and Education

John Price, Canada Asia Pacific
Resource Network and Faculty
of History at the University of
Victoria

B.C. has significant links with
the Asia-Pacific—through both
our economy and the makeup of
our population. One of the
institutions of globalization—
Asia Pacific Economic Co-
operation—identified education
as an important aspect of econo-
mic integration and maintains
an APEC Education Network.
Find out more about these links
and their relationship to
developments in B.C.

For more information, contact
Leona Dolan at the BCTF, (604)
871-2250, toll free 1-800-663-
9163, local 2250, f: (604)871-
2294, ldolan@bctf.bc.ca



JACQUI BIRCHALL PHOTOS

The BCTF, the Cuban Teachers' Union, and the Cuban Ministry of Education offer two-week methodology and language-enhancement courses to teachers of English in Cuba.

Cola vending machines



'Rich' contracts that may not be so 'sweet'

by Dianne Dunsmore

As a secondary teacher, have you ever found yourself volunteering to fill the cold-beverage vending machines at your school? Has the school's soft-drink representative ever told you that you are not allowed to give students a special deal on cola or sell lemonade at the school, even as part of a fundraising event? Can students still buy milk in your school? Have you ever felt uncomfortable expressing your concerns publicly about the cola products or accompanying promotions?

A deal between Coke or Pepsi and secondary schools may appear "sweet" at first glance, bringing added funds for cash-strapped schools. However such contracts have aggressively evolved into secretive, exclusive arrangements that have binding strings attached. Committed to these exclusive school-contract provisions, teachers need to be informed of their features and be aware of the emerging issues that may directly affect the working and learning conditions in their school as a result of such agreements.

Exclusivity

During the past five years, the B.C. public education system has permitted the cola giants to establish *exclusive contractual agreements* with individual secondary schools or school districts. The contracts allow only one beverage company the exclusive right to sell drinks at that school or school district, creating monopoly arrangements for the corporation. No other drink, except milk sometimes and a few juices (such as tomato juice), can be sold on the premises during school hours. The length of the contracts, which is negotiable, has increased significantly; a 10-year commitment is not uncommon to secure individual schools.

Price fixing

The cost of the soft drink is established through preliminary arrangements or within a contract clause. Frequently, the price of a can of pop is increased in accordance with the contract, forcing students to pay more. All outlets in the school or district must charge the agreed-upon price; the school store, cafeterias, and any sporting event (unless the product is given away as a promotion by the bottling company). Therefore, schools can sell drinks as part of a fundraiser, but the drinks must be products of the cola company and sold at the agreed-upon price.

School-based profits

When the contract is signed at an individual school, the share of the school's profit, from direct sales, remain in the school, going unreported to the board office. The profits can be anywhere from 15% to 40%, depending on who can cut the best deal. One secondary administrator claimed an annual profit of \$20,000, while the neighbouring secondary school revealed a \$40,000 gain.

In the Cola Wars, the beverage companies are competing with each other while individual secondary schools compete for the best contract. The percentage of school profit, which is on a grid, is directly linked to *volume*, the main focus of the beverage company. Therefore, larger secondary schools have a much greater profit potential. This volume-driven profit forces schools to promote the product in pursuit of more funds. For example, multiple vending machines may be placed outside the gym door or in cafeterias to increase sales volume.

Some school boards retain and allocate resources, while other boards share the profit with individual schools. In the absence of guidelines, profits varied widely at both the district and the school level.

Signing bonus

There is usually up-front money for the signing school (\$10,000 to \$15,000), paid in installments. If the school breaks the contract, the second installment may not arrive, or, as in any contract, the school could be liable to repay the signing amount, obliging the school to keep the agreement.

Direct promotions

In exchange for free vending machines, the exclusive contract often includes mutually agreed upon promotions, with the objective being, "to increase soft drink volume." The beverage company may sponsor the spectator event by engaging the students in a contest. For a few high-priced prizes, such as a cell phone or pager package, at sport assemblies or events, students may be invited to participate in a drinking contest that includes naming all the company's drinking products or racing to a designated area and bearing a transferable tattoo of the corporate logo or name.

Speaking out

When school administrators sign the contracts, they are acting as agents of the board. This can put the administration in a perceived conflict of interest if students or teachers criticize the expectations of these agreements. There have been attempts by some corporations in the U.S. to include non-disparagement clauses that prevent students and employees from speaking out. What does your contract say?

