

Teacher

Features

- Which side are you on? 4
- Health & Safety
Teacherages need
improvements 5
- Beware of extravagant
educational claims 6
- New survey on how
kids use the Internet 6
- Teaching peace in
a time of war 7
- The BCTF salary proposal 8
- Canto Cuba 10
- Questions about the
Fraser Institute's
report card 10
- Teachers do make a
difference 11
- Bella Coola forestry tour 16

Columns

- President's message 2
- Readers write 2
- Top 10 BCTF lesson aids 3
- Looking back 3
- Retirement seminars 12
- Classified 15
- PD calendar 15

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We need improvements not contract stripping!



BCTF President David Chudnovsky explains that one of the first acts of the new government was to provide deputy ministers with an 18-32% increase over one year. As well, many of the deputy ministers had received a substantial increase the previous year. "Teachers are determined to bring up the level of compensation for the profession."

by Peggy Salaberry

Sometimes collective-agreement language is perplexing. But parts of BCPSEA's proposals in this round are dishearteningly simple. This is how it begins:

Article A.1. "The provincially negotiated provisions of this collective agreement shall replace any provisions in the previous collective agreement with the same or similar matters in substance."

This dismisses superior provisions won and preserved from local negotiations in some districts.

Look at the Early Retirement Incentive Plan/Proposal: "Delete all provisions that provide early-retirement incentives." Consider the regard for the school-based team in this proposal, Article D.4.4(a), Inclusion of Students with Special Needs:

"The Administrative Officer, when determining the inclusion of students with special needs, ...shall consider the advice of the School-Based Team. When necessary, the School-Based Team may also provide advice regarding the balance between the needs of the included

students and the needs of the other students in the class."

In Supervision Duties, Article D.7.1 offers a guaranteed half-hour duty-free lunch. This carrot is followed with the stick:

"Employees shall be required to provide such assistance as the employer considers necessary for the supervision of students before/during or after school." When questioned, BCPSEA admitted that "after school" could include the assignment of evening activities.

A further concession targets sick leave, where BCPSEA softens a first proposal that suggested a cap of 120 days per year and per illness in favour of an overall cap on the accumulation of sick days. What our bargaining objective seeks is the portability of sick leave if a teacher changes school districts.

In the past, we have been successful in encompassing in our collective agreement many provisions that correspond to our needs, but that also embody good teaching practice. Each of them has a history, a contextual interplay with underlying assumptions of the time. From them arise an evaluation and evolution of basic operating principles.

Class size

Charles Achilles, acknowledged proponent of "good practice" in teaching, gave a lecture in Richmond, B.C., in January 2001. He demon-

Small classes, in a range of around 15 students, can make a difference of huge proportions in student accomplishment.

strated, with extensive, long-term research, that children have to get the hang of how school works. They have to get in on the ground floor. Small classes, in a range of around 15 students, can make a difference of huge proportions in student accomplishment. The gains encompass higher academic achievement, fewer behavioural problems, higher graduation rates and entry into post-secondary education, less involvement in crime, less need for remedial service and/or institutional confinement, and greater satisfaction with one's opportunities and accomplish-

ments. In view of that, teachers, can hardly abandon the cause of contractual guarantees of reasonable class sizes. What goes into the collective agreement is funded, and so long as the resolve of the teachers does not falter, which it has not in 80 years of bargaining history in B.C., advancements are made that benefit children.

The concession demand of the employers is to staff a school to the agreed-upon number of teachers required, based on class-size limits. The next step, however, is where the adherence to class size ends. It migrates from an understanding of class size to the sentence below:

"An individual class or classes may exceed the class size maximums provided that the school has an equal or greater number of teachers than would have resulted from organizing the school pursuant to Articles D.2.1. and D.2.2. above."

(D.2.1. and D.2.2 designate class-size language to be agreed upon.)

Briefly stated, there's no telling how many students actually will be in the classroom with the teacher.

See IMPROVEMENTS page 4

President's message



David Chudnovsky

How important are non-enrolling teachers in your school? In mine, they have a lot to do with how well I can do my job as a classroom teacher. The teacher-librarians, school counsellors, and learning assistance teachers, and all the others are really the pillars of support for the whole structure. Without those teachers' being readily accessible in all our schools, the quality of the learning experience we can offer our students is seriously compromised.

Recently the employers' rep, BCPSEA, came to the bargaining table with a proposal to remove from our collective agreement all language referring to non-enrolling teachers. The number of teaching staff with non-enrolling responsibilities would be determined by the administration. That would be problem enough but the real issue is that resources for non-enrolling teachers would no longer be guaranteed. Without protection provided by our contract, a school board could unilaterally decide to cut funding for such services as libraries and counselling and leave school administrators with little choice but to reduce the number of hours the library is open or increase the student load of counsellors.

This contract-stripping proposal from the employer is a dramatic demonstration of how important our collective agreement is in protecting the quality of public education in this province. We fully expect the B.C. Liberals to try to make cuts in the education budget. Services such as libraries and counselling are easy targets if they are not shielded by language in our contract that specifies how many are required in any given school.

And if an attack on such a critical component of schools as non-enrolling teachers is not

enough to satisfy the contract-stripping appetites of the employers, they have also tabled a proposal to require teachers to do lunch-time supervision. Those of us who have been around a while well remember the days when we wolfed down a sandwich and dashed off to walk the halls and playgrounds during the lunch break. It was a lousy working condition, it was unfair and unreasonable. We took many years to get our employers to agree that teachers were as entitled to a reasonable lunch break every day as anyone else. The employers' rep who seems intent on revisiting the 19th century.

In this volley of contract stripping, BCPSEA has proposed "flexibility" in class-size limits. They want language referring to class size removed so that administrators will have more flexibility in determining allocations of staff. This is a trip back to the bad old days when administrators had a free hand in deciding how large a class could be. Staffing decisions were often more about solving problems for the administration than they were about good learning conditions for students.

We cannot allow BCPSEA to strip our collective agreement of the most important guarantees for quality education for our students. We cannot accept a contract that will take us backward to a time when the working conditions of teachers were determined at the whim of our employers and administrators. If you needed more encouragement to enthusiastically support our job actions coming out of a positive strike vote on October 9-10, now you have it.

David

Teacher is remarkable

The efforts of your journalistic team are remarkable. As I read *Teacher*, it is apparent what a force the BCTF is in public education.

Your publication enlightens both teachers and the public. Please let your staff and contributors know that they carry on a long tradition and that their work does not go unnoticed.

Alex Goostrey
Surrey

We should bargain directly with government

Education and educators will continue to lose as long as the BCTF Executive bases its bargaining strategy on the defence of a system of "free collective bargaining" that is bogus. Free collective bargaining does not exist unless all parties lose by a shut down of the enterprise concerned. In the case of B.C.'s current system of education management, the local school boards, their politicians and bureaucrats, have nothing to lose by stonewalling and forcing a strike every time contract negotiations occur. They continue to receive full pay and benefits even when the schools are shut down and students, educators, and parents—who are the sole reasons for the existence of these politicians and bureaucrats—are entirely excluded from the educational enterprise.

The BCTF should be campaigning to streamline the education management system, bargain directly with the ministry, and make it accountable for maintaining the educational standards it sets forth. The money currently spent to support local boards should be redirected to schools, where it would help maintain ministry standards.

Richard Sharpe
Kelowna

Can't we keep pop out of schools?

As a retired teacher, as well as a graduate of Kitsilano Secondary School (1954), I agree wholeheartedly with Yvon Raoul in "Schools Don't Need Corporate Hype" (*Teacher*, May/June 2001).

I have been appalled by soft drink industry's takeover of our secondary schools and now our elementary schools. In Abbotsford, a corporate sponsor prevented three students from carrying out a school project using a "different" brand of soda.

It's amazing that on the one hand, teachers are expected to promote health and wholeness, while students and teachers are bombarded by the "hype" of soft drink companies with exclusive rights. School boards and administrators argue that money is provided for computers. So?! The sports equipment argument is even more incongruous.

My own children are grown and I am retired, but if I were still in the system, either a parent or teacher, I would complain long and hard and boycott the offending products.

Can the BCTF do nothing about this insult to our children's health and well-being?

Arlene Kropp
Abbotsford

Cubans appreciate B.C. teachers' help

I am a Cuban teacher and I teach English as a foreign language in a polytechnical school in Artemisa, a small town in the province of La Habana.

The purpose of my letter is to express through the magazine my sincere and everlasting gratitude to Beverley Cowie, Lorena Duran, Hilary Spicer, Diane Tijman, and Jill Wight, and thank them so much for the hard work done with us here in my country. They came to Cuba as members of the BCTF and imparted a course on methodology and language enhancement as a joint project with our teacher's union and Ministry of Education.

The Canadian teachers helped us improve our fluency in English and made us better human beings. That is why they will always be in our hearts. The course really lifted our spirits in the pursuit of English fluency. It was very precisely structured and balanced. We felt free to express our difficulties and they listened to us with respect and patience.

I particularly liked the very professional way the course was taught. It was not only enjoyable but very funny as well.

Thank you again for the great learning experience and the way you share your knowledge. We will never forget the efforts made for helping us. Best of luck with your teaching, solidarity, and human work.

Gustavo Diaz Sandoval
Artemisa, La Habana

BCCPAC missed the point

The letter from Reggi Balabanov, president of BCCPAC, in the September "Readers Write," seemed to miss the point made by David Roy in the May/June issue about decisions made by PACs and by BCCPAC. Despite Balabanov's assertion, PACs and BCCPAC do not represent a democratic expression of collective parent concerns. Since PACs are voluntary organizations, are not elected by parents at large, and usually do not survey parents in general on issues like class size, PACs are not democratically elected bodies representing a particular constituency, therefore, the resolutions passed by BCCPAC do not necessarily reflect the views of parents in general and may be biased by the voluntary nature of PACs.

Peter Vogt
Merritt

Progressive perspective publication needed

I would like to see the BCTF Executive show strong leadership encouraging progressive groups to publish a co-operative newspaper that would offer British Columbians a fresh, informative, progressive perspective. It could be a regular anthology of news and views of public interest drawn from current sources including *Teacher* newsmagazine, labour papers, and scholarly organizations such as the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The existing media does not offer a broad perspective on current events, social justice, and issues of public concern. Rather, we are largely fed a steady diet of corporate views consisting of misleading headlines and self-serving information. We require a much more open intellectual environment if we want to advance a more democratic and progressive society.

Public education, universal healthcare, and the capacity of Canadians to control their economy in the face of globalization are all under attack. Schools do not operate in a vacuum; like other institutions, they are very much part of a larger social, political, and economic context. Perceptions of that context are controlled, manipulated, and manufactured by corporate interests. How can teachers advance or even defend the goals of public education if they do not have a voice that extends beyond their own members? The same could be said of nurses, other employee groups, and anti-poverty organizations, to name just a few. We need a collective, progressive voice that can draw upon existing publications so that we can support one another, especially when we often share common goals about public institutions and policies that are increasingly under siege.

The BCTF needs to show leadership in bringing together like-minded organizations and produce a popular culture publication that can be widely shared with the public. We have an obligation to advocate for and ensure future generations enjoy quality public institutions that served us well. Democratic institutions depend on well-informed citizens and the BCTF should lead the way in forging a consortium of progressive organizations that can publish a credible alternative to the corporate media. As media expert Noam Chomsky argues, "we are not condemned to live in a society based on greed, envy, and hate." But that is exactly what we will get if we do not act soon.

Tim Dunn
McBride



Teacher

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LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

In most former times of economic depression, when it became necessary for our public bodies to practice economy, it was usual to single out educational costs as the first point of attack, and, as teachers, salaries formed a large part of such costs, it was natural for the cry of reduction to go forward in no uncertain tones. Fortunately, however, in the present strenuous period, through which we are passing, the Department of Education and School Boards throughout the Province have generally adopted a much more reasonable and progressive attitude towards the question.

(*BC Teacher*, October 1931)

50 years ago

It is particularly exasperating to know that so much of what we are attempting to put over is being nullified by the out-of-school contacts and activities of the senior students. How effective can one of our grade seven teachers feel his efforts are with the Effective Living program when he can walk down to the wharf any evening in the week and see two or

three of the girls in his class hob-nobbing with the unsavoury characters down there?

(*BC Teacher*, Sept./Oct. 1951)

30 years ago

The facts are that those who already think they know all the answers, whose minds are made up, whose prejudices masquerade as value judgments are always quite decisive in their actions. The characteristic of a wise and tolerant person is that he finds it difficult to make his mind up or come to firm decisions. Usually he is well educated.

(*BC Teacher*, Sept./Oct, 1971)

10 years ago

The government in Victoria has changed. After 16 years of Social Credit, British Columbians have elected an NDP government. The anticipation of change creates electricity. "What now?" go many staffroom conversations.

