

Teacher

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Fair funding for B.C. schools before it's too late



The provincial government is claiming that it is protecting education funding. Over 300 parents, teachers, trustees, support staff workers, and students attended the education funding conference, January 24-25, 2003. The BCTF launched the Caravan Against the Cuts on February 3; one of the first stops was in Bulkley Valley (above) where parents, teachers, and support staff workers provided large postcards for Gordon Campbell and their MLA Dennis MacKay.

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by Nancy Knickerbocker

Despite the many distressing similarities between the education policies of the Harris Tories in Ontario and the B.C. Liberals, it's not inevitable that British Columbia kids will have to suffer through seven years of strife in their schools, according to Ontario education activist Annie Kidder.

"It's not too late to change course, but what is vital is that you learn from the mistakes that were made in Ontario," said Kidder.

She was speaking to about 300 teachers, students, parents, support workers, and trustees at a provincial conference on education funding and the impact of the B.C. Liberals' cuts. Co-sponsored by the B.C. Teachers' Federation, CUPE, and the B.C. Federation of Labour, the conference included representatives from every school district in B.C.

The mother of two, Kidder heads People for Education, an advocacy group that began as an offshoot of the Home and School Association at her children's school and has grown to include 8,000 members throughout Ontario. Because

"hard facts are the best ammunition you've got in this fight," People for Education

"Access to quality public education is the birthright of every child..."

tracked many aspects of the cuts at the classroom level.

"Access to quality public education is the birthright of every child," said Kidder. "The most worrisome effect of the cuts is the growing gap between have and have-not schools, and the new funding formula has made it worse."

She said there has been a 68% increase in schools reporting fundraising for basic supplies and while some schools in wealthy neighbourhoods can raise up to \$200,000 a year, others can barely raise a dime. Schools in the top 10% in terms of fundraising generated as much as the bottom 75%.

Kidder quoted the renowned educator Ursula Franklin, who challenged People for Education activists with this question: "What do you do after you've taken a dim view?" Franklin encouraged them not to indulge in "awfulizing."

"You've got to advocate for something, not just talk about how horrid things are," Kidder said.

She encouraged teachers to defend public education without getting defensive in the face of legitimate critique. "Our government attacked the teachers relentlessly, and it undermined education, so teachers' impulse was to defend the system at all costs. But we all know there are things that need to improve," she said.

Kidder noted that while our education ministries set standards for student achievement and standards for curriculum, there are no standards for the level and kind of services students need. To fill that gap, People for Education recently began a campaign with the slogan "In life there are no guarantees. In education, there should be."

They've printed thousands of postcards calling on Premier Ernie Eves to guarantee basic necessities such as adequate textbooks and supplies, reasonable class sizes, a teacher-librarian in every school, special education services with not more than three months wait, clean facilities in good repair, and so on.

Kidder insisted it is crucial for educators and concerned citizens to advocate most vigorously for the students who are most vulnerable. She described the crisis in special education as "the canary in the coal mine." At present, 40,000 Ontario students with special needs are on wait lists for assessment, and 55% fewer schools have access to the services of a school psychologist.

She suggested that the erosion of our strong, universal, and free public education system is due to "collective amnesia" about the key role of public education as a cornerstone of our democratic tradition. "It's

"We're not only fighting over money for schools; we're fighting over who we are as a province and as a people..."

what made us who we are as Canadians."

In his speech, BCFed President Jim Sinclair echoed Kidder's concerns about the growing disparity of educational

See FAIR FUNDING page 3

STEVE MAYLOR PHOTO

President's message



Neil Worboys

One year ago, the B.C. Liberals rammed through Bills 27, 28, and 29 breaking contracts covering about 150,000 British Columbians: teachers, college instructors, nurses, healthcare workers, social workers, public servants in every sector.

Tens of thousands of teachers hit the street to protest the blow to public education in demonstrations in Vancouver, Victoria and around the province. Why?

Because the Liberals attacked teachers' bargaining rights and went after the contract language that limited class sizes, ensured specialist teachers, and protected the services to students with special needs. They gutted the very provisions that uphold quality of education.

School boards have cut at least \$210 million from our education system. Forty-four public schools closed and more are threatened with closure unless parents, teachers, and community leaders can convince the government to keep election promises to protect education.

Firm limits on class sizes are gone; apparently it's okay to have 37 tech ed students in a single class along with all those power tools. So much for safety and individual attention.

A recent poll shows that 67% of British Columbians believe that learning conditions for students have gotten worse since the Liberals eliminated those provisions from the teachers' collective agreement. But also 40% of Liberal supporters believe that public education has declined in the "New Era." Only 9.5% of Liberals believe learning conditions have improved under this government!

Christy Clark told us that she had not heard of any negative impact from her policies.

That's why we sent school buses throughout the province, stopping at towns and villages along the way. Students, teachers, and parents sent impact statements to the minister about the changes they're seeing.

The quality of education is being damaged and disparity between rich and poor and rural and urban neighbourhoods is deepening.

It is time to hold every MLA accountable for the quality of public education.

Gordon Campbell must resign

I do not accept Premier Campbell's apology. He apologized only because he got caught. He was really only apologizing for being caught. If he hadn't been caught, he would still drive while under the influence of alcohol. He would not have changed his habits.

In his apology, Campbell was not being truthful when he stated to the citizens of British Columbia that it was only a short drive to his hotel. It now has been revealed that it was a distance of at least 20 km. Further, the road is not "paved and straight," as Campbell attested, but rather it is a narrow, twisting, coastal road.

Premier Campbell was misrepresenting the truth when he stated that he drank only three martinis and two to three glasses of wine. An expert lawyer dealing with drunk-driving cases indicated that it would be impossible to have a blood alcohol level of 0.149, almost twice the legal limit, by drinking the amount of alcohol that Campbell says he drank. A toxicology expert stated that if Campbell instantly drank three martinis, even if they were doubles, and then drank three glasses of wine, he would not be drunk enough to have a blood alcohol level of 0.149.