Secrecy

Similar to other competitive corporate agreements, the contracts are highly confidential to protect the business interest of both parties. School-based administrators sign the contracts as agents of the school board. Confidentiality, which is either a preliminary agreement

or a contract provision, can make it difficult for the administrator to share the information in the contract with any school board employee, including senior administration. Teachers, parents, and students can also be denied access to the contracts. At this point, even an application for disclosure through the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act* does not guarantee complete transparency of the contents, upon request. Do these corporate deals wield more power than public policy?

Where do we go from here?

Teachers have the right to be informed of the contracts in their school or school district. They need to understand the context and be aware of the changes in policy at the ministry and district level that have accelerated this commercial intrusion.

It is imperative that teachers collectively convey to government that it is accountable for commercial enterprises and it must legislate protective measures to ensure full disclosure of such contracts province-wide. If private corporations are to be permitted access to our schools, they must meet the same vigorous standards for ethical behaviour that apply to all public institutions.

This year's BCTF AGM will be considering resolutions and executive recommendations to address this burgeoning corporate intrusion into our public schools. Your delegates should be prepared to vote on these important issues.

Dianne Dunsmore teaches at South Meridian Elementary School, Surrey.

For more information see www.bctf.bc.ca/notforsale

More thoughts about FSA

I can't believe I'm writing about Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) again. Wouldn't it be nice if this would all just evaporate?

Assessment in itself is a necessary step toward growth. Assessment should be authentic, relevant, and meaningful. To be authentic, assessment should honour the diversity of the learners. It should be more than a paper-and-pencil test. To be relevant, the assessment needs to test what we teach. Since what we teach is mandated, then the test should include more than a few of the prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs). To be meaningful, the assessment should be part of the growth plan for our children. Since the FSA test isn't authentic or relevant, it can't possibly be meaningful.

Here's the catch: If we do what we've always done and let our students write the FSA without any cares, then the test remains invalid. If we decide we'd better teach to the test, then the test will begin to reflect what we teach. We all want our students to do well on tests. It would be nice if the test were a step toward growth.

How does co-operative learning fit into this? As a teaching strategy, co-operative learning will increase our students' academic and social achievements. This includes standardized testing. However, it takes time and effort to become effective with co-operative learning. In the face of standardized testing, are teachers willing to take such a risk and move beyond their usual practices? Does FSA then begin to limit our teaching practices and control curriculum? If so, how much will this limit our children's growth?

Reprinted from *Classroom Connections*, newsletter of the B.C. Co-operative Learning Association, Winter 2001, Holly Stibbs, president of BCCLA.

Videos/TV use linked to youth aggression: Reduced exposure produces results, study shows

Cutting back the amount of time grade-schoolers spend watching television and playing video games can make them less aggressive toward their peers, according to a Stanford University Medical School study. While the link has been documented before, the new research is thought to be the first to show that aggressive behaviour can be curbed by reducing video exposure. "Reducing television viewing really will work to decrease kids' aggressive behaviour," said Dr. Thomas Robinson, assistant professor of pediatrics and medicine at Stanford and lead author of the study, published in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. Earlier studies have found that exposure to violent media causes children to become more aggressive and to view aggression as an acceptable method of resolving conflict. "But what's encouraging is that some of the effects of exposure to media violence can be reversed solely by decreasing that exposure," he added.

Project Overseas-Jordan

by Yvonne Price

Project Overseas has provided in-service education and organizational support to teachers in developing countries for 38 years. It also gives Canadian teachers the opportunity to share their experiences and learn about another culture. An English teacher from B.C., I had the good fortune of being chosen, along with a science teacher from Alberta and a math teacher from Ontario, as part of the Project Overseas team to Jordan last summer. I can only hope that my contributions came close to equalling the personal and professional rewards I reaped from the experience.

In Jordan, there is no teachers' union, and strikes are illegal.

We arrived in Amman, Jordan, in early July. Our workshops were held at the prestigious Amman Bacca-laureate School, a private school with impressive facilities, including a computer lab, a library, a theatre, and a sports stadium. Our assignment was to work with local teachers in our three subject areas. Our focus was on methods and on the integration of computers in learning. The attending teachers came from public schools in the

south of Jordan and the Jerash district in the north.