(*Teacher Newsmagazine*, October 1991)

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich

BCTF Global Education Fund grants for 2001-02

Do you have an idea for a classroom or a school project that would help your students develop a deeper understanding of global issues? Then read on, and consider submitting an application for a Global Education Fund Grant.

BCTF has received another grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for projects by students and teachers that help create international understanding in B.C. classrooms.

Individual teachers, groups of teachers, or provincial specialist associations may apply for Global Education Grants. Application forms are available through the BCTF web site: www.bctf.ca.

Decisions on grants will be made by the BCTF International Solidarity Committee at its

regularly scheduled meetings. Contact Leona Dolan (see below) for the committee's meeting schedule and deadlines for submission of applications. All applicants will be notified of the committee's decision on their proposal.

The BCTF Global Education Fund combines a contribution from the BCTF International Solidarity Fund and a matching grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). CIDA's contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

Requests for further information and completed grant application forms should be submitted to Leona Dolan, International Solidarity Program, BCTF, 550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2, 604-871-2250 or toll free: 1-800-663-9163 f: 604-871-2294, ldolan@bctf.ca.

What's new on the BCTF web site?

BCTF Fax Service

Fax your MLA or school district trustees directly from the BCTF web site. Just follow the link from the BCTF home page, www.bctf.ca, and select any of the available options. All you need to do is find your MLA or trustees, provide your name, which is used to sign the fax letter, preview the full text of

the fax, and send it.

The first letter for MLAs protests the legislation to make education an essential service. The first letter for school district trustees focuses on the concessions or contract-stripping demands placed on the table by BCPSEA. We want BCTF members to find out how the trustees feel about a school district

without class-size protections, without any protection for non-enrolling teachers, and an attack on the rights of teachers who are ill or could become ill. We will be posting more letters to the fax service home page as issues arise. Bookmark www.bctf.ca/fax.

— Diana Broome



Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 2331 *Standing Together: A Focus on Bullying*. Produced by the BCTF, 17-minute videocassette, ©2001 \$39.95. This video may be used as a supplement to the resource binder, *Focus on Bullying: A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities*, and/or as a stand-alone teaching tool with an audience of elementary students, educators, or parents. The video is narrated and dramatized by over 150 elementary school students. In the video the students explore several types of bullying behaviours and demonstrate appropriate ways of dealing with bullying incidents when the school, home and community work together. A facilitator's guide poses discussion questions. Funded by a grant from the National Crime Prevention Centre: Community Mobilization Program. K-7

2 LA 4048 *Water: Sharing Our Precious Resource*. Produced by FORED BC ©2001 \$14. Produced by FORED BC in co-operation with government agencies, business, environmental groups and others, contains resource information pamphlets, fact sheets, lesson plans, poster, and a water pollution quiz slide card. Activities include operating a hand-held electrical generator, a school energy audit, water filtration, watershed study and a consumer inventory. Students will be introduced to concepts such as groundwater, aquifer, the hydrologic cycle, and renewable and non-renewable resources. Some curriculum links are included in the package. Grades 8-12

3 LA 6805 *Take a Technowalk to Learn about Mechanisms and Energy*. Peter Williams and Saryl Jacobson 92 p. ©2000. \$27.95. This book introduces students to the concepts of mechanisms, power and energy by investigating the technologies that are all around the classroom, school, and community. Includes 10 fun technowalks with safety guidelines; special instructions to accommodate different grade levels; expectations; evaluation and assessment ideas; pre- and post-walk activities; proven strategies for integrating technowalks into science and other core subjects; reproducible technowalk worksheets and parent involvement sheets. K-8

4 LA 8571 *Science for Kids Series: Cross-Curricular Thematic Units* by Denny and Rebecca Hughes ©1999. This primary science series provides theme-unit ideas for the Grade K-3 science curriculum. The five units—Butterflies, Insects, Plants, Whales, and Rocks and Minerals—focus on student-centred discovery and experimentation, but also emphasize language skills. Each unit incorporates both oral and written

language, along with reading, spelling and vocabulary development. Social studies, science, math, drama, art and music activities are also featured in each unit. Teachers can select those ideas or activities which they feel are most suitable to their students (K-3). LA 8571A *Insects* 80 p. (K-3), \$20.95, LA 8571B *Butterflies* 61 p. (K-3), \$20.95, LA 8571C *Plants* 73 p. (K-3), \$20.95, LA 8571D *Whales* 77 p. (K-3), \$20.95, LA 8571E *Rocks and Minerals* 86 p. (Grades 1-4), \$20.95

5 LA 8048 *How to Write a Story, Grades 1-3*. Produced by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers ©2001. \$13.95. The contents of this illustrated resource book include setting the stage for writing; teaching the parts of the story; step-by-step writing units; more story writing ideas; publishing and presenting stories; and a story writing centre with 48 pages of charts, prompts, and writing forms. Note that the book is published in the USA and contains some US-based standards and references. Grades 1-3.

6 LA 9403 *Helping Low Achievers Succeed at Mathematics* by Derek Haylock and Douglas McDougall 160 p. ©2000. \$36.95. This book is the busy teacher's guide to helping low achieving students succeed at math. There are pages of practical ideas with a sound, easy to understand rationale. Topics include the most essential skill sets in mathematics for children aged 8-12 years. In this book teachers will find a positive expectation that all students can learn math, a method for realizing that goal, and hope that teachers will be able to help their low achieving students experience success. Included are an overview of how to teach mathematics effectively; key considerations in teaching with various topics addressed in the book: place value, measurement, operations, and common fractions; specific learning targets and engaging, easy to play games and activities. Grades 2-8

7 LA F2017 *Le Défi Begbie d'histoire du Canada: les huit premières années Parrainé* par The Begbie Contest Society 236 p. 25,00\$ Cette trousse rassemble les examens de Begbie depuis 1994. On y trouve plus de 220 questions à choix multiple, des questions à développement, des analyses de caricatures politiques, une bibliographie, le guide de correction et les corrigés. 10e et 11e année

8 LA 9755 *Song Writing: A Classroom Approach* by Fred Maybee, 60 p. and 73-min CD ©2001. \$31.95 Manual with practical advice for teaching song writing and recording in the classroom. Teachers with little or no experience

will be able to follow the process and produce something that their students will be proud of. Each chapter is short and practical, outlining exactly what is required to do in order to lead students through an exciting musical experience. Included in the resource are 26 original song scores written by students and a 73-minute CD of the 26 original songs performed by students. K-12

9 LA 9121 *How to Teach Nonfiction Writing, Grades 3-6*. Produced by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers 96 p. ©2001. \$13.95. This resource book is divided into seven parts. In addition to teacher directions and a myriad of reproducible writing forms, each section contains reproducible charts that describe the characteristics of each type of writing and give steps to follow. Part 1—Introduction; Part 2—Narrative Writing; Part 3—Expository Writing; Part 4—Persuasive Writing; Part 5—Writing Reports; Part 6—Graphic Components and Part 7—Other Writing Forms. Note that the book is published in the USA and contains some US-based standards and references. Grades 3-6

10 LA 2150 *Societal Impacts of Computerization* by Chris Bastone 44 p. ©2000. \$22.00. The Province of B.C. IRP for Information Technology 8-10 lists the prescribed learning outcome that "students will demonstrate an awareness of the impact of information technology tools on society." This learning resource is a must for Grades 7-12 computer teachers who try to help their computer students understand value conflicts and ethical choices associated with electronics communication. The activities help connect computer skills to a broader social context through an introduction to socio-technology and a survey of critical issues in computerization such as cyberstalking, hacking, safety, privacy and gender. The resource also supports learning outcomes for the following British Columbia IRPs: Information Technology 11/12, Social Studies 11, Technology Education 8-12. School site license allows teachers to photocopy the activities for students. Grades 8-12

For a listing of BCTF Lesson Aids, consult the catalogue in your school library or the Lesson Aids online catalogue. www.bctf.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.

Administrative staff positions at the BCTF

by Ken Novakowski

In the most recent round of negotiations between the BCTF and the Administrative Staff Union, changes were made to hiring procedures to positions on the administrative staff at the Federation.

Currently, the Federation maintains half of its administrative staff positions as four-year term positions. Typically, any vacancy of a four-year term position is posted in schools and members may apply. The new provision in the agreement requires that such vacancies now be posted internally first.

Internal applicants who have a continuing appointment will be selected by seniority to fill a vacant position for which they apply provided that they possess the necessary qualifications. If no one with a continuing appointment fills the position, then applicants who hold term appointments of less than four

years will be selected by seniority provided they have the necessary qualifications for the vacant position.

What this means in practice is that the entry point for a position on the administrative staff has now become temporary positions of less than four years. These temporary positions may be for anywhere from four months to a year and, on occasion, two years. Members from outside the Lower Mainland have been reluctant to apply for short temporary positions because of the problems associated with moving to Vancouver for a short period of time. However, if a member has the objective of serving in a four-year term position, the most likely way of achieving that objective would be to apply for a temporary position on the administrative staff.

Ken Novakowski is the BCTF's executive director.

IMPROVEMENTS from page 1

Special needs

Teachers support the inclusion of students with special needs in their classes. The practical application of that, though, is a need to adapt the school setting in various ways so it can work. Teachers' collective agreements have begun to establish smaller classes in such cases, to limit the number of students in a classroom who require special assistance, and to establish resource people and material to help meet student needs. All of that improves the learning conditions for all the children in a classroom community.

As more is required of us, we must have the material support to do our job well.

Non-enrolling

Another treasured principle is the value of services that enhance or preserve our learning environments. Teachers have sought to establish in contract the roles of teacher-librarian, school counsellor, learning assistance teacher, psychologist, and other resource people with specialized training and talents. Our student population is not a homogeneous group of scholars from elite backgrounds, but a vibrant cross-section of society, bursting with the potential of a full array of human enterprise. We have recognized the contribution of teacher-librarians to instill a love of books, to help students learn to conduct research, to promote the use of electronic tools for knowledge. Counsellors are indispensable to all students in giving guidance for the future, and also in preventative or urgent situations of bullying, family separation, violence, difficulties with friends, the seduction of drugs, or the despair of suicide. Equally powerful arguments exist for the preservation of the positions of learning assistance teachers and teachers and resource people working with students with special needs. Here is the text of BCPSEA's concession demand (the list of related Letters of Understanding has been deleted):

"Delete Article D.1...and all terms and conditions in the Previous Collective Agreement that establish ratios or formulas or caseload limits for non-enrolling and English as a Second Language teachers and support staff."

...we of all people cannot undervalue our work and expect others to realize how important it is! In today's world...

Over and over again, we hear at the bargaining table that objectives that cost money—reduced class size, support for children with special needs, preparation time, professional development, recognition of teachers-on-call as certified professionals, the assurance of resource people in our schools, true support for inclusion, salary or paid maternity leave—any or all of which must be traded one for another. Granted, money is finite, but so are teachers' time and energy, while the needs of children are not.

There is no inherent equity in school systems. It is left to us to create, insofar as we are able

We are asked to concede provisions of our collective agreement to the changing whims of budget and administration...

and determined to do so. Sometimes people have accused the public schools of reducing education to a lower common denominator. In fact this happens only, and almost inevitably, when public schools are abandoned to inadequate resources, and funds are siphoned from them to support experiments in privatization or a warped re-ordering of priorities that ignores the needs of children. As more is required of us, we must have the material support to do our job well. Teachers know that learning and teaching conditions are inextricably linked. Much of the employers' package aims to reduce the scope of bargaining. We cannot do that. We cannot allow the lustre of our children's future to be extinguished like some dead star.

Salary

To the south, some states are experiencing a crisis in education. Too often, government priorities and resultant policy have deprived public education of the best and brightest university graduates. A student selecting a career often considers education but chooses a different direction, gets involved, and we lose good teacher candidates. Rarely does he/she reconsider teaching. And rarely is this the result of a lack

Better our values be enshrined in a collective agreement negotiated between those parties most involved in, aware of, and committed to public education.

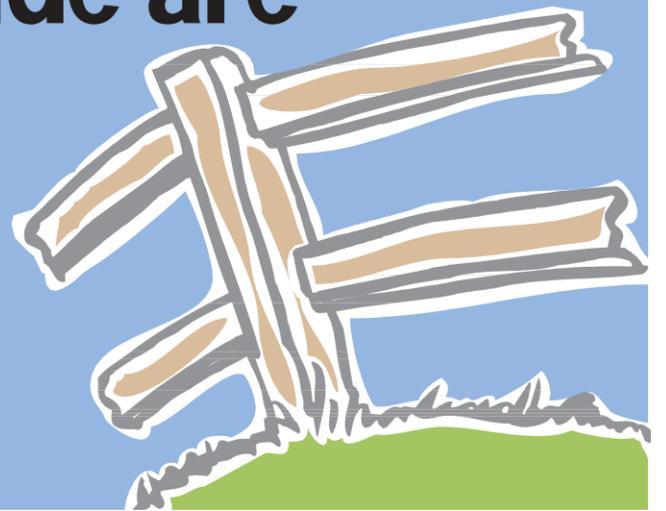
of interest in teaching. It is a decision, often, in spite of inclination or interest, where for reasons of family or other responsibility, the person seizes more lucrative opportunities. As for us, teachers today, we of all people cannot undervalue our work and expect others to realize how important it is! In today's world, worth in the workplace is reflected in dollars and cents. We are called to be altruistic and caring, and we aspire to that, yet we are entitled to be fairly and competitively compensated for our work.