Obviously, Campbell had far more to drink than he has admitted to. Campbell has admitted he made "a terrible, terrible mistake" and committed a "severe misjudgment." "How could I have been so stupid?" Did the Premier also make a "terrible mis-

take" when he closed and downgraded hospitals, schools, forestry, transportation offices, and extended-care facilities? Did he also exhibit "severe misjudgment" and "stupidity" when he sought to host the Olympics and then stated that they would make a profit of \$10 billion?

All of the recent decisions made by Campbell are now brought into question because he has not been truthful and by his own admission has exhibited stupidity and severe misjudgment. Gordon Campbell has shown gross incompetence as Premier.

This incompetence extends to hosting the Olympics. Do not entrust this man who may very easily damage Olympic ideals and taint the Olympic image for years to come.

Rick Foulger (an Olympic supporter), Nelson

Not all exam prep

As a Grade 12 English and English literature teacher, I would like to offer an opinion different from that expressed by Katherine Askew in an article in the Jan./Feb. 2003 *Teacher* entitled, "A teacher responds to a student teacher's questions." In my subject area, at least, the government exam does not in any serious way affect my professional autonomy. I do not "budget every classroom minute" to exam preparation. For most of a semester, I teach exactly as Askew says she teaches; I try to teach well and enjoy myself. In English 12, I devote the last two weeks of the course, or about 10 hours, to exam preparation. In English Literature 12, I spend about 30

hours on the required core works and another seven hours on direct exam prep. There are other things to experience with my students that are every bit as important, and I exercise my autonomy in making those choices.

I have also taught Chemistry 12, Biology 12, and Communications 12, in my teaching career and have never felt I needed to be a slave to an exam. More content-oriented subjects do tend to have the content directed to some extent by an exam, but good teaching prepares students well. A few hours guiding students through exam-taking strategies, guessing likely questions, and dealing with exam anxiety are all that I feel I need to do.

Marlowe Irvine
Surrey

Reduce college responsibility

Mike Lombardi's editorial about the B.C. College of Teachers (*Teacher* Jan./Feb. 2003) fails to mention the expensive embarrassment the College of Teachers has become. Their decision to fight a pointless battle against liberty (aka the rights of students at TWU to choose to live according to some moral standard and become teachers) did more to lower public opinion of the teaching profession than the BCTF's ridiculous initial salary-increase demands (34%!) in the 2001 bargaining process. Get the BCCT out of approving teacher-education programs, and decrease the amount of money teachers have to pay to the college.

Also, I would like to add a correction to my letter in the

Jan./Feb. 2003 issue of *Teacher*. It was supposed to read "homogenized milk is approximately 50% fat by calories, and 2% milk is approximately 35% fat by calories." I wish to provide information for people to make informed decisions, but not to mislead them, so I apologize for my mistake.

Craig Bresett
Langley

Appreciated BCTF presence

I am a teacher in the Lake Washington School District, in Washington State, and when I went to the march at Olympia last week, I heard that representatives from the B.C. Teachers' Federation were there in support. I am a Canadian, from Burnaby, and I was so proud that you were there! I am planning to return to Vancouver in 2004 and am thrilled that I will be working with a union much like the one we have here; that is reassuring. So please pass on my appreciation to your staff!

Jackie Berger
Lake Washington

International Women's Day March 8

The Federal government's Status of Women program is making available quantities of posters, fact sheets, and IWD buttons to interested teachers and schools.

To request material, go to their web site: svcc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/iwd/index_e.html#products

Is your school plugged in?

Is there a teacher at your school who would take on the responsibility to monitor the web? Have the teacher sign up to the BCTF e-alert. The volunteer will receive an e-mail every time something is added to the BCTF web site. The message will contain a brief description of the new information with a direct link to make access easy. The teacher can sign up by going to www.bctf.ca/signup and following the directions to get onto the list and stay informed.

Sign the petition

Sign the petition to return learning conditions to the collective agreement—www.bctf.ca/firmlimits.

LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

A sword hangs over education. To prevent this sword from sinking to the vitals of the whole enterprise of education, builded of the blood and sacrifice of pioneers, will demand the utmost of statesmanlike co-operation between the leadership of school and the leadership of society. This sword that hangs over education is but sign and symbol of the peril that confronts all of the social and cultural enterprises of our common life in this phase of unprecedented depression through which we and the world are passing.

The sword that hangs over education and the other social enterprises of government is the sword of imperative retrenchment forged in the fires of an irrational depression. The peril lies not so much in the existence of the sword as in the way we wield it.

(*The BC Teacher*, March 1933)

50 years ago

Though the teacher is engaged in teaching he has a

greater duty. It is this: unless he has created a taste for study, unless his digressions have illuminated the dark recesses in some young mind, unless he has insisted that his pupils attempt to think and judge for themselves, unless he has given them a fine contempt for clichés and platitudes, for woolly, mushy thinking and ambiguous, muddled expression, unless he has shown them that values are more important than facts, and that imagination and compassion are superior to academic knowledge, unless he has done these things, he has failed.

(*The BC Teacher*, March 1953)

30 years ago

The public is appalled at student unrest. At a time of unparalleled affluence and opportunity, many protest that students are insensitive, indifferent and ungrateful. In the extreme, students are accused of having assaulted middle-class ethics by experimenting with drugs and sex, by committing acts of violence and by damaging property.

The thesis of this article is that student unrest is a manifestation of a societal crisis. Furthermore, it is proposed that this crisis of our society is a crisis of values.

(*The BC Teacher*, March 1973)

10 years ago

How does the province decide what should be spent to operate the province's schools? We are not completely certain how this decision is made. Indications are that the Treasury Board, a group of cabinet ministers, looks at the province's financial situation, and in their judgment decides how much money is needed to operate the school system in the coming year. Actual needs of students are not examined; advice from school districts is not sought. Whether current expenditure levels or real costs are considered is not known and appears doubtful. What the school system is to achieve, what its mandate is, appears to be ignored.