My classroom was the school library, and what a wonderful, cool, airy oasis that was. In just over two weeks, I worked with 14 Jordanian English teachers. We discussed the writing process, the use of rating scales, and the advantages of working in pairs and groups. The participants gave mini-lessons on writing, reading, and speaking. We also worked in the computer lab on word processing, e-mail, and doing research on the Internet. Our session on social styles and personality types drew a lot of laughs when we saw together the common links between the analyticals, drivers, amiables, and expressives that bridged our cultural, religious, and societal differences.

One afternoon, we held a debate. The Jordanians, much to my delight, chose a topic related to gender roles. In the group were 10 men and 4 women. All of them had a lot to say on the topic. One woman, Samara, an obvious leader, felt that she had a lot to contribute to her family and to society by working. She found personal fulfillment in meeting the challenges of being a head teacher. Another woman would have preferred to stay home, but she felt that other women should work and seek education if they were so inclined. One man argued that a woman's place is in the home and that

only economic necessity should drive a woman to work. Several women did not want to be seen as equal to men. Their desire, they said, was that men recognize that they could make a significant contribution to the

Many teachers take on a second job to make ends meet.

family through education and work. I certainly felt privileged to moderate the lively discussion, which referred to the Koran, the economic pressures on Jordanian families, and the expectations of men and women. The discussion went in directions that would surprise and intrigue most Canadians.

I was very impressed with the teachers I worked with. They were mostly in their 20s and not long out of university. Not all had chosen teaching as a profession.

Some saw teaching as a stepping stone to something better. Unfortunately, teachers are poorly paid in Jordan, and with poor pay comes a lack of respect from Jordanian society that is troublesome and demoralizing. (It soon became clear that the Amman Bacca-laureate School was far from typical of school facilities in the country.)

The negative feeling about status and working conditions was evident from the outset, and I tried to address it right away.

However, inspirational quotations and discussions about the importance of a teacher's work can go only so far when teachers feel powerless to change the circumstances of their daily work lives. In Jordan, there is no teachers' union, and strikes are illegal. In some schools, having 40 to 50 students in a class is common. Many teachers take on a second job to make ends meet.

In spite of these realities, and to their great credit, the Jordanian teachers received me warmly, participated with an eagerness to learn, and were effusive in their appreciation of working and sharing ideas with a foreign teacher.

After the teaching sessions were over, I travelled south to the port city of Aqaba, a small town of low-rise buildings hugging the coast of the Red Sea. There I visited Amjad, one of the teachers who had attended the sessions in Amman.

Included as part of my personal tour of Aqaba was a small learning centre, where Amjad taught in the evenings to supplement the earnings from his day job. Adults came to the learning centre to take courses to improve their job prospects. English courses were in particular demand. Amjad had taught his course earlier that evening, and I was most interested to see that he had led his class through some group brainstorming: a web cluster took up most the space on the

white board. When I pointed at the cluster, Amjad smiled and said he was trying out many of the ideas I had presented in Amman. In the same evening, he told me, laughing, that he and his group had had a heated debate on the roles of men and women.

My experience in Jordan has given me much to smile over and think about. As it is on the other assignments, the experience is humbling. The teachers I worked with showed a desire to learn, an openness to ideas, and a willingness to share their experiences and hopes—quite inspirational. I hope that

The teachers I worked with showed a desire to learn, an openness to ideas, and a willingness to share their experiences and hopes—quite inspirational.

for the sake of future Jordanians these people stay in teaching; however, given the current status of teachers in the country, I fear that many of them will not.

Yvonne Price teaches at the Cloverdale Learning Centre, Surrey.

Teachers unite to keep public education out of trade agreements

ZACATECAS, Mexico—Since the advent of the free trade era, teachers throughout the Americas have witnessed disturbing changes in the politics and economics of public education. Traditionally education has been seen as a cornerstone of a nation's democratic values and the fullest expression of its cultural realities. Today, however, public education is seen as a vast untapped market and a valuable commodity to be traded.

To confront this profound shift from the social to the mercantile agenda for education, teachers in Canada, Mexico and the United States have come together under the banner of the Tri-National Coalition in Defense of Public Education.

The coalition's fifth tri-national conference took place last November in Zacatecas, a colonial city in the central highlands north of Mexico City. About 175 delegates met over three days in the ballroom, the ballet studio, and even the balcony of the Teatro Calderon, a faded but still stately theatre overlooking a charming cobblestone plaza and a stunning Baroque cathedral.