We are asked to concede provisions of our collective agreement to the changing whims of budget and administration—all of this based on the mercurial situation that is B.C. politics. In the classic response to all extortionary methods, we say, "No! No! A thousand times, no!" Better our values be enshrined in a collective agreement negotiated between those parties most involved in, aware of, and committed to public education. This is the win-win situation—this, the working from the same page—this, the buy-in to the goal of equal opportunity.

Peggy Salaberry is a member of the BCTF's Bargaining Team.

To send a letter to trustees in your school district regarding concession demands, go to www.bctf.ca.

Which side are you on?



by Pat Clarke

Those are the first few words of an old union song written by Florence Reece and made famous by the great American folk singer Pete Seeger. The song has a straightforward message when it comes to the struggle for better pay and working conditions for union workers—you are either with us or against us. In reality, the situation can be much more complex. We realize this when we organize our bargaining campaigns and expend so much money and energy trying to persuade a sometimes skeptical public to support our issues. The question, Which side are you on? is one that, in the interests of public relations, we do not put so bluntly. We can, however, ask the question of administrative officers.

How so? Well, because they are teachers. They are AOs because they have, among other qualifications, teaching certificates. They have worked as teachers, and they have been members of the teachers' organization. (In fact a good number, when they were BCTF members, were active in improving working and learning conditions.) They were successful applicants for administrative positions because they demonstrated an awareness of the challenges of teaching, as well as sensitivity to the needs of children. Most of the AOs I know certainly qualify for their positions on those grounds. A few, however, have either changed their orientation since their appointments or obtained them for other reasons, reasons that would have more to do with managerial qualifications than educational ones.

Someone once told me the best teachers are the ones who have the keenest recollection of

what it is like to be child. A variation on this could apply to school administrators: The best AOs are the ones who have the keenest recollection of what it is like to be a teacher. Again, most of the AOs I know have this ability. Unfortunately, a few don't. Those few have had inordinate influence in the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association. The April issue of *Teacher* described the antics of that association's president, Stu Dale. Dale and his fellow travellers in that organization have evidently decided that they are not teachers but managers through and through. They see the teachers' organization, the union, as an obstacle to effective plant management. Class-size language, staffing ratios, seniority provisions, posting-and-filling language, and sick leave are all detrimental to school effectiveness according to their 19th-century world view. Apparently a few of the leadership luminaries at the BCPVPA visualize a good school only as one that is run their way.

I don't think very many school administrators actually agree with them. Most principals and vice-principals really do live in this century and appreciate the important role the BCTF and our collective agreement plays in assuring many of the essential components of good learning environments. They know that the efforts of the BCTF to cap class sizes, guarantee support services for students with special needs, and make sure teaching is a well-compensated profession are indeed in the best interests of quality education. They may sometimes find contract language cumbersome and inconvenient, but overall they know the alternative of a system wide open to the political whims of governments and school

boards can be much worse.

The problem in this round of bargaining, however, has been that the voice of AOs that has been most prominent is the one of Dale and his acolytes at the BCPVPA. This would be a very good time for all the administrators who do not share that group's perspective on the BCTF and its bargaining efforts to demonstrate that they are indeed educators before they are managers, and as educators they do not see the teachers' organization and the teachers' collective agreement as the enemy.

Teachers might help this along by asking their administrators a few polite and tactful questions:

- What do you think of the BCPVPA's position on our collective agreement? If you aren't too pleased with the "Dale program," why don't you let the association know?
- Do you really think class-size limits and non-enrolling staff requirements in contract are a problem?
- Do you see any real administrative advantage to limiting access to sick leave?
- Have you thought of the implications of forcing teachers to record each sick day used against a specific illness?
- Won't the salary gains teachers make at the bargaining table also be of some benefit to administrators?
- Do you see yourself as more of a teacher or more of a manager?
- If you want to be brief and blunt just ask, Which side are you on?

Pat Clarke is director of the BCTF's Professional Development Division.

B.C. tax cuts for top 10%

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives says the tax cuts announced in July by B.C.'s new government are a shocking surprise.

"During the campaign, British Columbians were led to believe that tax cuts would be concentrated on the bottom two tax brackets," says Seth Klein, director of the centre's B.C. office. "This announcement delivers much bigger tax cuts to those who need it the least. These changes make B.C.'s tax system more regressive—the higher your income, the bigger your tax cut." Under the Liberal plan, upper-income earners not only receive the biggest tax cut

in straight dollar terms, but also as a share of income. For example, in 2002, someone with earnings of \$30,000 will save \$430 per year or 1.4% of their

"...today's cuts are a windfall for those making over \$60,000 per year or the top 10% of taxpayers."

income. Someone making \$200,000 will save \$7,797 or 39% of their income.

"This tax cut exposes the government's real agenda," says

CCPA economist Marc Lee. "Rather than concentrating tax cuts on low- and middle-income earners—as was emphasized during the election campaign—today's cuts are a windfall for those making over \$60,000 per year or the top 10% of taxpayers."

"These tax cuts will provide a mild economic stimulus, but the idea that they will pay for themselves is a delusion. Moreover, these tax cuts will put serious pressure on our ability to pay for existing public services," says Lee.

Source: End Legislated Poverty/*The Long Haul*/CALM

Health and safety

Teacherages need improvements

by Neil Worboys

Although the vast majority of our members live in urban settings, a small but very important group of members live in isolated, rural communities. Their story is an example of the challenges of bargaining provincially for a few. We must not lose sight of their pressing concerns. The issue of decent teacherages and living conditions for these members was strongly supported by the 2000 Annual General Meeting. I wanted to discuss their unique concerns first-hand.

Teachers and their children have constant respiratory infections, nasal drip, and other symptoms of inferior living conditions.

So in June, I visited the Vancouver Island West local with BCTF Health and Safety Officer Lynne Sinclair. Our purpose was to visit the remote teaching areas in the district, Zeballos and Kyuquot, in order to help address the dire living conditions of the teachers in those areas. The provincial committee had recommended that a member of the Bargaining Team and a table officer visit teacherages in several areas of the province in order to enhance our understanding of the conditions and to negotiate collective-agreement protections. In addition, the information gathered could be used with the Workers' Compensation Board to argue that the health and safety of members and their families was being put at risk by the significantly substandard housing and by some of the working conditions. The Executive Committee decided to send teams to three different locations to see first-hand the living and working conditions of those in teacherages.

We flew to Campbell River, drove to Gold River, and boarded a small float plane with Jim Norman, the local president. In Tahsis, we picked up Hiapo Poirier, a member of the provincial Health and Safety Advisory Committee, and then flew to Zeballos, where Dana Plett, the housing committee chairperson, met us at the wharf. The entire school staff,

including support staff and the principal, were waiting with a wonderful potluck lunch—a great way to sit, talk, and share information about teacherages and living in remote locales. Even the talk of mould could not dampen our appetites! The local newspaper showed up to cover the event.

We heard about one teacher's foot going through the floor of his bathroom because leaks had led to wood rot. The bathroom ceiling is still hanging down many months later. We heard about unpaved driveways and sidewalks that become mud bogs during the constant winter rain, an oil furnace leak under one of the teacherages that has not been cleaned up, no overhangs so that porches and stairs are always treacherous, and the extremely high cost of groceries and other items, not to mention the difficulty in travelling to shop. It was obvious that teachers felt

visiting with a friendly and playful sea otter we named "Oscar." On the island, we saw the old Kyuquot school, a dilapidated, crumbling building where a TOC and his family lived after the school closed.

Next we visited the Red Cross station, and nurse Don gave us a tour so we could compare his living and working conditions with those of the teachers. He pays \$100 less rent per month for a perfectly maintained, beautifully furnished, and spacious house with a spectacular view of the harbour and beyond. Heating and cooking gas are free. The house has hardwood floors, a fully equipped kitchen, and a washer/dryer. He and another nurse rotate in the job, two months on and two months off. Each trip is fully paid by the provincial government.

By contrast, most teachers live in single-wide trailers that

other symptoms of inferior living conditions. The poorly constructed trailers are expensive to heat, and teachers pay the full cost, unlike the nurses.

Many do not stay because of the conditions. We saw one teacher's bedroom: a sleeping bag on the floor. Often, the only chairs are institutional plastic chairs from the school. Light fixtures are missing and porch lights are never replaced in spite of repeated calls to maintenance. The teacherages are mere metres from the school; privacy is non-existent. Close proximity to the school greatly adds to the hours of work.

The teachers must pay their own transportation in and out of Kyuquot—a \$120 water-taxi ride to their vehicles in Fair Harbour, followed by a long, treacherous drive on logging roads. Sometimes, teachers find themselves stranded because of

than negotiate the long, irregular stairways from the bedrooms in the middle of the night!

Another concern is that if the gas pilot light goes out, the gas continues leaking.

Our last stop was at Sally and Chris's for another potluck meal. The teachers had gone all out to give us a warm welcome. Sally told us that the porch of her doublewide trailer used to have no eaves, and water poured on their heads every time they entered or left. Chris finally widened the porch and built an overhang himself, but it took two years to get the non-slip treads for the stairs! We also talked to a very-pregnant Sally about the trials and tribulations of living so far away from a hospital and her doctor.

The entire staff walked us back to the wharf and stood waving on the dock as we took off. Some of us were a little choked up at the sight. I will



A teacherage in Kyuquot.



The nurse's working and living conditions in Kyuquot.

strongly about these issues that so affected their lives.

With Dana we toured several teacherages after lunch. A graphic reminder of our trip's purpose was the newly constructed Workers' Memorial that recognizes the deaths and injuries of workers in the area.

As we landed in Kyuquot, two teachers stood on the dock to greet us. Staff rep Brenda first took us on a boat trip over to Walters Island. The teachers must make the trip three times a week to get school and personal mail. The boat fills with rainwater and seawater and has to be bailed before travel. The pull-rope start is often difficult, especially in bad weather. The teachers have been lobbying for a safer boat. A highlight of the boat trip was

are unfurnished unless someone leaves unwanted belongings behind. The school board pays only 60% of the cost of bringing household goods in and nothing to ship them out. Since everything arrives on a barge, it is very expensive. The trailers all leak, so many are reluctant to freight their belongings into Kyuquot, especially since the school board charges them rent in the summer. Some leave for the holiday and come back to a different teacherage rather than pay rent just to store belongings. The windows pop out easily, and because security is non-existent, they are prone to vandalism and theft. The leaks, mice, and mould would destroy what isn't stolen. Teachers and their children have constant respiratory infections, nasal drip, and

vandalized or stolen vehicles, trees across the road, blasting on the road, or winter conditions. Cell phones do not work in the area.

Brenda and others took us to the two new teacherages on the hill. They are not trailers; on-site construction was cheaper than bringing in trailers! By comparison, the new ones are spacious, light, and private. There is no rule about who gets what teacherage; that is all decided by the district management.

There is one drawback to the new abodes. The bathrooms upstairs do not work because they are at the same level as the water tower and there is no water pressure. Consequently, the tenants—the principal and a teacher—live downstairs rather

never forget the kindness, sincerity, and dedication of the teachers from Zeballos and Kyuquot.

The provincial government provides free transportation and fully furnished, livable accommodation for nurses, and teachers should accept nothing less. As a member of the Bargaining Team and the Executive Committee, I will continue to be forceful in my insistence on justice and fairness for those colleagues. A lingering image of Brenda, Dana, Sally, and the rest of the two school staffs and their run-down, mouldy trailers has made me angry and even more determined to ensure that all teachers in this province are provided with safe housing.

Neil Worboys is the BCTF's first vice-president.



PETEROWENS PHOTO

You want it when?!

When the communications team asked staff to prepare, print, and collate materials for zone meetings, to collate the materials into kits for zone-meeting participants, to package up boxes to be sent to local offices, to have enough in each box for every member in the local and one video for each school, we said, "It can't be done; the timelines are too tight."

Staff were pulled in from many departments to help. Tables for collating were set up wherever there was room in the production area, and the printed materials, hot off

the press, were delivered and left sitting on skids in the loading area outside, alongside boxes filled with videos.