(*Teacher* Newsmagazine, March 1993)

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich



Teacher

Newsmagazine of the B.C. Teachers' Federation
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ISSN 0841-9574

Volume 15
1 Sept./Oct. 2002
2 Nov./Dec. 2002
3 Jan./Feb. 2003
4 March 2003
5 April 2003
6 May/June 2003

Copy Deadline
August 23
October 18
December 18
January 17
March 26
April 25

CALM
Canadian Association of Labour Media
PRINTED IN CANADA BY MITCHELL PRESS LIMITED

Local 1176/IWA 1-5867

CEPA



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FAIR FUNDING from page 1



Students Brad West, Coquitlam and Braeden Cayley, Richmond attended the conference and described the deteriorating conditions they are witnessing in their schools.

opportunity between rich and poor, rural and urban schools. He said the struggle against the Liberal agenda will define us in profound ways.

"We're not only fighting over money for schools; we're fighting over who we are as a province and as a people," Sinclair said. He called on delegates to "take down the barriers between us and put children first."

BCTF President Neil Worboys said he feels "a new awakening of energy on the education scene and a new sense of possibilities, despite the tough reality we're facing."

"When called upon to defend such a worthy cause as our public school system, people throughout B.C. have come together around our public schools and organized in many new ways," he said. "At the core has been our deep commitment to a strong and stable public education system that builds success for every student."

To raise awareness about the impact of cutting more than 2,000 teachers and \$210 million from the B.C. school system, the BCTF launched the Caravan Against the Cuts. Five school buses will travel the province, visiting every school district and collecting impact statements from students, teachers, parents, and other community members. They will deliver the information to Education Minister Christy Clark on the first day of the new legislative session.

Greater Victoria School Board Chair Charley Beresford said that because of chronic underfunding, services in schools have been cut to the bone. "If public education is likened to the skeleton, we've been leaching calcium for so long, we're in danger of breaking something in the course of daily events," she said.

Beresford urged everyone present to "work collectively, and raise your voices together." When trustees, teachers,

parents, and students speak out together, positive change can be the result. For example, she pointed to the hot lunch program that was saved from the chopping block—although for only one year. "I invite everyone in our education community to join us as we fight for ongoing funding," she said.

Indeed, the gathering did inspire common purpose and



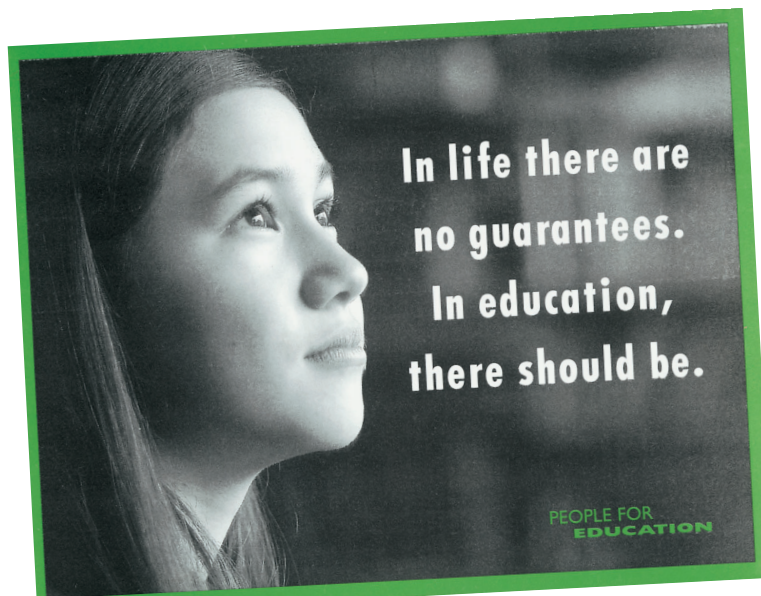
Jim Sinclair, B.C. Federation of Labour, one of the co-sponsors of the conference.

unity as people came together in small groups to strategize around issues specific to their home communities and neighbourhood schools.

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.

Education funding issues in B.C.: bctf.ca/action/cuts/EdFunding

People for Education in Ontario: peopleforeducation.com



Dear Premier Eves,
I believe our kids deserve an education policy that guarantees the following in every school:

- ✓ A full-time principal
- ✓ A secretary
- ✓ A teacher-librarian
- ✓ Adequate textbooks and school supplies for every student in every subject
- ✓ No classes of more than 20 students from kindergarten to grade 3
- ✓ No classes of more than 24 students from grade 4 to 6
- ✓ No classes of more than 30 students from grade 7 to 12
- ✓ Special Education services and programs provided with waits of no more than three months
- ✓ Access to a physical education and a music teacher
- ✓ Sufficient credit courses in every high school to allow students to graduate without leaving their communities
- ✓ Bus services to ensure that no student spends more than 11/2 hours per day on the school bus
- ✓ Facilities available for community use at a reasonable cost
- ✓ Facilities that are clean and in a good state of repair

I urge you to introduce an education policy that guarantees these basic necessities. Do it for our kids. Do it because it's right.
Sincerely,

Name _____
Address _____
Postal Code _____

Premier Ernie Eves
c/o People for Education
P.O. Box 64, Station P
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2S6

PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

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10 New BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 2014 Great Canadian Political Cartoons: 1915 to 1945 by Charles and Cynthia Hou 238 p. ©2002. The years 1915 to 1945 represented a period of transition for Canada, as Britain's power and influence over her former colony declined and Canada's independence and ties to the United States increased. This transition was captured in a unique and often controversial way by some of Canada's finest cartoonists. Cartoons are succinct and to the point. Contains an index and bibliography. Grades 8-12. \$39.95 (LA 2013A—The Art of Decoding Political Cartoons—A Teacher's Guide by Charles and Cynthia Hou, 71 p. \$14.95)

2 Fun Phonics: LA 8076—Consonants, \$14.95, LA 8077—Short Vowels, \$14.95, LA 8078—Long Vowels, \$14.95, LA 8079—Blends and Digraphs, \$14.95 produced by Creative Teaching Press, Inc. 34 p. ©1993. These illustrated resource books, with accompanying CD, include lively collections of poems, chants, songs, and accompanying activities. Engaging themes, colourful imagery, and game-like activities draw the students' attention to the components of spoken and written language. Young learners quickly master basic phonics skills as they sing, dance, and move to the lively songs. Motivating movement games and related hands-on activities reinforce learning. Children make meaningful phonetic associations in the context of familiar, engaging text. Song lyrics can be reproduced to make student copies. K-2

3 LA 8239 Celebrating Families, co-produced by The Critical Thinking Cooperative and B.C. Ministry of Education, 129 p. ©2002. The eight critical thinking challenges in this unit focus on recognizing and valuing the similarities and differences among families. Throughout the unit, students compile and create materials for inclusion in a family memory box. Activities include creating and presenting clues about family members to other students who try to guess the identity of the mystery family member, deciding which of their family memories are the most powerful, exploring the benefits of different-sized families, and planning key aspects of a culminating event to celebrate with their families what they have learned. (ISBN 0-84691-246-3) K-1. \$13.