They heard from students of Mexico's National Autonomous University who suffered threats, intimidation and police brutality during their eight-month strike to resist imposition of tuition fees that would deny education to many young Mexicans. Indeed, delegates from all countries reported increasing imposition of user fees as one key symptom of neo-conserva-

tive policies. Other trends noted throughout the continent included:

- Reduced public funding for education, accompanied by increased corporate and private financing.
- Promotion of voucher systems to subsidize private schooling.
- Increased use of high-stakes standardized testing.
- Fragmentation of education systems: in effect, two-tier schooling.
- Permanent violation of teachers' civil and union rights.
- Increasing use of distance education as a substitute for direct teaching.
- Spiraling student indebtedness.

Conference organizers were pleased to see much broader participation from Canada, including representatives of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Centrale des Syndicats du Quebec, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, and colleagues from at least six Canadian universities, including UBC.

B.C. delegates included BCTF Second Vice-president Jinny Sims; Executive Committee member and former VESTA President Suzie Mah; former Surrey local president Peter Ellis; and Gavin Hainsworth, from the International Solidarity Committee. Larry Kuehn, director of research and technology

and a co-founder of the Tri-National Coalition, was one of the keynote speakers.

Kuehn recalled that the coalition first came together in Zacatecas six years ago, sparked by a shared concern about NAFTA and its negative impact upon public education traditions in Mexico, Canada, and the U.S.

"We do not think of education as a commodity to trade, but others do," Kuehn warned. "Privatization and commodification are key to making education tradable and profitable to

private interests."

Now, we are confronting not only NAFTA, but the greatly-expanded Free Trade Area of the Americas, slated to take place in April in Quebec City. The federal government has repeatedly assured Canadians that there's no cause for worry, that they would never put education or other public services on the trade table. But teachers and other scholars of these agreements are skeptical, and many will be joining in the protests against the FTAA, which has been described as

"NAFTA on steroids."

Anti-FTAA activists in Quebec and across the globe have been working for months on an alternative People's Summit, including an education forum, which they plan to hold in tents on the Plains of Abraham. (Canadian participants are urged to bring additional warm clothing to share with Mexican colleagues!)

For more information, see: www.web.net/comfront/quebec.htm.

— Nancy Knickerbocker



Public education is not for sale! BCTF Second Vice-president Jinny Sims addresses delegates to the Fifth Tri-National Conference in Defense of Public Education, Zacatecas, Mexico, November 2000.

Inner-city schools: Canaries for the public school system

by Sam Fillipoff

Inner-city schools can be compared to the canaries that were taken into coal mines to signal a deteriorating environment with their demise. If the signal was noticed quickly enough, the miners could exit the shaft before tragedy struck. Inner-city schools are like those canaries because the schools are in danger of collapse as result of neglect, misunderstanding, and underfunding. Will we notice quickly enough to avoid the demise of inner-city schools?

Inner-city schools are special places. They are the places where the most vulnerable children in our society receive their education. There is little doubt that poverty is the most telling indicator of need for the children who attend these schools. In addition to poverty are factors such as crime, hunger, transience, prostitution, homelessness, emotional neglect, single-parent families, physical and sexual abuse, English as a second language, delayed language development, social and cultural barriers, violence in the home and community, refugee/immigrant status, drug and/or alcohol dependency, fetal alcohol or drug syndrome, and other special needs. These factors reach a "critical mass" when compounded and have a debilitating effect on individual children and their school.

Every school has children who live in such unfortunate circumstances. What makes an inner-city school different is that it seeks to provide a quality education in an environment in which a substantial number of children have a critical mass of such factors affecting their lives.

The majority of inner-city school children commence school delayed in language and social development. Inner-city school children possess intelligence comparable to any other child in the public-school system. They need proven programs that develop literacy, numeracy, and social skills.

Public schools differ from other institutions in that they have a mandate to serve all children and to enroll and retain every child within the system.

Their need for continuity, consistency, and compassion from teachers and other adults in their lives is crucial. The children particularly need prolonged periods of time to develop trusting relationships with adults in order to learn and develop to their potential.

Equality of educational opportunity is available to every child in our province. What is not available to inner-city school children is equity of educational outcomes. For example, equity of educational outcomes would occur when distribution of reading, writing, and math outcomes showed that every child was achieving at or above grade level. Public schools differ from other institutions in that they have a mandate to serve all children and to enroll and retain every child within the system. While equality of results and excellence for all are clearly

desirable goals, there are many barriers to overcome before equity can be achieved.