It was a huge co-operative effort. When someone yelled, "I need 4,500 copies of that brochure with the red printing," another raced outside with boxes on a dolly to pack them up, put the local address label on the outside, and stack them in the courier-pickup area.

Those 25 staff members moved 600,000 pieces of paper out of the BCTF offices to zone meetings and local offices in two days.

It could be done!

—Kathleen Smith

Beware of extravagant educational claims

by John Smyth

It is certainly time to improve schools (*Times Colonist* editorial, July 19, 2001), but not perhaps in the way currently being suggested in the proposed policies. The international research evidence suggests that British Columbia would do well to heed the experiences elsewhere. Choice, flexibility, autonomy, and self-management might be the seductive new buzzwords of educational reform sweeping through schools around the world. But it is not quite that simple. We need to look much more carefully at the effects of such reforms on teachers, curriculum, teaching, and learning.

...there is no evidence showing improvement of learning attributable to these kinds of reforms...

In countries where these kinds of reforms have been most warmly embraced, they are promoted as a way of allegedly making public schools more accountable and responsive to parents and students.

The claim is that by removing inefficiencies that exist in the form of bureaucratic redtape, schools and their local communities will be freed to make decisions in their own best interests because decisions are taken closer to the point of

learning. The argument is that parents can be given greater curriculum choices for their children when they are allowed to act as *customers*, shopping around for the best deal. Indeed it is also said that schools will be better places if they are brought much more into the orbit of the competitive practices pursued by the business sector.

Now, at a quick glance, and taken at face value, these seem like quite reasonable claims. We are not being told what a substantial body of research is beginning to show—there is no evidence showing improvement of learning attributable to these kinds of reforms, even after several decades of pursuing such policies in some parts of the world.

The most worrying aspect is that the package of reforms being applied in B.C. has been extensively tried elsewhere in the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand, and in all of those places they have been accompanied by significant resource downsizing. In Victoria, Australia, when measures like these were introduced in 1993, the teaching force was reduced by 25%, 300 schools were closed, and the education department that was supposed to support the work of schools was reduced by 80%. Responsibility for the problems generated by this shrinkage, was handed to schools and their communities, as part of the move toward self-management.

The evidence is starting to accumulate that schools tend to respond to the pressures of competition and market forces by shifting their energies to

image- and impression-management strategies (for example, through advertising, school uniforms, and discipline policy) in the effort to shore up *market share*. These are practices that are at the expense of innovative and creative teaching.

It is true that some schools and parents do benefit as a

The most worrying aspect is that the package of reforms being applied in B.C. has been extensively tried elsewhere in the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand, and in all of those places they have been accompanied by significant resource downsizing.

consequence, but the least advantaged schools are considerably worse off; they simply do not have the capacities to exercise choice. In the end, it is the schools that do the choosing (not the parents), and the students selected are the ones who fit the image the school has of itself. This is extremely damaging to public education systems that are supposed to exist and be accessible to all.

Furthermore, to maintain standards, there is a marked recentralization of control through curriculum and policy

frameworks, which are policed by intensified regimes of testing, league tables, performance pay, and the like. The deep damage being done to the character of teaching was captured in the words of a dedicated and competent teacher in Australia, where the policies being proposed in B.C. have been pushed even further. He said he was leaving teaching after 30 years because he could no longer continue to compromise his ideas in a system that he knew was "failing, even damaging the children it serves." In what seems a far cry from what was being promised by the reforms, this teacher described himself as a "shelf stacker in a curriculum factory." He said that assessment had displaced learning as a priority, with teachers having to spend inordinate amounts of time fulfilling accountability requirements.

The increasing hierarchy that accompanies such a low trust view of teachers, produces an unhealthy distancing of principals from teachers, and shifts principals away from being much needed educational leaders in their schools.

Making teachers more accountable through increased demands for paperwork, is not a recipe for improving the work lives and morale of an occupation already in crisis and struggling to handle complexity.

What is being veneered and laminated over in making schools responsive, accountable, and productive in terms of measurable performance indicators, is the essence of what lies at the heart of good

schools—something as intangible as changing the minds of students.

The rhetoric might be about the improvement of educational quality and learning outcomes for students, the involvement of parents and community in the life of schools, and creating schools that are more responsive. The reality is that schools are being restructured along lines that re-institute hierarchies, diminish co-operation, foster competitive individualism between schools, and in the end divert schools away from their educative

In the end, it is the schools that do the choosing (not the parents), and the students selected are the ones who fit the image the school has of itself.

agenda by requiring them to be entrepreneurial and more like businesses.

These are a constellation of elements that are highly antagonistic to the ideals of quality public schooling as we currently know it.

John Smyth is professor and director, Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching, Flinders University of South Australia.

This article is an edited version of Smyth's Lansdowne lecture presented at University of Victoria, July 18, 2001. It draws on research in his most recent book,

New survey on how kids use the Internet

In June 2001, the Media Awareness Network (MNet) released "Young Canadians In A Wired World," the most comprehensive survey to date on what Canadian kids are doing online. The cross-Canada survey, in the form of a written questionnaire, was administered by Environics Research Group in March 2001, to 5,682 students between the ages of 9 and 17. The survey is a follow-up to telephone research conducted last year with 1,100 Canadian parents about their kids' Internet activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that kids are way ahead of their parents—and alone—in their explorations of the Internet. Perhaps more important, the findings reveal a major discrepancy between parents' views about how the Internet is used, and managed, in their homes, and what the kids think.

Eight in ten kids say they are alone online all or most of the time.

The survey underlines the extent to which Canadian kids have integrated the Internet into their daily lives. Seventy-nine percent of kids say they access the Internet at home (48% for at least an hour a day). Fourteen percent say they use the Internet at school for at least an hour a day.

Downloading music, e-mailing, and surfing for fun are the

kids' favourite activities, followed closely by downloading games, getting information (other than for school work), using instant messaging, and chatting. Homework (which parents rated at 66%) came in 9th as a preferred online activity, albeit at a healthy 38%. The three most popular sites, for respondents of all ages, are Hotmail (a free e-mail service), Yahoo (a multi-purpose portal that provides e-mail, chat, instant messaging, and a search engine) and Napster (a Web site where kids can go to download music).

Parents' main concern about the Internet is kids' access to pornography and other inappropriate material. Over half the kids in this survey say they've ended up in a pornographic Web site accidentally while searching for something else, or by typing in the wrong address, clicking on a banner ad, or being sent a link by someone in a chat room or in instant messaging. Slightly less than a quarter of kids say they go to sexually explicit sites intentionally and another 40% (mainly boys) visit violent or gory Web sites.

More than anything, it's the interactive aspects of the Internet that have captured kids' imaginations. Seventy-one percent of young people have an e-mail account and of these, 81% have a free e-mail account like Hotmail or Yahoo. Instant messaging (IM)—like ICQ or MSN Messenger is especially popular with young people. Use peaks with the 13- to 14-year-



olds, 39% use IM every day or almost every day.

Kids do not always know who they are talking to online. Most e-mail activity is with friends, but 45% of kids say they "often" or "sometimes" e-mail people they've met only on the Internet. Of the 56% of students who say they go into chat rooms, 72% participate in unmonitored chat rooms for teens and almost 60% say they at least sometimes go into private areas of chat rooms to talk to just one person.

Kids are exploring the Internet largely without adult intervention. Eight in ten kids say they are alone online all or most of the time. Nearly seven in ten say their parents never sit with them while they surf the Net and over half say parents never check where they've been online.

There's a "disconnect" between how parents view their management of the Internet at home, and how kids see their parents' involvement. Seventy-one percent of parents say they

know quite a lot about the Web sites their child visits but only 45% of kids say this is so. Eight in ten parents tell us that they talk "a great deal" or "a fair bit" to their kids about their Internet activities but less than a quarter of kids are of the same opinion. A full 44% of the students say their parents don't know about all their e-mail accounts!

"What we're seeing" says Jane Tallim, MNet's Internet specialist, "is a parent generation that values the Internet as an educational tool and who think they're in touch with their kids' Internet activities, and a younger generation who consider the Internet their own world, separate from their parents' reach and knowledge." Over half the kids think they know more about the Internet than their parents, and nearly a quarter have put up their own Web sites.

In spite of their technical abilities, many show a certain naiveté about online communication and information. The majority of kids who host their own sites are willing to disclose their e-mail addresses on these sites and 39% believe "all" or "almost all" of what they find on the Net.

"It's hard keeping up with the kids," says Anne Taylor, MNet's co-director, "but we have to remember that they need our involvement now more than ever. There's a lot of savvy required for the Net. Kids may have the technical know-how but they also need good information and critical thinking

skills in order to be safe and discriminating consumers of Internet content and interactivity."

The second half of the Young Canadians In A Wired World findings, about safety, privacy, marketing to kids and online student behaviour, will be included in our next issue. For more information on the data cited in this article go to www.media-awareness.ca/eng/webaware/netsurvey/index.htm.

The Media Awareness Network (MNet) is a not-for-profit education organization whose mandate is to support and encourage media and information literacy in Canadian homes, schools, and communities. MNet hosts a large Web site with K-12 resources (www.media-awareness.ca) and it licenses professional development workshops for teachers to raise awareness about Internet issues that are emerging as children

...39% believe "all" or "almost all" of what they find on the Net.

and young people go online. Among MNet's members are the CTF, 13 provincial teachers associations and the Canadian Home and School Federation. To contact MNet write to info@media-awareness.ca

MNet is sponsored by Bell Canada, Rogers@Home, CanWest Global, BCE, CTV, CHUM Television, A & E Television Networks, AOL Canada, and the Government of Canada.

B.C. Youth tackle global issues

by Jasmine Lucky

Ever since the Youth Millennium Project's establishment in June 1999, large numbers of B.C.'s youth have embraced the project and dedicated their energy to making the world a better place. Designed to be truly inclusive, the Youth Millennium Project allows young people all over the world to discuss global issues of concern to them and then create local action plans in response. Youth ages 11 and older are invited to take part in this unique project that encourages awareness of global issues while fostering communication and personal empowerment. The project came at a time when 70% of surveyed youth in British Columbia felt they could not "make a difference" or effect positive change in the face of global challenges such as environmental degradation, armed conflict, poverty, and health issues. The reasons given were "because we are kids, no one listens to our opinions" and "these problems are too big—I'm just one child." The Youth Millennium Project was created as a response.

"...the younger you are when you get involved in global issues, the more you can do over your lifetime."

—Madeline Pollard-Hyde, 13 years old

Originating from an innovative premise that allows children worldwide to work on the basis of their own observations and experience, youth are able to identify and communicate to influential publics and political leaders those major circumstances that affect a child's quality of life and diminish a child's prospects for a fulfilling future. Poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and violence all have a particularly cruel effect upon children. In those circumstances, a child's voice is the purest of descriptive instruments and potentially the most influential. As 13-year-old Madeline Pollard-Hyde said, "We're going to grow up and eventually be the ones running the world...the younger you are when you get involved in global issues, the more you can do over your lifetime."

While we reflect upon what the future holds for us and our progress as a world community, YMP aims to develop awareness of global issues, encourage communication within and between cultures, foster a sense of personal empowerment, and create a sense of community within each group and across national borders. To achieve this, every participating group is matched with four companion groups in other countries to foster international communication. If they do not speak the same language, companion groups exchange artwork and music instead of letters. "The Youth Millennium Project is truly a testament to what young people can accomplish if they are given an opportunity to exercise their ideas," said Dr. Martha Piper, president of the University of British Columbia. "YMP is making this possible on

an international scale."

Currently YMP has over 10,000 young people in over 80 countries participating in the project. In B.C., program staff are working with schools, youth groups, community centres, and First Nations communities to build an inclusive network of youth translating their ideas into action. YMP's B.C. Outreach Program is involving groups of youth historically left out of community programming, including Aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities, and female youth.

Through YMP's Aboriginal Outreach Program, positive steps are being taken to ensure that the voices of our First Nations youth are heard. One such measure is a Multicultural Awareness conference set for next summer, where activities such as traditional dancing, singing, games, crafts, and storytelling will be showcased. But that is only the beginning as Chastity, a 17-year-old First Nations girl explains. "There were a lot of things to think about when we first started. I think we talked about everything from racism to pollution. I like the project that we started though, because I think it can do a lot of good in the First Nations community. Right now it seems like the Native voice is not being heard, and it doesn't help that we are young. So far it has been a lot of work, and I have run into more roadblocks than I thought I would, but I think it is going to be worth it."

In B.C., 500 youth are carrying out inspiring and creative plans. In addition to many other local plans, youth are:

- educating peers against littering by making videos.
- organizing anti-drug campaigns.
- putting books on tape for blind children in South America.
- performing plays against bullying and violence.
- raising money for youth street shelters and other charities.
- teaching the elderly computer skills.