4 LA 9314 Explorers of Canada by Sonja E. Schild, 71 p. 2002. This book includes worksheets, maps, an evaluation form, an answer key, plus two colour pages called "Explorer Portraits" and "Explorer Ships." It is reproducible and suitable for elementary students, ESL students, home schooling and students with special needs. The pages can be used for teaching, reviewing or randomly at different age levels. The first half of the book teaches students the most important discoveries and achievements of the explorers by using maps, charts and illustrations. The second half of the book reinforces and tests students by using pictures, games, maps and word search puzzles to make it fun. Most of the pages have a section called Brainwork, which requires research by the students and encourages creative thinking and problem solving. Elementary. \$24.95

5 LA 9315 The Aboriginals of the Pacific Northwest by Denny and Neil Hughes, 88 p. ©2002. This fully illustrated activity book, which includes reproducible black line masters and resource sheets, offers reading, writing, drama and art activities for classroom use. The text is information rich and examines historically the shelter, food, transportation and clothing of the coastal First Nations people. The book also examines society, culture and customs of the early Aboriginal people in depth, besides covering the belief systems, potlatches and art of the coastal peoples. The text also examines the tragic demise of the First Nations people after the arrival of European traders and settlers, and it looks sympathetically at First Nations displacement and current land claims. The text aims to develop higher cognitive skills in students, as it addresses ambivalent and complex social issues in an honest and straightforward way. Grades 4-6, \$22.95

6 LA 9561 Build Your Own Programmable Lego® Submersible by Harry Bohm and Vickie Jensen 39 p. ©2001. This illustrated resource book for teachers, librarians and parents outlines how to construct a sea angel auv (autonomous underwater vehicle). Included in the book is a submersible description, how to get started information, and tools and a parts list required to build the project, all instructions on how to build the auv to testing the sea angel plus other information on storage, waterproofing, and a resources section. Recommended by the Ministry of Education. Grades 6 and up. \$11.95

7 LA FS68 Salish Sea : Manuel de l'enseignant, Pêches et Océans Canada, Parcs Canada 108 p. ©2001. C'est un outil d'enseignement innovateur qui vise à transmettre à la prochaine génération de décideurs-nos enfants-divers messages portant sur la conservation des écosystèmes marins, au moyen de la musique. Ce manuel comprend un exemplaire du CD Salish Sea, mettant en vedette l'auteure-compositrice-interprète Holly Arntzen, accompagnée de chorales du district scolaire de Saanich, sur l'île de Vancouver. Ce manuel contient plus de 75 illustrations incluant 10 originaux pleine page qu'on peut imprimer ou utiliser comme acetates. Contient plus de 70 activités correspondants aux trousseaux de ressources intégrées du ministère de l'Éducation de la C.-B. "NEW" Enfants de la maternelle à la 7ième année. \$30.

8 LA 1001 Reading, Writing and Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word by Linda Christensen, 110 p. ©2000. This book is a Rethinking Schools Publication, a Wisconsin non-profit educational publisher of books, booklets, and a quarterly journal on school reform, with a focus on issues of equity and social justice. The author is a veteran inner-city school teacher, and this book captures her vision and dedication to teaching disadvantaged high school students. Her style and stories underscore her belief that teaching literacy can be a genuinely empowering experience. The book is filled with wonderful samples of student writing from her classes. Grades 8-12. \$20.95

9 LA S70 Marine and Aquatic Educators' Guide produced by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada, 49p. ©2001. A 1997 review of existing marine conservation learning resources to determine if any met the key concepts identified as priority educational messages by the department. The results of the review have been summarized in this guide as a service to teachers who are often seeking educational materials related to aquatic conservation. The online guide can be accessed at www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/outreach/maergfinal.pdf and stewardshipcentre.bc.ca by using a key word search. For teachers. \$15.

10 LA 9537 Not So Scary Science produced by Engaging Science, a joint venture of the H.R. Macmillan Space Centre, Science World B.C. and the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre. 34 p. ©2001. In this unit a multiplicity of sensory observations is used to have the teacher delve into a series of activities for the classroom that will have students applying the skills used by biologists to develop an understanding of the natural world. Activities include finding the hidden key to treasure, how tall is that tree and how old is that forest?, plot study, critter corner, and food web drawing. K-7, \$11.

Check out the website for the B.C. Association of Learning Materials and Educational Representatives at www.bcalmr.ca/ for a source for contacts for many curriculum resources and information.

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

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

Notice

BCTF Lesson Aids are primarily intended to provide support for teachers in the development and teaching of units and lessons. They are not "school materials" as described by the February 12, 2002, Representative Assembly.

The RA motion covers the purchase of materials that should be the responsibility of a school district. Those would include materials used by students such as class sets of books, paper, drawing materials or other stationery supplies. Resources such as those provided by the Lesson Aids Service of the BCTF, which are of assistance to teachers in their preparation for teaching are not covered by the motion. We encourage members to continue to share materials, lesson aids, and resources with one another.



Annie Kidder, People for Education, described the problems in Ontario.



Jabulani, a world rhythm youth ensemble, performed for the conference participants and highlighted the talent and dedication of students in our schools.

PETER OWENS PHOTOS

School closures of a different stripe

by Lynne Sinclair

Did anyone notice when the corporate media and Christy Clark changed their collective minds and decided teachers need more time off? It was when the budget cuts began and our campaigns were showing signs of success.

I've spent my lifetime either defending teachers against attacks upon their short work day and their long vacations. Now all of a sudden, some want us to have a four-day week and/or extra time off during the year? All the management proponents of school calendar cuts cite "budget woes" as the rationale. Teachers cite workload and stress. Some claim that the changes are better for children, but the jury's out on that one.