Public schools have long provided excellent services to their varied school communities by adapting to meet the needs of students and families. Funding cutbacks to education over the past decade have had a cumulative effect of reducing services in all schools; however, inner-city schools have been disproportionately affected. The canaries in these schools are chirping, signalling that their demise may be imminent.

The following are the demographics for a typical inner-city school in Vancouver:

- over 80% of the students and their families live in poverty; most live in single-parent families with the mother.
- 52% of the children are of Aboriginal ancestry; within this group are numerous nations and tribal groups representing a diversity of cultures and languages but lacking any organized political representation.
- 40% of the children are recent immigrants or refugees to Canada, bringing memories of war, atrocities against their families, and deep emotional wounds that need healing and understanding. English is not their first language.
- 40% of the children have significant special needs; most of the needs are social, emotional, and behavioural. According to Ministry of Education criteria for behavioural needs, there are at least two severe and several moderately severe students in every classroom.
- 30% of the children live in

foster care.

- Children with fetal alcohol or narcotic syndrome make up 8% of the population.
- The school has a high absentee and transience rate, with a stable population of only 30%.

Many of the children come to school hungry. Healthcare, proper diet, and physical fitness are often at minimal levels. The result for many children is poor health and lack of sustained energy. The children do not

Many inner-city children carry their burdens with resiliency and grim determination. There is much to admire in their courage and endurance.

choose poverty.

Poverty is not just having too little money to live comfortably. Poverty creates loss of self-respect, loss of personal freedom, and poor physical and mental health. It makes access to everything and every place in the larger community difficult. It can often be a humiliating experience. Parents attempting to secure services their children need feel frustrated and powerless. Many families with children attending inner-city schools live in crowded, noisy, substandard housing. Some students live in abusive relationships with no means to escape. Alcohol and drug abuse often leads to family violence. Children are exposed

to prostitution and frequently witness events from which they should be shielded. The cumulative effect of all these stresses on children attending inner-city schools cannot be overstated.

Many inner-city children carry their burdens with resiliency and grim determination. There is much to admire in their courage and endurance. Students generally enjoy coming to school. It provides a safe, caring, and respectful environment. It can also provide them with the skills and knowledge that will enable the student to construct a hopeful future.

Inner-city schools may need a special "bubble zone" of procedures that will encourage and allow innovation and alternative practices.

If we agree that society has an obligation to provide equitable educational outcomes for all children, carrying out that obligation is even more imperative for children living in poverty. A truly democratic society with an effective public school system would provide all children with the teaching and learning experiences that prepare them to become fully participating citizens in their community, their city, and their country.

The child is the same child even if his or her label changes from student, patient, ward, or offender. Our tax dollars would be better spent if they went into prevention rather than intervention. We have an opportunity to ensure a healthy environment for the canaries of the public school system. By ensuring not only the survival but also the enhancement of inner-city schools, we will be able to achieve equity of educational outcomes. In doing so, we will improve learning and working conditions for everyone.

Sam Fillipoff teaches at Grandview/ʔUuqinak'uuh Elementary School, Vancouver.



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ENTER A&E NETWORK'S 8th Annual Canadian Teacher Grant. Four educators can qualify to win cash grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,000, plus video equipment for school. Teachers who incorporate A&E's Cable in the Classroom programming within curriculum can qualify. A&E broadcasts commercial-free, educational programming weekdays from 4am to 5am. For entry form or more information, call 1-800-722-6146 or log on to AandE.com. Deadline to enter is March 30, 2001.

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TEACHER EXCHANGE, Yorkshire town in England for the academic year Sept 2001-02. Infant school teacher, house swap possibility. k.raud@virgin.net

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FRENCH TEACHERS. Aural comprehension exercises to accompany Disney animated features-all levels. Answer key incl. For info, fax: Debut Productions (250) 768-8141, e-mail: adesjard@okanagan.net

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STILL AVAILABLE - "ROCKS" Primary-Intermediate teaching unit. Incorporates Science, Music (cassette tape-6 original, catchy, informative songs), Drama, and Language Arts. Recommended by Education Division of Mining Assn. of B.C. and Calgary Board of Education. \$19.95 + \$4 postage. Jayd Publishing, Box 75, Nelson, BC V1L 5P7, (250) 825-4472, e-mail: corner@telus.net

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PD CALENDAR

MARCH

1-2 Abbotsford. B.C. Educators for Distributed Learning PSA Conference, Dealing with Special Needs in a Distributed-Learning Environment, Ramada Inn. Contact Bobbi Vestre, (250)315-1208, bvestre@desconnect.com, www.bctf.bc.ca/psas/bcedlpsa.