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

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

Jasmine Lucky is media correspondent, Youth Millennium Project.

Surviving the big one: Student preparedness

From the B.C. Solicitor General's office

Because B.C. is located in Canada's earthquake zone, we must give our children the tools they need to survive a major earthquake. The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, has begun work to ensure that students and their families have the information they need to be as safe as possible.

Providing useful survival tools is much more than holding a "duck, cover, hold" drill or supplying information about the



Teaching peace in a time of war

September 11, 2001, will be one of those days even our youngest students will remember vividly for the rest of their lives. They will remember how they learned of the disaster, what their first thoughts were, how they felt. They might also remember that it was the first time they were afraid about something that happened far away. It may have been the first time they really confronted the realities of global politics and realized they were part of the picture. Perhaps more worrying is how they might recall September 11, 2001, as the first day of the rest of their lives. If the reports and analyses of the tragedy in New York are correct, our students are likely to be living in a time of war, perhaps not a conventional war, but certainly a time of apprehension, tension, and ongoing crisis.

The teaching challenges in such an environment are many—the most pressing being helping students understand the issues well enough that they feel some degree of security and bringing students to a recognition of the alternatives to war and violent conflict resolution. World events may swirl violently about them, and the more that happens, the more frightened they may become. An awareness of how problems can be solved and how they can contribute to peaceful conflict resolution can give many students the empowerment and participation they need to feel some control and hence security.

Teaching for peace or peace education has been around for some time. But since the Cold War ended and the nuclear threat diminished (it didn't diminish but most of us felt it did), peace education has been in the closet. It is time to get it out, dust it off, and give it a prominent place in our teaching.

Peace education has a broad scope. It includes international or global conflict resolution as well as personal conflict resolution. Peace is as much about how we conduct ourselves as how nations, religions, or ideologies relate to one another. The BCTF and its members have done a lot of work over the years on peace education in all its aspects. The *Lesson Aids Catalogue* has many resources for students of all ages that were developed for teaching for peace—personal and global.

Here are just a few:

1. A new resource for secondary students especially relevant to the events of September 11, *A Culture of Peace: A Teaching Unit on Alternatives to War and Violent Conflict*. LA #2040, Secondary, Pat Clarke, 57 p. (c)2000 Co-Development Canada. \$18.95. This unit was written to help students develop an understanding of the causes and consequences of violent conflict and war, the concepts of conflict and peaceful conflict resolution, and the potential for "a culture of peace," and to be able to apply conflict resolution concepts to situations where violent conflict is present or possible. The unit is presented in four parts: Why War? The Reality of War, Alternatives to War and Conflict, Building a Culture of Peace. It includes student handouts and information sheets for the teacher. Suitable for Social Studies 11 and History 12 in conjunction with a focus on 20th century conflicts, Social Studies 9 with study on war and revolution, English as a part of a thematic study on war and conflict, and as a library resource for independent projects on war and conflict.

2. *Take a Step for Peace*. LA #9225, Intermediate, Grades 4-12. Atmatyagi Andrew Kutt and Mary Joan Park, 121 p. (c)1999, \$10.95. This resource package provides classroom-ready activities that help to build peace and community in schools. The program is designed to counteract some of the fundamental causes of violence with exercises to build self-esteem, promote self-empowerment, raise awareness of the value of each individual, and build conflict-resolution skills. Three levels of activities are presented, depending on the amount of teacher preparation and classroom time. A unique feature is the section on Canadian heroes, both of the present day and of the past.

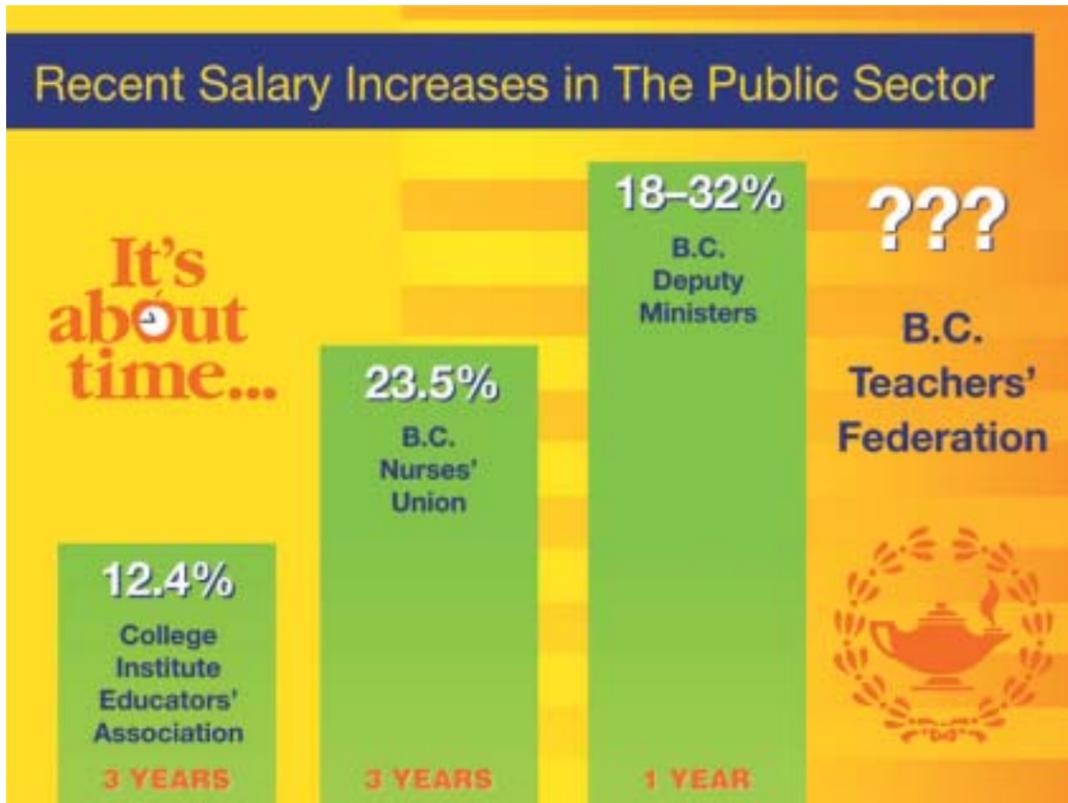
3. *Educating for Peace*. LA #P102, Primary. Cathy Goodwin and Trish Grant. 1984. An article reprinted from the May/June 1984 issue of the *Status of Women Newsletter*. It includes suggested peace activities for Kindergarten. 70¢.

—Pat Clarke

How to help your American colleagues

The Canadian Teachers' Federation has informed us that at the request of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, the Education International has established a solidarity fund for teachers and their families who were victims of the terrorist attack in New York last week. Any contributions made to the fund will be forwarded to general funds established for this purpose by NEA and AFT. Three Washington D.C. teachers and three of their students were in one of the aircraft used in the terrorist attacks. The 11-year-old students were on their way to California to receive awards from National Geographic for essays they had written.

If locals wish to make donations to this fund, send them to the CTF, made out to the CTF annotated "EI Solidarity Fund" at 2490 Don Reid, Ottawa, ON, K1H 1E1. The source of their contribution will be communicated to the AFT and NEA.



THE BCTF

by Irene Lanzinger

This is the salary proposal tabled by the BCTF Bargaining Team on September 13. It is designed to attract new teachers to the profession by bringing up the beginning-salary levels and shortening the time it takes to get to full salary. AGM 2000 decided that a bargaining goal should be to shorten the salary scale to four steps (*Members' Guide to the BCTF*, 4.B.01.7, p. 33.) It is also designed to make salaries in the profession more competitive by increasing the salaries at the top. Most teachers will spend most of their working lives at the top salary level. A salary increase is important at this time because salaries have fallen behind for nine years, and teachers retiring within the next five to ten years need a salary lift in order to be

able to survive on their pensions.

The proposal includes four components:

(Category 3 (EA) will be removed from all grids. Teachers on Category 3 will move to the corresponding experience step on Category 4.)

1. The scale will be shortened to four steps.
2. Minimum salaries will be set for Categories 4, 5, and 6M at both the bottom and top of the scale.
3. A market adjustment of 10% will be added to the top of the scale.
4. An 8% increase will be applied in each year of the agreement.

We presented the employers' bargaining agent (BCPSEA) with the following plan for implementation:

The proposal includes four components

1. The scale will be shortened to 4 steps (Annual General Meeting 2000).
2. Minimum salaries will be set for Categories 4, 5 and 6M both at the bottom and top of the scale.
3. A market adjustment of 10% will be added to the top of the scale.
4. An 8% increase will be applied in each year of the agreement.

Implementation of Salary Proposal

- ▶ Stage 1: Reduce to Eight Steps
- ▶ Stage 2: Market Adjustment to Top of Scale
- ▶ Stage 3: Reduce to Four Steps
- ▶ Stage 4: Add % Increase

Stage 1: Reduce to Eight Steps

- ▶ 1. If a scale has more than 8 steps, reduce to 8 steps off the bottom step.
- ▶ 2. For each category, set the new bottom of the scale at the average Step 3. If the new scale equals the average Step 3: C, C, C.
- ▶ 3. If the scale equals the average Step 3, see if the bottom of the scale equals the average Step 3, if not, scale equals the average Step 3.

Stage 3: Reduce to Four Steps

- ▶ 1. For each category to get the increment:

$$\frac{\text{new top} - \text{new bottom}}{\text{difference} + 3} = \text{increment}$$
- ▶ 2. Add increments to get scale.

New Baseline July 1, 2001 10% Market Adjustment To Maximum

	CATEGORY 4	CATEGORY 5	CATEGORY 6M
Increment	\$5,869	\$7,060	\$7,375
Step 0	\$40,300	\$44,700	\$50,107
Step 1	\$46,169	\$51,760	\$57,482
Step 2	\$52,038	\$58,820	\$64,857
Step 3 (max)	\$57,907	\$65,880	\$72,233

Sample Grid Under BCTF September 13, 2001 Proposal

Stage 4: Add % Increase

- ▶ 1. Apply 8% increase to all salaries.

Teacher Starting Salaries Lag Behind Other Professions

Occupations with lower entry education/requirements

- Dental hygienists/therapists \$49,800
- System analysts \$40,800
- Firefighters \$40,800
- Probation officers \$39,000
- Police officers \$37,800
- Teachers (for comparison in this survey) \$37,800

Teacher Starting Salaries Lag Behind Other Professions

1997 University Graduates (2 years after graduation)

- Social professions \$45,380
- Health \$45,000
- Applied science \$45,000
- Business \$40,381
- Education \$36,700

Recent settlements included a market adjustment

- ▶ B.C. Government and Service Employees' Association
- ▶ Health Sciences Association
- ▶ College Institute Educators' Association
- ▶ B.C. Nurses' Union

TEACHER SALARY PROPOSAL

Stage 1 Reduce to eight steps

In this stage, the bottom steps would be removed from the grid to leave the eight highest steps.

Average up bottom of scale

The 70 different salary grids in the province have a variety of steps ranging from 8 to 12. Removing steps from the bottom alone would have the effect of increasing the disparity in starting salaries. Also, a number of locals have salaries that are unacceptably low compared with other districts. To address those two issues, we have proposed that if the removal of steps from the bottom of the scale results in a starting salary below the average Step 3 in the province, the starting salary in that local will be the average Step 3. This would have the effect of creating the minimum

salaries below:

Average Step 3:

Category 4	\$40,300
Category 5	\$44,700
Category 6M	\$48,884

Salaries that are higher than the average Step 3 would remain and have any percent increases applied to them.

Average up top of scale

Similarly we have proposed that any local with salaries at the top of scale that are less than the average top of scale in the province be averaged up to those levels.

Average Maximum:

Category 4	\$52,644
Category 5	\$59,890
Category 6M	\$65,666

Salaries higher than the average would remain.

Stage 2 Market adjustment

A feature of most public-sector settlements, market adjustments reflect the fact that particular employees are in demand. In teaching, salaries need to be adjusted because there is a market demand for those professionals. Current salaries are too low to attract adequate numbers of new employees.

Recent settlements that have included a market adjustment are:

BCNU	17% for all employees
HSA	8.0% for some job categories
BCGEU	6.6% for some job categories
CIEA	6.4% at the top of the grid

Our salary proposal included a 10% market adjustment to the top of scale in each category.

This would produce a minimum top of scale in each category:

Category 4	\$57,893
Category 5	\$65,839
Category 6M	\$72,152

Stage 3 Reduce to four steps

A new salary scale can now be produced by calculating the increment:

$$\frac{\text{new top} - \text{new bottom}}{\text{difference}} \div 3 = \text{increment}$$

With the new bottom of scale, top of scale, and increment, a new scale can be constructed.