So, if the reason for changing the school calendar is cost savings, what will the suggestions be next year? The three-day week, the three-week spring break? Where does it end? Do we now feel that we cannot afford to offer our children the education they deserve? School calendar arrangements that alter the Canadian tradition of the five-hour day, five-day week, with standard family holidays, are becoming a form of school closure.

Imagine yourself two years from now with that four-day week when one of our noted antiteacher columnists asks, "Why are we paying teachers for a five-day week when they work only four days?" or "Why aren't teachers working a five-day week like everybody else?" All of a sudden, the political climate has returned to normal where teachers are being attacked for their high pay and few working hours. Will we be

able to withstand the heat then, or will our salaries be cut and our hours increased, in spite of the "deal" we make today? Who will remember or care that we added a few minutes to a day in order to get Fridays off?

The Liberal government loves privatization. Is this just another pathway to privatization? We can't afford a public education system, so let's hand it over to the private entrepreneurs. (Have you checked the healthcare system lately?)

In Philadelphia, the public schools were handed over to Edison Schools Inc., a private contractor. Its stock prices plummeted over the summer. Shortly before classes began in the fall, the company sold off textbooks, school supplies, computers, and musical instruments to raise cash. Then some of the company executives moved their offices into schools, until ordered out by the school board. The founder of Edison proposed to school principals that school children could work one hour a day in the school offices, helping the company save 75 full-time clerical salaries!

We need a strong and stable public education system to prevent examples such as the Edison failure and to create the brightest possible future for children. We cannot and must not run our public education system off the backs of our TOC colleagues, support staff colleagues, and working parents. All have suffered from the models that have been developed in Boundary and Abbotsford: in lost jobs, lost work, increased hours, or increased childcare costs.

The BCTF is discussing school-calendar issues, in order to ensure that our members engage in a thoughtful, wide-

ranging, and strategic discussion of the issues. It is tempting to agree to a four-day week because of the cuts to our collective agreement that stripped workload guarantees, but there may be a higher, long-term cost.

Why do we teach? Because we care about students. We must not leap to yet another ill-thought-out government scheme that puts students at risk. Before any school calendar changes, teachers, parents, and members of the community should take the time to consider whether the proposed changes enhance teaching and learning, childhood and family life, and community life, including business.

Recommendations were adopted by the Winter 2002 Representative Assembly. They call for strong opposition to school calendar changes that are driven primarily by budget cuts. In addition, locals and members are asked to ensure the broadest possible input from the community, including people from all socio-economic backgrounds, when discussing school calendar changes. Some of the issues to be discussed are: whether teaching and learning are enhanced, the effect on working parents, the effect on childhood and family life, the effect on professional development and PD days, whether or not colleagues and support staff lose pay or jobs, the implications for teachers' salaries and hours of work, the effect on community services such as policing, the health and safety of both staff and students, and the language of the collective agreement.

Stay tuned, and don't dive before you test the water.

Lynne Sinclair is the acting director of the BCTF's Field Services Division.

What's wrong with commercialization of public education?



A Surrey School Board truck.

SURREY LEADER PHOTO

by Larry Kuehn

The public schools are an integral part of the institutions of democracy. Democracy requires public space, places where debate and discussion inform decision making. And it requires education that prepares people to participate as critical citizens in that public space. If we are to achieve the democratic ideal of equity, there must be a commons, and it must be accessible for all to participate effectively. Public education is an important part of that commons.

The commons is not "free," in the sense of not costing anything. It does cost. However, if it is to be open to all of us, we must pay that price collectively rather than individually. When we all pay through the taxation system, we ensure that ability to pay is not the criterion for ability to play.

Commercialization encloses the commons and puts up fences, with admission only to those who can pay. It privatizes public space. It makes the dollar, not citizenship, the entry point to educational experiences and social and political influence in a democratic society.

Businesses see the schools as good marketing opportunities.

Commercialization subjects public education to trade agreements, such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), currently under negotiation at the World Trade Organization. The result could prohibit a return to an entirely public system.

Why is education being commercialized?

If commercialization privatizes the commons essential to democracy, then why do we see signs of it all around us? It is happening for at least three reasons: desperation, market opportunities, and ideology.

The desperation flows from the cuts in collective funding through the tax system. Parents, teachers, and administrators may be reluctant agents of commercialization, but they see no alternative way to maintain programs that they feel are of value to our students.

Businesses see the schools as good marketing opportunities. Young people significantly influence the spending decisions of families, and many older

students hold part-time jobs that give them significant discretionary income. The large corporations, like Coke and Pepsi, are interested not just in sales today, but in long-term customer loyalty. Whatever products are sold in the school receive an implicit stamp of approval from an institution that is still well respected by many.

Whatever products are sold in the school receive an implicit stamp of approval from an institution that is still well respected by many.

And then there is neo-liberal market ideology. This is a belief that the market should decide. The dollar, rather than the ballot, should determine what is available and to whom. The ideology accepts the reality that markets increase inequality. In fact, it promotes inequality, claiming that society gains when the rich get richer. Neo-liberalism calls for the role of the state to be reduced through cuts in spending to those programs that reduce inequality, such as education and social services. Neo-liberalism has a hold, not just here but also in many other places.

What are some signs of commercialization in schools?

The Commercialization in Education Research Unit at the University of Arizona annually publishes a survey of trends in commercialization (<http://edpolicylab.org>). It identifies a

Surrey also broke new ground for commercialization when it sent home flyers from the school district with advertisements...

number of types of commercialization taking place in education: sponsorships, privatization, fundraising, exclusive agreements, incentive programs, educational materials, electronic marketing, and appropriation of space.

The research unit tracks the amount of each form of commercialization by doing a search of key words in news

A Lesson for all governments

by Doug Willard

The Rozanski Report, which has directed the public's attention to the current state of education funding in Ontario, should be a "heads-up" for all provincial and territorial governments regarding the inevitable results of underfunding education.

The report is more than Rozanski's meeting with nearly 900 people (including teachers, students, parents, and school boards), perusing some 880 submissions, and then writing a readable 107-page report.