9-10 Richmond. Speaker Dr. Pat Mirenda, Positive Behavioural Supports: Assessment and Intervention, sponsored by Richmond School District and Private Practice Interest Group of British Columbia Assn. of Speech/Language Pathologists and Audiologists, Palmer Secondary School. Contact Penny Berinbaum, p/f: (604)275-3126, mpberinbaum@home.com.

15-16 Vancouver. Special Education Assn. (SEA) Conference, Cross-currents 2001, Westin Bayshore. Keynoter Richard Lavoie. For program copies or registration forms, contact Madeline Pohlmann, (604)855-9039, f: (604)885-9193, mpohlmann@sd46.bc.ca; for registration and availability, contact Pearl Wong, (604)576-1528, f: (604)576-1561, pearlw@uniserve.com, or visit www.bctf.bc.ca/psas/SEA.

15-17 New Westminster. Three-day workshop, The Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect: Child Development and Resiliency (EP261). \$195. Justice Institute of B.C. Contact Amber Hall, (604) 528-5620, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

22-24 New Westminster. Applications of Relational Theory, Spring Institute with The Stone Center's Judith Jordan, Ph.D. & Maureen Walker, Ph.D. Justice Institute of B.C. Contact Natalie Clark, (604)528-5627 or Cheryl Bell-Gadsby, (604)528-5626. Conference information can be found at www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

26-27 New Westminster. Making Connections: Working Through Conflict with Youth Series. Workshop 2: Making Connections-Managing Emotional and Aggressive Situations with Youth (CY186). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Nenita Capili, (604)528-5631, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

APRIL

4-6 Kamloops. B.C. Business Education Assn. Annual Conference, Technology in the Classroom, with keynoter David Vogt, University College of the Cariboo. Contact Corrie Macdonald, (250)573-5913, s: (250)672-9943, f: (250)672-0144, cmacdon2@cln.etc.bc.ca.

5-8 Richmond. ICTR 2001, Eighth Annual International Conference on Teacher Research, A Calling of Circles, Living the Research in Everyday Practice, hosted by SD 38 (Richmond) and UBC, Richmond Inn. Classroom visitations (\$25) can be arranged for April 5. Contact Sabina Harpe, sharpe@richmond.sd38.bc.ca, or Margie Savigny, msavigny@richmond.sd38.bc.ca, or visit www.educ.ubc.ca/ictr2001.

6-7 New Westminster. Creativity and Trauma: Using Art as a Tool for Healing (CSA191). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Amber Hall, (604)528-5620, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

7 Burnaby. B.C. Assn. of Mathematics Teachers (BCAMT) New Teacher Conference. Contact Ron Coleborn, (604)664-8560 (local 1225), f: (604)664-8561, rcolebor@south.sd41.bc.ca.

9-10 New Westminster. Developing Effective Interventions: Interventions for Moderate to High At-Risk Youth (CY189). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Nenita Capili, (604)528-5631, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

9-10 New Westminster. Putting a Youth Twist into Substance Misuse information and Youth Services (AD207). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Heather Olson, (604)528-5573, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

11-12 Surrey. Surrey Speech-Language Conference: Translating Brain Research into Instructional Practice with Pat Wolfe, Sheraton Guildford Hotel. Contact Carol Westdal (604) 878-6162, surreyslp@hotmail.com.

18-19 New Westminster. Art and Play Therapy with Neglected and Abused Children (CY104B). \$195. Justice Institute. Contact Amber Hall, (604)528-5620, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

25-27 New Westminster. Children Exposed to Family Violence, Level 1 (CY230). \$195. Justice Institute. Contact Amber Hall, (604)528-5620, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

27 Kelowna. Learning Assistance Teachers' Assn. (LATA) Conference, David Bouchard on Reading and the Reluctant Reader, Grand Okanagan Lakefront Resort. Contact Lynda Mawer, 8614 Foster Rd., Vernon, BC V1H 1C9, f: (250)558-1065, lmawer@sd22.bc.ca.