Stage 4 Add percentage increase to new scales

Finally, once the new grids are created, we have proposed adding an 8% increase in each year of the agreement. The issue of how teachers move from their

current position on a grid to a position on the new grid will be worked out during our negotiations with the employer. The BCTF goal will be to equalize as much as possible the increases that result from changes to the grid structure.

This is the Federation's opening position on salary as presented on September 13, 2001. If we are successful in achieving this increase, teaching will be much more attractive to the best and brightest in our universities. We have been bargaining for many years and know that there will be give and take at the table, however, it is in the long-term interests of students, teachers, and our communities to improve the salary levels in education.

Irene Lanzinger is co-chief negotiator with the BCTF's Bargaining Team.

Reduce to Eight Steps

...than eight steps, cut ...s to give it eight. ...check to see if the ...scale is less than the ...es, then the bottom of the ...erage Step 3.

Category 4 \$40,300
Category 5 \$44,700
Category 6M \$48,884

...eight steps then check to ...f the scale is less than the ...es, then the bottom of the ...erage Step 3.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	CATEGORY 4	CATEGORY 5	CATEGORY 6	CATEGORY 6M
0	34,391	37,965	40,468	41,538
1	36,276	40,074	42,600	43,680
2	38,162	42,184	44,733	45,823
3	40,048	44,294	46,864	47,965
4	41,933	46,401	48,996	50,107
5	43,819	48,511	51,128	52,250
6	45,704	50,620	53,261	54,392
7	47,588	52,728	55,392	56,534
8	49,474	54,838	57,526	58,676
9	51,360	56,949	59,658	60,818
10		59,056	61,791	62,961
11				65,105

Stage 2: Market Adjustment to Top of Scale

- In each category check to see if the top of the scale is less than the average top of the scale, if yes, then the top of the scale equals the average top.
Average Top of Scale: Category 4 \$52,644
Category 5 \$59,890
Category 6M \$65,666
- Add the market adjustment to the current top of the scale in each category to get the new top of the scale.

Percentage Increase

July 1, 2001, Adding 8.0%

	CATEGORY 4	CATEGORY 5	CATEGORY 6M
Step 0	\$43,524	\$48,276	\$54,116
Step 1	\$49,863	\$55,901	\$62,081
Step 2	\$56,201	\$63,526	\$70,046
Step 3 (max)	\$62,540	\$71,150	\$78,012

Sample Grid Under BCTF September 13, 2001 Proposal

July 1, 2002 add 8.0% to the July 1, 2001 grid

July 1, 2003 add 8.0% to the July 1, 2002 grid

Salaries that have market adjustment

BCNU 17% for all employees
HSA 8.0% for some job categories
BCGEU 6.6% for some job categories
CIEA 6.4% at the top of the grid

B.C. Teachers and other Canadians

- York (Toronto) metro teachers, on maximum, earn \$11,000 more than their Vancouver counterparts.
- Toronto teachers, on maximum, earn \$8,400 more than their Vancouver counterparts.
- Calgary and Edmonton teachers, on maximum, earn \$2,100 more than their Vancouver counterparts.

Top Three Average Teacher Salaries U.S. States, 1999-2000

	\$Canadian
Connecticut	77,530
New York	75,474
New Jersey	75,264

Sources: Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2000, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, Bank of Canada Historical Currency Converter (using June 30, 2000 noon-hour rates)



Canto Cuba: A cultural co-development project

by Valerie Dare

Cuba aims to be, by the year 2010, one of the cultural leaders of the world, with an entire population that both values and practices the arts. To reach that goal, the government has launched a number of cultural and educational initiatives. Students in regular schools are encouraged to supplement their basic arts-education courses, which are taught by highly qualified specialists, by attending evening programs in community cultural centres. For the most gifted and motivated students, fine arts schools in each province and at the national level offer training in visual arts, music, modern dance, and ballet, as well as courses in pedagogy that prepare them to be teachers. After 12 years of intensive instruction, young graduates who do not go on to university are expected to work for three years in the countryside, teaching their specialty. The Cuban term for the program is "massification," and it is modelled on the mass literacy movement of the 1960s that transformed Cuba into one of the most literate and politically active nations in the world and made it the destination for educators, union leaders, and artists.

In March 2001, a team of five Vancouver teachers, three musicians, a filmmaker, and a guide/translator travelled to Varadero, Matanzas, and Havana to observe the Cuban system of music education and examine its relationship to the culture. We wanted to see the fine-arts schools in operation and make ongoing connections with educators and artists that would have the potential to benefit arts instruction in B.C. schools. The trip, planned over a two-year period, was supported by the W.R. Long International Solidarity Committee, the Vancouver School Board, and our local union. CoDevelopment Canada provided logistical support through two Cuban contacts—Luz del Alba Perez Bardaji, a retired teacher and former president of the Havana teacher's union, and Ariel Valdes, a music teacher and member of the musicians' union—both of whom worked hard on our behalf to arrange official visits, sightseeing, accommodation, and transportation.

The trip was indeed an eye-opener. Everywhere we saw public art—brightly painted murals and sculpture. Free outdoor concerts featured city, provincial, and national orchestras. Ticket prices for performances in theatres are so inexpensive for Cubans that

most people can enjoy the opera or ballet. Musicians ranging from very good to exceptional roam the parks and play in every bar, hotel, and restaurant.

Cubans are respectful toward one another and strangers. The only heated argument we saw—about baseball—took place in the corner of a park traditionally used for that purpose. There are no advertising signs or billboards, no neon signs, few people asking for handouts, and no one sleeping on the streets at night, although the balmy climate certainly permits it.

Cuba's warmth extends to its people, who welcomed us with great generosity and an old-world dignity. Although materially impoverished by our standards, Cubans more than make up for shortages in commodities through ingenuity, generosity, and a joyful spirit. Imagine being given an impromptu rumba lesson by a taxi driver who, appalled at our attempts to play the rumba rhythm on a newly purchased clave, pulled over to the curb and demonstrated the correct rhythm. Then, before taking us on to our destination, he proceeded to teach us to dance the rumba on the sidewalk with music blaring from the taxi's stereo, much to the amusement of passers-by!

The same cavalier spirit goes a long way to compensate for the lack of educational resources. In the two fine-arts schools we saw, the shortage of books, teaching materials, and musical instruments was balanced by the abundance of human resources. For example, the 370 students in the Escuela Vocacional de Arte de Matanzas are taught by 95 full-time teachers, in addition to support people like the pianists who accompany the dance classes. This ratio means that individual instruction is the norm, as are classes of six to ten students. The relationship between



The gallery at the Amadeo Roldin School of Music in Havana.

teachers and students is very warm, with much kissing of cheeks and exchanging of hugs. At the same time, academic, performance, and behavioural expectations are high, and the students we saw were very focussed. The Matanzas fine-arts school, the Escuela Vocacional de Arte "Alfonso Perez Isaac," and others like it in each province, graduate musicians who are qualified at age 18 to join professional bands and orchestras or to teach in fine-arts schools and community cultural centres. We met two teenagers who are professional musicians at night and attend the Amadeo Roldin, the Havana provincial school of music, by day. Annaici, a 17-year-old girl who is studying clarinet, also plays Galician bagpipe in a progressive rock band. Her dedication and hard work so impressed us that our group donated a clarinet for her personal use.

The second-hand instruments we gave to Cuban schools came from individual donations made by many local people, the majority from a major campaign organized by Stewart Brinton, an East Vancouver musician, who continues to seek sources of funding for new instruments for Cuba. As enrolment in music programs in Cuban schools is limited to the number of instruments available, our gift of 60 instruments to the Matanzas school in particular has already had a significant impact by dramatically increasing the number of students able to attend.

Cuban fine-arts schools, particularly the Amadeo Roldin, receive many foreign delegations, but our group was different in two respects. First, we were a team of teachers rather than administrators, with set goals and objectives for our trip. Second, we travelled with musicians used to working in schools as artists in residence. Fana Soro, Andre Thibault, and Carlos Bastidas (who is now a teacher in Surrey) connected with artists in Cuba, and they also were great cultural ambassadors in the schools, performing West African, Flamenco, and Andean music, to the great delight of teachers and students in Matanzas and Havana. They did much to help us reciprocate for the school concerts and workshops that were arranged to celebrate our visits.

Another music-related highlight was a concert performance by Amadeo Roldin students of an original work composed by one of our group, Paul Nicholls, who is music teacher at Charles Dickens Elementary School. Other members of the Canto Cuba project are Eric Hartman,

Grade 7 classroom and music teacher at Shaughnessy Elementary School, Charmian Bland, Grade 6 teacher at Captain James Cook Elementary School, Robin Holburn, music teacher at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School, and Valerie Dare, teacher-librarian at Britannia Secondary School. Randy Rotheisler, filmmaker with the Vancouver School Board,



Classroom instruction at the Amadeo Roldin School of Music in Havana.

documented the trip. We were accompanied by Josh Berson, our guide and mentor with experience in development work, who played a major role in the success of our trip.

With our initial visit accomplished, we are now looking at ways to build on the relationships we have formed with Cuban colleagues. We see many opportunities to strengthen educational and artistic ties between our countries, and we plan to start by bringing Ariel Valdes to Vancouver in February to present artist-in-residence programs and professional-development workshops. Future exchanges of teachers, students, and artists will provide real opportunities for cultural development in both countries.

CoDevelopment Canada is organizing a cultural tour in the winter and other educational tours for students and teachers later this school year. We predict that participants will return, as we did, singing the praises of this amazing country. Canto Cuba!

Valerie Dare is teacher-librarian at Britannia Secondary School, Vancouver.

For more information on these tours, contact Carmen Christiansen, at CoDevelopment Canada, 604-708-1495. A 20-minute video documentary, *Canto Cuba: A Video Journal*, is available from Randy Rotheisler, 604-713-8984, ext 138.

Some questions about the Fraser Institute's report card on B.C. schools



by Gordon Gore

As an academic subject teacher (physics) for many years (now retired), I am puzzled by the techniques used by Peter Cowley of the Fraser Institute to rank schools year by year.

The report averages all the exam marks of all the students in a school during the school year. Apparently it is assumed that different schools all write the same subjects in similar numbers and all subjects are of equal difficulty.

How does one handle the likelihood that some schools do not offer "hard" courses such as physics, history, or English literature, while others do? How can Cowley justify comparing schools on that basis?

How does one deal with the fact that in some schools, all students genuinely interested in a "hard" subject are encouraged to try it, regardless of their ability, while in other schools weaker students may be "screened out" of the hard courses, in subtle fashion, because their marks may "wreck the stats?" Many "high scoring" schools have very low participation rates!

Since there are two, sometimes three, different exams in a given subject during the year, this "averaging" has questionable validity. The exams are not reusable "standardized" tests! Students in the first semester write a different exam than students in the second semester, for example. Cowley even compares averages from one year with averages from another year, with a whole different set of examinations and a different population of students! What possible meaning can one attach to those averages?

5

What is the point, and what is the value, of publicly ranking individual schools annually? *Any experienced teacher knows that in a given year, the academic level of students in one's class can vary tremendously, with average achievement in small classes being skewed by the two or three strongest or weakest students in the class. Average achievement of small graduating classes is bound to vary, just as the performance of a school's basketball team can vary from year to year, even with the best coaches! The ranking of a small school on Cowley's scale is a matter of pure luck.*

6

The report shows that elite private schools obtain very high marks on provincial exams. Good for them! That is why they are elite private schools. What is "news" about that information? (There are also some private schools that fare less well on provincial examinations.)

7

Why are provincial examinations assumed to be so important? They are two-hour snapshots of a student's performance on the aspects of a course that are easiest to "test." Half the examination consists of multiple-choice questions. Another ex-physics teacher once called the provincial exams "the new B.C. lottery." (A certain Peanuts cartoon character referred to them as "mystical choice.")

8

Many Grade 12 teachers are being driven to "teach to the exam" by pressure to "get the stats" to "look good in the rankings." Is that what education is about in British Columbia? (Ask experienced Physics 12 teachers how many laboratory experiments their students do now, compared with what they did prior to the introduction of provincial exams in 1984!)

In my opinion, Peter Cowley and the Fraser Institute are doing more harm than good with their simplistic "ranking" of schools. I think Cowley should attend a school music concert or a drama production, visit the shops, drop into a business education class, a computer science room, or an art class, or watch a senior basketball game—so that he can see for himself that there is much more to schools than marks on provincial examinations in a few academic areas.

Gordon Gore taught science and physics in seven different schools, in four different districts, with and without provincial examinations, from 1959 to 1991. He now writes science and physics textbooks and voluntarily runs a small science centre in Kamloops.

Teachers do make a difference

by Alex Kobelak

Scanning a recent *Hudson Bay Post-Review*, I noted a section entitled "25 Years Ago." Viewing the photographs of the teachers brought a flood of memories of my high-school days in 1948–49 and the events leading up to my departure from Hudson Bay.