It is a collateral-damage report on the effects of long-term depletion of education funding. While many would say the report did not go far enough, none can dispute the focal point of Rozanski's message: The public education system cannot be starved for years and expected to function properly.

An analogy can be made to the maintenance of your home. In the short term, you may think you're saving money by not fixing the roof or the plumbing. But after a while, the damage

caused by years of neglect could force you to rebuild your home entirely. A more responsible owner would take measures to ensure that the home is well maintained for the safety of his/her family. The same applies to our public education system.

We hope the B.C. government will take particular note of Rozanski's message.

The damage resulting from the underfunding of public education is not as easily or readily visible as funding cuts to the healthcare system.

However, the long-term cumulative effects are extremely costly to correct in both human and economic terms.



We hope the B.C. government will take particular note of Rozanski's message. B.C. teachers, school boards, students, and parents are all feeling the impact of government fiscal policies that are creating havoc within the public education system.

The Rozanski report comes on the heels of the Romanow Commission on the future of healthcare. Both reports confirm what Canadians already knew about the effects of chronic underfunding on the two key public services of health and education. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that governments are aware of the repercussions of their decisions and that they take measures to eliminate such shortsighted policies.

Doug Willard is president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

databases in the U.S. This year, it found decreases in news coverage in each area. The conclusion, however, is not that there is a decrease in commercialization, but that it is being normalized. Commercialization in education is so pervasive that it is not being challenged in conflicts that get covered by the news media.

The researchers did add a new category to their study this year. It is what they call "corporate branding"—naming a building after a corporation. This has already been a trend in this province at the post-

The paper pointed out the irony of a public education system running elite private schools internationally to finance public education in B.C.

secondary level, exemplified by the downtown campuses of our universities, where except for the washrooms, every room is named after a corporate donor. At least one school district in B.C.—Surrey—has jumped onto the bandwagon, naming a school theatre the Bell Centre for the Performing Arts in return for sponsorship from the phone company.

Surrey also broke new ground for commercialization when it sent home flyers from the school district with advertisements for Bell Mobility, Playdium, and a martial arts association. The flyer was in a sealed envelope that teachers were instructed to send home with the students.

In accord with neo-liberal ideology, the B.C. provincial government has jumped into a form of commercialization ahead of everyone else. In Bill 34, the B.C. government provided for school districts to create private for-profit companies to sell education services internationally and nationally. This is grand-scale commercialization and privatization.

Among the projects approved by the B.C. government are 20 elite private schools to be run in Japan, Taiwan, and China, all with the aim of making a profit for the school districts. This was noticed even by *The Times Education Supplement*, a prestigious British publication. The paper pointed out the irony of a public education system running elite private schools internationally to finance public education in B.C. One district (West Vancouver) has announced a plan for a school that will charge \$35,000 a year for Grade 11 and 12 education at a B.C. school in Japan.

In a number of places in the U.S., school boards have adopted policies to eliminate junk food from sale in schools...

What can be done?

First, expose what is happening. Much of the commercialization is being carried out by stealth. Exclusive deals are made with Coke or Pepsi, and the contracts are kept secret, supposedly to protect proprietary information from competitors. Students get access

to the details of a UBC exclusive deal through a court action. They discovered that the

Public policy can be changed through bringing attention to an issue.

university was not using as much of the proceeds as claimed to make the university accessible for people with disabilities. Choosing a good cause for the profits is often a way the deals are sold to a reluctant populace. One school trustee in Surrey, in the minority of course, has come up with a proposal for transparency. She called for quarterly public reports from the school board on the funds taken in and expended through commercial activity. This is an initiative worthy of consideration everywhere.

Second, push for changes in public policy. Roll back market intrusion. In a number of places in the U.S., school boards have adopted policies to eliminate junk food from sale in schools and to shut down Channel One, the company that gives schools equipment for letting them compel students to watch programs with commercials aimed at young people. The newly elected school board in Central Okanagan has asked the superintendent to produce a report on the health effects of soft drinks and whether they should be sold in the schools. Public policy can be changed through bringing attention to an issue. Raise policies on commercialization with school boards.

Third, and most important, work for adequate public funding of public education. Very few parents, teachers, or school boards really want to commercialize our public schools. They participate in this form of privatization because

If the same energy now used to raise money for schools through commercialization could be devoted to a campaign for adequate public funding, the pressure on government would be powerful.

they see some other public good, such as extra-curricular activities, computers, or sports equipment, that won't be achieved otherwise. If the same energy now used to raise money for schools through commercialization could be devoted to a campaign for adequate public funding, the pressure on government would be powerful.

Let's not normalize commercialization of our public spaces. Even when we lose a particular battle, the very act of opposing commercialization creates a public debate and thus a public space, a necessary precondition for democracy. Silence is consent. Let's not be silent.

Larry Kuehn is director of the BCTF's Research and Technology Division.

Apprenticeship changes raise concerns

by Anita Chapman

The Federation is concerned about the new model for trades training in B.C. outlined in the Ministry of Advanced Education discussion paper "A New Model for Industry Training in British Columbia."

Driven by business

The new model will be driven by business. This is not an inference from the paper; it is a direct quote. The board governance structure, operating independently of government, would be employer dominated, rather than have a stakeholder balance of employer, labour, and government. That would make B.C. the only jurisdiction in North America where worker representatives do not sit on apprenticeship boards. The \$70 million that government currently spends on trades training will be handed over to the new business-dominated board to spend on training needs it identifies. That amounts to a government subsidy to business.

Trades will be de-skilled

Trades will be de-skilled by the modularization of training and piecemeal credentials for each component of a trade. For example, apprentices will train and receive credentials as forming carpenters or framing carpenters, rather than attain journey-person status as a carpenter. The

partial credentials, which will fall short of the interprovincial Red Seal Certification, will likely not be recognized in other provinces and countries, thus severely limiting the mobility of B.C. workers. Over-specialization may leave workers without mobility outside B.C. but with too much mobility within B.C., chasing a series of short-term jobs.