28 Vancouver. Educators Against Racism Conference, Diversity and Human Rights. Contact Roz Johns, (604)272-7720.

MAY

5 Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices: 4th Annual Conference on Teacher Research/Researching Teaching, UBC. Contact Gaalen Erickson, (604) 822-2867, gaalen.erickson@ubc.ca, www.ocpe.educ.ubc.ca/wcs/c_investprac.html.

4-5 New Westminster. Working with Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (TS531). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Amber Hall, (604)528-5620, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

7-8 New Westminster. Making Connections: Working Through Conflict with Youth Series. Workshop 3: Making Connections-Third Party Facilitation when Working with Youth (CY187). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Nenita Capili, (604)528-5631, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

8-9 North Vancouver. Fast Forward 2001, Educational Media Showcase, Capilano College Sportplex. \$101.65 before March 6; \$133.75 thereafter. Visit www.langara.bc.ca/ffwd; fax registration forms to (604)323-5577.

10-13 Prince George. Bridging the Gap, A Lifetime of Opportunities in Education; bridging the gap between high school and post-secondary education, trends for lifelong learning, UNBC. Keynoters: Ann Dowsett Johnston and Crawford Kilian. www.res.unbc.ca/btgconference.

11-12 Nanaimo. New PE in the New Millennium, 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, lmmyres@sd70.bc.ca, or Darlene Higgins, (250)753-3245 (2554), f: (250)741-2393, higging@ mala.bc.ca, www.bctf.bc.ca/BCRTA.

16-17 New Westminster. BC Working with Adolescent Females in Trauma: Innovations in Group Treatment (TS527). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Heather Olson, (604)528-5573, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

18-19 Richmond. Catalyst 2001, A Conference for K-12 Science Educators, sponsored by the B.C. Science Teachers' Assn., Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre. Contact Kitty Morgan, kmorgan@telus.net, f: (604) 298-5562, or David Barnum, c/o West Sechelt Elementary, PO Box 220, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0, (604)885-2825, f: (604)885-6468, dbarnum@sd46.bc.ca, www.bctf.bc.ca/BCSCTA.

25 New Westminster. Identifying and Overcoming Racism in the Counselling Relationship (EP321). \$95. Justice Institute. Contact Heather Olson, (604)528-5573, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

28-29 New Westminster. Counselling Skills: The Art of asking Effective Questions (EP587). \$185. Justice Institute. Contact Heather Olson, (604)528-5573, www.jibc.bc.ca/ccs.

PD Calendar web site

<http://pdonline.bctf.bc.ca/conferences/PD-Calendar.html>

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

by Kevin Layne, Noela Facey, and Margaret Boyd

The Social Justice Committee of the COTA (Central Okanagan Teachers' Association) organized a Social Justice Forum for Grade 5 and 6 students, entitled "Care, and Make It Fair," that took place on October 12, 2000. In attendance were 144 student representatives from every elementary school in the Central Okanagan. The student conference was made possible through a social justice grant provided by the BCTF and the support of the COTA.

The goals of the day were simple. The first goal was to heighten the awareness of social justice issues in the students' schools and communities. The second goal was to inspire the students to go back to their schools and spread the message of their learning by developing and implementing a project that could make their school safer and more caring.

The organizers wanted to take the students out of the school environment and make the forum special; a real conference organized and held at various downtown Kelowna venues. Each student attended three of the six workshops that reflected social issues. All of the workshops were facilitated by Central Okanagan educators. The workshops dealt with: bullying, multiculturalism, racism, poverty, children's rights, and First Nations issues.

Students were provided with active experiences through drama with some secondary school students, lectures,



The Friendship Circle

Care, and make it fair

reader's theatre, panel discussion with First Nations' secondary school students, and co-operative learning.

At the end of the day, students were encouraged to reflect upon the day's events, to see how newly acquired information could be applied to their school milieu.

The forum closed with the Friendship Circle, the coming together of all participants led by First Nations' students from one of the local schools. The spiralling figure was an incredible demonstration of unity and fellowship as the participants celebrated their first ever Care, and Make It Fair forum.

The participating students were asked to complete an evaluation form expressing their feelings about the forum. The following comments reflect the students' sense of empowerment and understanding having participated in Care, and Make It Fair.