A small caption on the front page, "Teachers resume extra duties," was followed by a photograph of a retired teacher assisting a participant in the Terry Fox run, which had 49 local participants and raised \$7,800.

To follow my musings and to understand the significance of the above captions, you have to go back to the post WWII era, when lumbering and mixed farming were the only two occu-

It was so exciting, so enriching to hear Shakespeare taught by someone who obviously enjoyed the course content and teaching.

pations that had any meaning to us students. We were children of parents employed by or because of the railways that gave the community its prior name, Hudson Bay Junction. It was pioneer country, the kind that evoked the best and worst in people eking out a modest living that was occasionally borderline survival.

The province had enacted the district school unit model of administration, and Hudson Bay was designated as the base of one such unit. It was a first attempt to assist those in the smaller rural communities to attain a basic secondary school education, which was more widely available in urban areas. Among its benefits was a policy that provided students from areas without a high school a support level to the extent of 50¢ per school day of attendance at a district school. In effect, it was the beginning of "equal educational opportunity" for those of us who were rural residents in the pioneer communities that dotted the entire north central half of the province.

I, then a 16-year-old from the rural community of Weekes, Saskatchewan, was one of the first who benefited from the restructuring and the exposure to a whole new schooling process.

My Ukrainian parents emigrated from Poland to Canada in 1927 and 1930 only to be blindsided by the Great Depression. With four sons as able helpers, mixed farming and lumbering were well suited to our lifestyle and parental experience, and, basically, we prospered. However, the prospect of earning a living as a farmer did not appeal to me. Fortunately, after returning from service in the Canadian army, Father was very

supportive of his younger sons' receiving an education, even if he was not aware of occupations other than the priesthood, teaching, farming, and soldiering.

To receive a senior matriculation standing, one had to take Grade 12 in a high-school setting. Reading about and performing a simple science experiment was a challenge to one whose reading skills were hampered by a lack of a library and parental guidance to read. To attend a large school and to be one of four students in the Grade 12 graduating class was a huge adjustment for me.

The high school, Grades 9–12, had only three full-time teachers. The newly appointed principal (Mr. West) was the science and math teacher, his wife taught English composition and literature, and a newly graduated teacher taught biology, geography, and social studies. It was so exciting, so enriching to hear Shakespeare taught by someone who obviously enjoyed the course content and teaching. Everything was new to me, above all the exposure to a wide variety of students with varied interests and an array of skills.

The principal and his wife were both kind and supportive. I was tied to a tight monetary budget, so through their connections in the community, they arranged for me to work at the Brooks grocery store two nights after school and, on occasional Saturdays, at Hawke's Lumber. When the school's janitor fell ill, the principal asked me to fill in for a week, and the money was a God-send. He trusted that I was responsible enough to do the task and went out on a limb for me.

For a teenager, it was a unique experience. I lacked social skills; my whole life was a floating dream, no goals, no direction, seemingly lacking in ambition, yet very happy with my lot. Coming from a home that did have stringent rules and a strong value system, I did have some anchors for personal guidance. But we lacked parental encouragement of the

Good teachers know when and how to motivate students and when to encourage and, above all, when to intervene.

form that built confidence in our ability and ourselves. It was simply assumed that we would grow and attain a level of success, but how and by what means was unclear to us. I now know that it was unclear to them also; they too lived in hope.

That was where the teachers came in. Good teachers know when and how to motivate students and when to encourage and, above all, when to intervene. I recall many whose encouragement gave me needed self-confidence. Had it not been

for those dedicated people who cared enough, I wonder what might have happened to me and to many others in similar circumstances.

In May, prior to preparations for the departmental final exams, I was approached by the principal and his wife about my post-secondary intentions. They were planting a seed in me to consider some form of post-secondary education on the basis of their view that I was a good candidate to continue into some other occupation.

In early June, I got a call from the principal to see him in his office. The local improvement district engineer needed a math-oriented student to assist him for the summer in surveying. Without the benefit of an interview, the engineer engaged me to begin on the day after my last Grade 12 exam. It was another event that came as though by accident that got me into the engineering profession. The circumstances of my entering the College of Engineering are the kind that make me cringe in retrospect.

Unbeknownst to me, but with my tacit approval, Mrs. West had arranged to do the paperwork to obtain a student loan from the province. While I was not really aware, she colluded with the engineer that I enter

I would have told her that her personal efforts were not in vain, that my contact with her and her husband as teachers was a turning point in my life.

the University of Saskatchewan after the summer-term employment. Four years later, after many, many more learning and life experiences, I graduated as a civil engineer. Following spring 1953 convocation, I received a short handwritten note from Mrs. West congratulating me, and in her inimitable style, she added that she knew all along that I could do it. She noted with some pride that two other HB high-school students were about to graduate.

My lack of social graces did not give me the ability to respond to her, yet I wanted to do so with so much emphasis. Two years passed when I found the note and tried again to write a response. It was difficult for me to express my inner feeling, and the whole document became lengthy and so convoluted that I was ashamed to send it. I never did respond.

Years later, while reading the obituaries, I saw that Mrs. West had died. I was saddened because I never had thanked her for the part she played in assisting and guiding me. I would have told her that her personal efforts were not in vain, that my contact with her

and her husband as teachers was a turning point in my life.

I could not have attained the recognition of my peers, the awards for professional excellence, and the many years of service on three continents without having attained that first step: the confidence to

The central core of that base strategy are the teachers. They are special people, and their specialty should be rewarded.

complete high school, and proceed to post-secondary school education. It would never have happened.

One might conclude that mine was a random situation or that other factors entered into play, but the majority of my classmates were like me with roots in rural communities, whose "schooling" was marginal by today's standards. All were influenced by a teacher or by a parent who was a teacher.

Teachers like the Wests are here today, and they are needed more than ever before. They are needed to counsel, to explain, and to expand the thinking horizons of generations in whose hands a nation depends for vision and growth. Unfortunately in this complex world with its many competing forces, symbols, causes, and diversions, teachers are not fully appreciated. How unfortunate also that our expectations for our children increase with each generation, and we blame the education system and the teachers if those expectations are not fulfilled.

Dedicated teachers will always be there for students in spite of the remunerative circumstances, but they cannot live on promises and accolades alone. My experience made me conclude that student growth and development must start within a public school system, fully supported by parents.

Dedicated teachers will always be there for students in spite of the remunerative circumstances, but they cannot live on promises and accolades alone.

There are no other sources or institutions to turn to for guidance.

The central core of that base strategy are the teachers. They are special people, and their specialty should be rewarded. I cannot overstate the point that *teachers do make a difference.*

Alex Kobelak is a retired professional engineer, Parksville.

PART II

Integrated projects for second-language learners

by Wendy Carr

This is the second part of "Technology and Language Learning: Moving toward integration," which appeared in the September 2001 issue of *Teacher*.

Examples below, suitable for core French Grades 4–12, may be adapted to suit other languages or immersion settings.

Integrate technology as one of several options for learning about/researching a topic

• *Mon animal préféré* (Grades 4-5):

Students discuss personal pet preferences and learn how to describe different animals. They have several choices for presenting what they've learned, such as creating a paper-bag puppet that performs in a skit, writing a booklet that is read aloud or creating a *KidPix* slideshow. The slideshow may be done individually or in collaboration with the class, i.e., one show comprising a set of slides, each prepared and narrated by one student. A personal slideshow has five or six slides each with a sentence describing various aspects of one's favourite animal using the language structures learned during the unit, e.g., *Voici mon animal préféré. C'est un chat. Il s'appelle Bouffon. Il est formidable. Il aime les oiseaux. Il dit "Miaou".* The child records his or her voice saying each caption, along with musical effects and cool transitions between the slides. The collection, saved as an animated show or QuickTime movie, and may be stored in a shared network folder or linked to the school web site.

• *Une île tropicale* (Grades 6/7):

Students discover many of the interesting features, items, and animals found on a tropical island and where they are located. They learn how to read a map and legend and then produce and present a tourist island map using the language learned during the unit, e.g., *Voici l'île d'Amour. Il y a des montagnes dans le nord. Il y a une jungle dans le centre de l'île. Dans la jungle, il y a des singes et des oiseaux tropicaux.* An option for the project is to conduct research about a tropical island: one student did a search at *altavista.com* using the keyword "Martinique" and selecting "French" as the search language. She explored some of the sites and found a recipe, which she printed, cut out and included on her tourist map.

• *La francophonie* (Grades 8/9):

Students embark on a project in which they learn about a French-speaking country. They conduct research about its culture, natural elements, and industries and report to the class. The evaluation rubric specifies the type and amount of information required and provides for a variety of presentation formats: written report, photo collection with oral description, *un bol de papier mâché*, which presents information visually on a bowl and is described orally, a *Power Point* presentation, or a *WebQuest* (using *Netscape Composer* or *AppleWorks*). Each presentation option includes written, visual, and oral

production. The results, shared with the class, allow for a variety of learning styles and interests.

• *Ma carte postale*—International Postcards (Grades 9-10):

Students read holiday postcards from around the world and compare format and content. They study and practise using the past tense and pronoun objects with agreement, e.g., *Aujourd'hui j'ai visité la Tour Eiffel. Je l'ai trouvée intéressante.* They also talk about what they are planning to do next while on their holiday, e.g., *Demain, nous allons prendre un bateau-mouche.* Their task is to create a postcard for the chosen location and to write a message as if they were actually there. An option for the project is to make contact with someone in the target country and to find out some "insider" information other than the usual tourist facts. Students use their e-mail accounts, e.g., *hotmail.com* or *mail.yahoo.com* and/or teacher-approved key pal sites like *epals.com* to link up with someone in the country. They ask about sites and events and include them in their postcard.

• *Des actualités*—News Reports (Grades 11-12):

One student each week presents a news report in the target language drawn from a journal or news site. Current information is presented orally for four to five minutes. The student then poses three questions about the news report to the class, collects and marks the responses, and submits the data to the teacher along with a copy of the news source, e.g., a journal or web-page printout. Students use on-line news sites, such as *radio-canada.ca* or the multilingual *journalismnet.com* and may include a recorded live-audio broadcast sample (recorded on a cassette from the computer). Played in class prior to the student's summary report, this adds a sense of immediacy and realism to the presentation. Ideally, audio and video clips are played on a classroom computer or laptop that is connected to the Internet, but that is not always possible.

How do students work on a project at home and then bring it to school?

The transmission of these projects may take place between the student and the school via e-mail, diskette, zip disk or CD. For example, a student may e-mail his or her *Power Point* project to the teacher as an attachment. The teacher or the school must have the *Power Point* or *KidPix* program (or download QuickTime if the slideshow has been converted) in order to view the project. Similarly, if a web page or *WebQuest* is created, the teacher or the school must have a web browser such as *Netscape Communicator* or *Internet Explorer*



Grade 9 students watch a *Power Point* presentation they've created about *La francophonie*.

2001–02 Retirement planning seminars

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

Date	Location
October 13, 2001	Campbell River, Coast Discovery Inn
October 27, 2001	Cranbrook, Heritage Inn
November 3, 2001	Terrace, The Terrace Inn
November 17, 2001	Surrey, Days Hotel
November 24, 2001	Nanaimo, Coast Bastion Inn
December 1, 2001	Richmond, Best Western Richmond Inn
December 8, 2001	North Vancouver, North Shore Cont. Ed.
January 19, 2002	Coquitlam, Westwood Plateau G&C Club
January 26, 2002	Vancouver, Plaza 500
February 2, 2002	Burnaby, Radisson Hotel Burnaby
February 9, 2002	Delta, Town and Country Inn
February 16, 2002	Abbotsford, The Inn at King's Crossing
February 23, 2002	Langley, IWA Canada
March 2, 2002	Prince George, Coast Inn of the North
March 9, 2002	Vernon, Prestige Inn/Avonlea Conf. Centre
April 6, 2002	Kamloops, U. College of the Cariboo
April 13, 2002	Penticton, Penticton Lakeside Resort
April 20, 2002	Fort St. John, Northern Grand Hotel
April 27, 2002	Williams Lake, Overlander Hotel
May 4, 2002	Victoria, Victoria Conference Centre

to view and explore its links. The sharing stage is important for many reasons. The presenter shows his or her project on a classroom computer or laptop. Questions from the class and/or a short oral synopsis in the target language ensure that the student does indeed know the topic. In a pinch, a student may videotape a computer presentation at home to be shown at school. The emphasis of the sharing is not to learn specifically about the technology (although this positive side effect will occur) but rather to show how different tools can enhance learning and the presentation of results.