Transfer costs to students

The cost of education and training costs will be transferred to students from government and industry. Students who take trades training will now have to pay tuition. Students taking trades training are ineligible for student loans, so it will be difficult for young workers to support themselves and their families while continuing their training. Students will be expected to schedule their technical training after discussion with the employer about timing and work priorities. Those factors may compel young workers to leave with partial credentials and enter low-paying jobs.

Less opportunities

Opportunities for students currently in K-12 will diminish. The lack of apprenticeship spaces is not addressed. The discussion paper acknowledges the lack of growth in apprenticeship spaces, the shortages of skilled trades people, and the fact that the average age of people entering apprenticeship programs is 28. The only proposal to address this

issue is having employers "actively engage with parents and the secondary school system to promote and market trades training and career opportunities." The lack of apprenticeship spaces and the downloading of training costs to students will seriously diminish trades-training opportunities for students currently in the K-12 system. This seems at odds with Graduation Program proposals aimed at encouraging more students to go into trades training.

Public/worker safety at risk

Public and worker safety may be put at risk by the erosion of effective enforcement of trades standards. Currently, legislation identifies compulsory trades, i.e., those trades in which only certified journeypersons and registered apprentices may work. Mandatory training for the apprentices in those trades (about half the total number of apprentices) helps ensure public safety. If compulsory trades are de-listed and the new Safety Standards Act weakens safety standards to mesh with the lower qualifications envisioned by modularization, there may be a significant threat to public safety.

Anita Chapman is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division.

For more information, go to www.gov.bc.ca/aved.

Public/private deal a \$90 million disaster

The public/private partnership deal in Maple Ridge, that lost the mayor his job and put district councillors on legal notice will cost taxpayers about \$35 million more than necessary, says an auditor's report released January 14, 2003.

The report, commissioned by the District of Maple Ridge itself, confirms earlier claims made by CUPE BC in an investigative brief called *Secret & Illegal*. It concludes that two years were wasted on a potential partnership, that council made decisions contrary to the advice of consultants, and

that it failed to "fully consider alternative courses of action."

"This is a wake-up call to every municipality in the province," said CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill. "How many other P3s have gone unnoticed? How many millions of dollars have been squandered while schools, hospitals, and courthouses shut down?"

Clearly, the district was so ideologically committed to the P3 concept that it was willing to do virtually anything to push the deal, O'Neill said. Yet the report concludes that the analysis was misleading and not verified, while practical and business

considerations were ignored, including the eventual cost and financing of the deal.

"Where is MLA Ken Stewart?" O'Neill asked. "He praised the deal when he was on council. Yet he hasn't said a single word. I challenge him to come forward and admit that this was a terribly costly mistake."

"Where is the Canadian Taxpayers Federation on this one? They are quick to jump on other boondoggles, why not this one?" O'Neill asked.

CUPE will keep a watchful eye on all future P3s, he said, calling on others to be vigilant as well. Source: www.cupe.bc.ca

BCTF supports Washington teachers



A delegation of BCTF Executive Members attend a march and rally in Olympia, Washington to support our colleagues. The Washington Education Association teachers were protesting the government's failure to fulfill its commitment, approved by a referendum, to reduce class sizes and provide cost of living increases to teachers.

Affiliation



Letters to the affiliation task force

The BCTF web site has letters from members and responses from the Task Force on Affiliation with Labour. Here are some excerpts:

I feel very strongly against joining other, non-professional groups, such as trade unions... We are professionals, albeit, government employees. Let's make our stand as professional caregivers—join up with doctors, nurses, social workers and maintain our status as being here for the people of our province. Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Thank you very much for your letter.

If the BCTF does affiliate with the B.C. Federation of Labour, we will be joining up with exactly the "professionals" to whom you refer. The B.C. Nurses' Union is a full-fledged member of the BCFed, social workers, as members of B.C. Government Employees' Union, are members of the BCFed, college instructors are members of the BCFed through the College Institute Educators' Association, journalists, through the CEP, are members of the BCFed, and, in fact, a number of lawyers, through their places of employment, are members.

Where was the BCFed when we had our one-day strike this year? Why did they not support shutting down the province for a general strike?

Where was the BCFed when we were on strike last year? I was at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver listening to, among other speakers, Jim Sinclair, the president of the B.C. Federation of Labour. I know that local labour leaders around the province were in attendance at events sponsored in Prince George, Kelowna, Cranbrook, etc.

To deal with the question of a general strike... The B.C. Federation of Labour is in a real sense a coalition of labour unions in the province. It has no powers of compulsion over the member unions.

As members of the BCFed, are we in the BCTF/locals then susceptible to be picketed by BCFed members should they have a contract dispute with their employers? I have always respected the picket lines set up by CUPE, and will continue to do so, but I fear that other affiliated unions may use the schools for their sole purposes.

Other unions (except, obviously CUPE) will not picket our schools. It's called secondary picketing, and it's illegal under the B.C. Labour Code. In fact, the BCFed has no power to dictate the actions of

affiliates, so we could not be part of a general strike or other movement unless our own decision-making structures voted to do so, as is the case now.

I am absolutely opposed to the BCTF's joining the B.C. Federation of Labour. In my opinion, the BCTF needs to maintain its independence, and teachers are best suited to deal with educational issues. I don't wish to drag students and schools into non-educational issues. No, to affiliation.

Like you, I believe that teachers are indeed best suited to deal with educational issues. We live education, we breathe education, and we sleep education. For that very reason, it is essential that, if we are to slow down this government's agenda of defunding public education, we must get our collective perceptions of the problems facing public schools out to the largest group of supporters of public education in B.C.: the working men, women, and families of the BCFed. We cannot do that while remaining at arms length from labour.

The full text of all the letters can be read on the BCTF web site at bcf.ca/about/affiliation/letterstof.html.

Opposed to another vote

Recently, posters advocating affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour have sprung up in my staffroom. Most of the teachers who were around when this proposal was voted down last time are still here, but it would seem that perhaps the BCTF leadership is not prepared to accept the expressed will of the members. It would seem we are to be "educated" until we vote "correctly." I don't expect to see any BCTF posters giving reasons for not affiliating, so I'll provide some here.