In response to the question What is the single most important thing you learned today? responses included:

- It made me feel that everyone should have equal rights.
- The world isn't fair but we can make it better.
- Everyone should help to make the world a better place.

• I learned that you should stop bullying before it gets worse.

Student responses to the question How did the day make you feel? included:

- Good in a way that I can help people and represent our school, but sad that people can be so mean and rude to other people.
- Excited, because I knew that we'd be doing something to help social justice and stop bullying.
- The day made me feel like I could do something about bullying.
- It made me feel strong.
- It will make me watch out for unfair things because the

workshops opened my eyes to them.

• It made me feel good because I learned something and now I can share it with others.

Upon returning to their respective schools, students met with the teacher who is the social justice representative for their school. Together, they devised an action plan that was submitted to the COTA Social Justice Committee. Projects could be big or small; for example, one school decided to hold a poster contest that denounces bullying; another school group went to local businesses for items to use as prizes in a raffle to raise money for a social justice cause.

The organizers were delighted with the positive response from parents, teachers, administrators, parents, and presenters. All agree that participating in the Care, and Make It Fair forum was a tremendous experience. The COTA Social Justice Committee would like to repeat the experience next year using the same format and adding some new workshops.

Plans are under way to have a reunion in the spring for the students who attended the forum. It will be a time after school to share and celebrate successes and to see how the work of the young activists may be continued.

If you would like more information about the forum, please contact the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association.

Margaret Boyd, Noela Facey and Kevin Layne, Central Okanagan, organized the forum.

Recycling for students and the environment



by Beverley Roy

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle can help educators to provide both social and academic skills. Having applied this theory with students with special needs for a few years, I now help others who wish to set up similar programs in their schools.

We need to show responsibility for our environment and its future. I was able to accomplish this through discussions and through students' identifying marketing strategies that they thought would help other students become aware of how much material was being thrown out daily.

To ensure that the recycling container is not used as just another garbage can, keeping the containers small seemed best. We used a blue recycling bucket fitted with a metal handle that allowed it to hang on the outside of the regular

garbage can.

Initially we did have trouble getting students and staff to break their habits of throwing away their recyclables, especially the tetra packs that became recyclable last fall. The best marketing strategy we discovered was offering a candy for each container that students placed in our collection box. The program increased the amount we recycled and it also allowed me the opportunity to introduce the students with special needs to the "regular" student body. The students with special needs gained a sense of independence, as they felt comfortable going out into the hallways where they knew people.

Students collected, sorted, counted, recorded, and cashed in bottles. They proved that they were capable, choosing jobs that suited both temperament and skill. Students were expected to behave and complete the job to the best of their abilities. As the

year progressed, students were given more responsibility. Often the higher functioning students were able to support the work of students who had more skills to develop. The recycling program helped the students develop social and practical skills that would allow them to function in any future work experience.

By recycling, students can also develop academic skills. At the secondary school, students became involved in the day-to-day management of what amounted to a small business. Marketing was the "fun" area that students enjoyed working on. We did a variety of activities that created more environmental awareness. We developed ads to be either read on the school's public announcement system or displayed. In addition, we created environmental informational posters to place around the school to make students aware of the "Candy for a Can" program.

The program allowed students to develop accounting skills. After we had done our daily collection and sorting of the cans, bottles, and tetra packs, students who were learning basic counting skills would count what we collected, and more capable students would add those counted totals to the previous day's totals. After the items were sorted, we settled down to record our business profits and losses. We used special sheets that looked similar to a bank statement book. We recorded the money we had earned from cashing in the recyclables and the money we spent on expenses of the business or for our classroom activities. Students also counted the money we earned and reconciled it to the total we had calculated, filled out deposit sheets, and took that money to the office and purchased supplies.

Our discussions allowed us to

develop our evaluation skills, such as how to best handle the type and placement of recycling buckets and what marketing ideas were working. The students did price/quality comparisons when we went out to purchase supplies. And as time went on, students evaluated our progress as to whether or not we were doing all that was necessary to run a successful business.

Many paybacks, besides obvious financial remuneration, result from recycling. Students can learn many skills that will help them for the rest of their lives. Given the right attitude and support, a recycling program works in almost any school and at any skill level. The hard work can have exponential benefits. Hands-on educational experiences offer many rewards to the students, the teachers, and especially the environment.

Beverley Roy is district staff, special services, Prince George.