With any tool or approach, the key is not to overuse one to the exclusion of others. A well-rounded program includes opportunities to speak, listen, view, respond, read, write, and create. The teacher still oversees instruction and sets parameters in the classroom. However, to appreciate the full potential of integrating technology, we may at times need to step aside—letting go of our control over certain aspects of the teaching and learning—so that students may incorporate and demonstrate what they are already learning on their own. Just as we shift to less steady ground from the safety of our established experience, students who might otherwise not shine in a traditional written or oral presentation may surprise everyone with how effectively they can use technology to enhance their learning.

Wendy Carr teaches Core French and Technology in Coquitlam and second language methodology at UBC and SFU. Her web site for language teachers is www.home.istar.ca/~mmecarr.

Correction:

Notice to teachers who took maternity leave in Manitoba

If you are a teacher who has taken maternity leave(s) from a Manitoba school division prior to August 18, 2000—and you are not currently collecting your Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF) pension—you are now eligible to purchase period(s) of maternity leave as pensionable service.

If interested, you must apply to purchase those leave(s) before July 3, 2002. For a purchase request form, contact:

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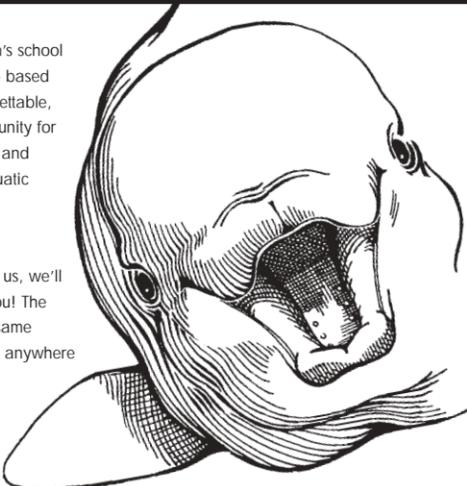
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VOLVO 1993, 850GLT Gold, 100,000 km, sedan, leather, excellent condition, call 604-583-1313, \$15,500 o.b.o.

NOVEMBER

7-10 Calgary. Quality Learning Symposium 2001, presented by the Calgary Board of Education, Fairmont Palliser Hotel. Speakers include Stephen Lewis, Steve Dotto, Bruce Kirkby, David Bouchard, and Roy Henry Vickers. \$395. Contact Calgary Board of Education, 403-777-8420, www.qualitylearning.org/ql2001 or cbeglearning2001@home.com.

JANUARY

17-19 Richmond. B.C. Student Activity Advisors Conference, Working Together To Empower Youth, Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre. \$150: \$100 for Friday only. Contact Deb McColman, debbie@bcasaa.bc.ca, or Karalee Drdul, karalee@bcasaa.bc.ca, www.bcasaa.bc.ca.

24-25 Vancouver. B.C. Alternate Education Association (BCAEA) Conference, Challenge and Change 2002, Sheraton Wall Centre. Keynote is William Glasser on the Origins of Violence. Contact j_pauls@sd34.bc.ca.

31-February 2 Vancouver. The Early Years: Building Family Capacity/ Building Supportive Communities, welcoming and supporting all families with young children. Abstracts deadline June 15, 2001. Contact Interprofessional Continuing Education, 604-822-0054, interprof@cehs.ubc.ca, www.geocities.com/UBCinterprof.

FEBRUARY

14-15 Surrey Speech-Language Conference, Auditory and Language Processing Disorders: Assessment and Intervention, with Gail J. Richard, Ph.D. CCC-SLP, Surrey School District Conference Centre. Contact Carol Westdal, 604 507-5731, Arlene.Sturn_sturn_a@fc.sd36.bc.ca, <http://slpconference.sd36.bc.ca>.

14-16 Vancouver. B.C. Music Educators' Association (BCMEA) Conference, Affirmation 2002, Magee Secondary School. Featuring workshops, sessions, miniconcerts, displays, honour ensembles, and evening concerts in the new Magee Theatre, and keynoters Tim Lautzenheiser and Maestro Bramwell Tovey. Contact Pete Stigings, c/o 6360 Maple Street, Vancouver, BC V6P 5G8, 604-261-6891, f: 604-261-6718, stigings@interchange.ubc.ca, www.bctf.ca/bcmea.

15 Kelowna. Third Annual Interior Mathematics Conference, B.C. Association of Mathematics Teachers (BCAMT) Contact Chris Van Bergeyck, 250-766-2734 318, f: 250-766-0271, cvanberg@sd23.ca.

15 Brackendale (Squamish). Take It to Heart: For the Love of Literacy, presented by the Howe Sound Teacher Librarians' Association and the Howe Sound Teachers'

Association. Keynote Susan Close, Brackendale Secondary School. Contact Beth Miller, PD chair, or Della Halvorsen at 604-892-3056 (HSTA office) or Colin Chafer, president HSTLA 604-892-5261.

21-23 Surrey. B.C. Art Teachers' Association (BCATA) Conference, 2002: Diversity by Design/Mud to Microchips, Enver Creek Secondary School. Contact Wendy Long, longwm@home.com.

MARCH

14-15 Vancouver. Special Education Association (SEA) Conference, Crosscurrents, a conference for regular and special education teachers, teacher assistants, and parents, Westin Bayshore. Keynote Jane Healy on the impact of media and culture on brain development. Contact Madeline Pohlmann, 604-855-9039, f: 604-885-9193, pohlmann@sd46.ca.

4-5 Vancouver. B.C. Business Education Association (BCBEA) Conference, Business at the Speed of Technology, Delta Pinnacle Hotel and off-site labs at Eric Hamber Secondary School and Pitman Business College. Discussions, hands-on workshops, and presentations by industry leaders. Contact Peter Noah, s: 604-713-8278, sf: 604-713-8277, h: 604-541-1025, peter_noah@yahoo.com.

MAY

17-18 Prince George. B.C. Rural Teachers' Association (BCRTA) Conference, Rural Schools: We Value Our Place, University of Northern B.C. Keynote Tom Tiller, of the University of Tromsø, Norway, on the healthy interdependence of communities and schools. Contact Gail Moseley, Box 153, 70 Mile House, BC V0K 2K0, 250-456-7528, sf: 250-395-5198, moseley@bcinternet.net.

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

The BCTF's PD Calendar web site includes these direct links:

Alberta Teachers' Association www.teachers.ab.ca/conference/index.html
 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development ASCD-Conferences www.ascd.org/
 Justice Institute Training—www.jibc.ca
 National School Conference Institute www.nscinet.com
 National Staff Development Council NSDC-Conferences www.nsdcc.org/conference/
 Phi Delta Kappan (PDK) International Conferences www.pdkintl.org/profdev/cphome.htm
 Solution-Focused Counselling workshops by Nancy McConkey—www.solutiontalk.ab.ca
Additions or changes?
E-mail dstagg@bctf.ca

Teaching in a multigrade classroom?

Are you teaching in a multigrade classroom this year? If so, you may be interested in what the B.C. Rural Teachers' Association has to offer. Our association serves teachers in a diversity of teaching situations and locales around the province for whom multigrade classrooms are the norm. Although we call ourselves *rural*, our membership goes well beyond the isolated or one-room schools of B.C. Multigrade classrooms, once the bastion of country schools, are now found in both small and large schools throughout the province. As an association devoted to this type of teaching, we celebrate the social and academic benefits of such a learning environment. Through our list-serve, publications, and annual conference we share ideas, successes, units, and research to help teachers with the important

(and sometimes daunting) tasks of planning, teaching, and managing their own multigrade classrooms.

For many teachers in this province, multigrade classrooms are an expected part of our jobs. If you are an experienced multigrade teacher or new to this type of classroom, you'll benefit by being a member of the B.C. Rural Teachers' PSA. Members receive three to four publications a year, have access to our list-serve, and may attend our annual conference (in Prince George, May 17-18, 2002). Meeting teachers of other multigrade classrooms is a highlight, as well. Membership is just \$20 a year. Contact BCTF (PSA Membership), or our membership chairperson, Sherri Pepin, at e-mail pas@pacifcoast.net to register or by fax at 250-246-4789 or phone 250-246-4774.

— Heather Johnson
 Rural Teachers' PSA

Bella Coola forestry tour surprises teacher



(Top) Seventeen teachers participated in the annual "Festival of Forestry Tour," at Spring Break 2001.

(Above) Crew boat boarded for full-day trip along South Bentinck Arm. (Right) Jim Rodney, professional forester and Bob Strain find a point of interest. (Far right) Interfor worker demonstrates pulley mechanism on site.



by Bob Strain

Until recently, I considered myself an informed, albeit environmentally biased, observer of forestry practices in B.C. I had spent more than 20 years in our logging capital, Prince George, 12 of those years on small acreage in the forest. My father, brothers, and a brother-in-law had worked a good portion of their lives in logging camps. I knew from them that logging companies did try to manage our resources well. I wanted to support the industry's right to make a living. However, the longer I taught, the more research I did, and the more I viewed the mistreatment of our woods as portrayed not just by the environmental movement, but by the media in general, the more I questioned how those companies were carrying out their business.

A visit to several logging sites in the Bella Coola Valley during Spring Break 2001, made me reconsider my values and attitudes. Along with 17 other teachers, I participated in the annual "Festival of Forestry

Tour," sponsored by Forestry Continuing Studies Network, International Forest Products Limited, and the B.C. Forest Service. Our tour was led by congenial professional forester Jim Rodney. Some might infer that our trip was nothing more than a PR campaign by the industry, an attempt to brainwash a captive audience. I would be hard pressed to find examples on the tour to support that idea. Our hosts insisted we "be inquisitive," meet formally and informally with representatives of all stakeholders in the area, and hold back no questions or concerns. Cynics were encouraged to plead their cases. By the end of the tour, few in our group could argue with the practices we observed.

We began our tour in ministry planning offices. We heard from individuals in the extensive and inclusive Land and Resource Management Planning. The Coastal LRMP was days away from being signed. We ate with business people and other members of the community, rode with them in 4 x 4s and a crew boat, talked

with other teachers, met officials from different ministries, and spoke with environmentalists, sawmill and logging camp owners, and workers, First Nations representatives, and politicians from all levels of government. We stomped through logging shows, photographed silviculture/reforestation areas, walked through a watershed restoration slough, toured an island of "culturally modified" trees, and visited a fish hatchery. We experienced many opportunities to discover what was actually going on in the forests around Bella Coola. We based our conclusions on that evidence.

I don't know if the answers to my concerns apply throughout B.C. Perhaps Interfor, at Bella Coola, is an industry leader and its high standards remain to be matched by others in the province. However, I can comment on one or two of my ideas that have changed.

First, I was impressed with the amount of consultation going on among all interested parties. This was most evident in the Land and Coastal Resource Management Plan,

which will provide strategic direction for managing B.C.'s natural resources. There was both praise and criticism for the coastal LRMP. Regardless of how it is finally evaluated, the LRMP process was a significant step forward, since it involved all parties and they did reach consensus before signing off their agreement.

Until our group discussed resource planning, the impression I had received from the media was that environmental groups did not support conservation-based ecosystem approaches to temperate rainforests. I was, therefore, pleasantly surprised to learn of the agreement reached by Greenpeace, the Sierra Club of B.C., the Rainforest Action Network, and the Coastal Rainforest Coalition in the LRMP. The input of those groups regarding forest practices and management systems was taken seriously. They know that commitment toward sustainable forest management is manifest in a variety of forest certification systems. They know that every major B.C. forest company is dedicated to making B.C. a North American leader in certi-

so that they almost blended into the rest of the forest. Instead of being shocked by what I saw, my eyes feasted on landscapes that had regrown into meadows that would support a variety of species and eventually regrow into beautiful, new forests.

At several stops along the way, we examined streams in the midst of logging operations. They had been protected during all phases of the logging operations by the forest companies. Stream after stream showed no signs of erosion to their banks. Water flowed freely below the fallen logs. Teachers must be on the alert to dangerous descriptions in the media that use old pictures to misinform us about damage to the streams.

Environmental and economic discussions also focussed on old-growth forests. Critics of old-growth logging have had limited and misguided definitions of old-growth thrust upon them by the media. Seemingly, the environment would not be protected unless wilderness areas were left intact to preserve 200-year-old trees. A tree might be 200 years old, but it does not take 200 years to replace it or its neighbours. The meaning of old-growth and what to do when a species of any age reaches maturity needs to be reassessed. Our group was in awe over the massive, ancient trees in the forests. However, the argument need not be all or nothing, preservation or destruction. There are ways to harvest old-growth areas while leaving plenty of wilderness areas. We need to respect old growth, but we also need to respect our means of reforestation.

It is important for us to scrutinize the impact of every action in the forests. After all, forestry is the backbone of our economy, and the environment is our number one concern. As teachers, we try in each topic to ensure that each point of view is fairly and thoroughly presented. We do our best to maintain a balance of ideas. When discussing forest values, let us remember to continue to update and improve our understanding and knowledge.

Bob Strain teaches at Dave Kandal Elementary School, Abbotsford.