Back in 1987-88, I was on my district bargaining team and took great pride in, among other things, pushing though language for mandatory membership. Soon after, a big-hearted colleague down the hall quit her job because her religious convictions made her feel she couldn't be associated with an organization that actively supported abortion. All of a sudden I didn't feel quite so proud. Later, I attended the Representative Assembly where the organization backed away from the abortion issue so quietly that the reporters sitting at the table next to me didn't notice.

Although I almost always agree with the political and social positions taken by our Federation, I've never seen any real evidence that our public support of these positions has made any positive impact. I have, however, seen much

evidence, both personally and in the media, that our forays into the political arena garner us a great deal of negative publicity.

I strongly encourage any teacher who wishes to be politically active to do so; join a political party or special-interest group and pursue your convictions with a passion. I do. Our Federation, however, is not the appropriate forum for such activity. Like any large sample of people, the teachers of this province hold a broad cross-section of political opinions and social values. Sit down in any staffroom and this becomes obvious. To hijack the machinery of our Federation in support of any one particular view is therefore inappropriate.

The nature of our profession makes it particularly important that we not advocate political or social positions. We are entrusted with people's impressionable children behind closed doors for hours a day. I believe most parents are uncomfortable with the thought that their children's teachers might be pushing their personal views in the classroom. Our Federation's public advocacy of political positions only enhances this fear and damages our credibility.

Should we join the B.C. Federation of Labour? I say no. Not because I'm opposed to the BCFed, but because I believe such a move will do our profession more harm than good.

Walter van der Kamp,
Burns Lake

Editor's note: The decision to hold a vote on affiliation was made by the delegates to the 2002 AGM.

Convinced to vote yes

When I first heard that we were going to take another vote on whether or not to affiliate with the BCFed, I was of the opinion that we had already had that discussion and had decided not to join. In the past few weeks, I have been following the discussion in the PGDTA folder and reading the propaganda from the BCTF. It has been effective in convincing me that we must now join the Fed. Simply put, I have become convinced that the reasons for joining far outweigh the reasons for not joining.

The reasons for not joining seem to be based on cost, which is negligible, association with the leftist labour movement (they will not be able to dictate to us what we will do—it is a federation and a democracy), and issues of professionalism, which is nonsense, as over 35 professional associations already belong to the Fed.

The reasons for joining, while not compelling, are convincing. I will not repeat all the arguments so eloquently put forward by Sandra Davies in her *Teacher* newsmagazine article.

One, however, bears repeating. Teachers' traditional allies are not speaking out in defence of public education. Trustees, through BCSTA and BCPSEA, parents, through the BCCPAC, and administrators, through the Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, have all meekly agreed to follow the government's agenda. They have bought the argument that there is not enough money for a quality public education system. They have bought the idea that they should be the ones making the educational decisions in our schools. They have bought the idea that they must have the flexibility and choice to force teachers to give up their professional autonomy. We must change their minds. The only way to do that is to find new allies and to work to replace the current government with one that supports our agenda for better working and learning conditions for all teachers and students in B.C.

On February 26, I will be voting to affiliate with the BCFed.

Phil Nellis, Prince George

EC recommends AGM review affiliation decision

Many people have asked how the decision after three years will be made. The executive has adopted this recommendation to the AGM:

That the Executive Committee recommend to the AGM:

That, subject to a successful member vote to affiliate to the B.C. Federation of Labour for a three-year trial period, a decision on whether or not to continue that affiliation following the trial period will be made by the 2006 Annual General Meeting.

Once a decision to join the B.C. Federation of Labour has been made by a vote of all members, the BCTF will become organizationally involved in the B.C. Federation of Labour and the leadership will report regularly to members on the work we are doing in the labour movement. A vote to continue or not continue our membership at the end of the trial period should be made by the Annual General Meeting. This is the appropriate body to make such a decision. Delegates to the AGM are representing their locals and members have considerable input into the positions that their delegates take at AGMs. It is likely that in three years a decision on our continued membership will not be a controversial one. If it ended up being an issue of controversy, the 2006 AGM could decide to put the matter to another member vote.

Health & Safety

A noisy noise annoys an oyster and other health & safety facts every teacher should know

by Maureen L. MacDonald

Wash your hands

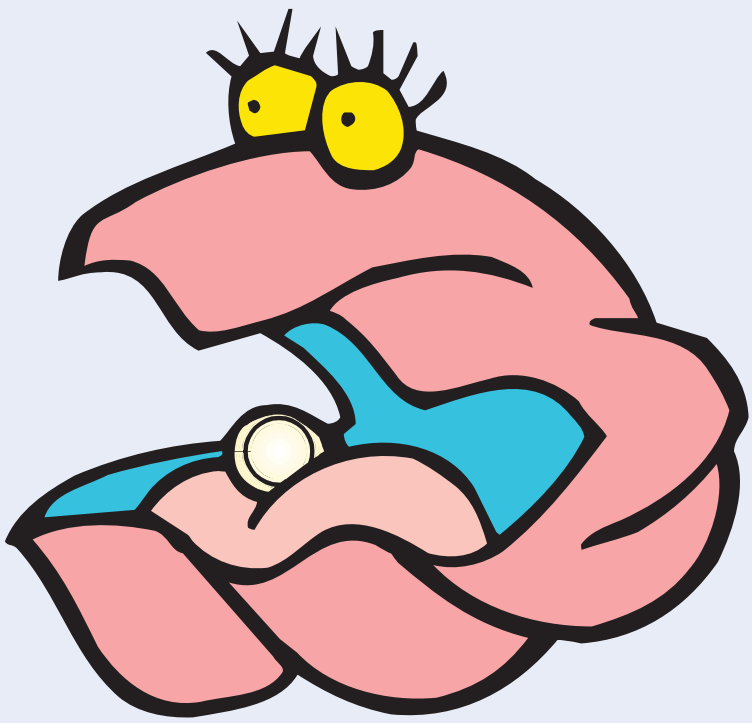
(I asked for this heading to be done in bright flashing lights with screaming sirens, but you see how it turned out. So pretend.) *Water, soap, and friction* can break the cycle of virus transmission. Every time you pick up a book that a student has sneezed on or use a keyboard shared by others or blow your nose or use the washroom or touch a doorknob or a railing, wash up for at least 30 seconds. We teach children to sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* or *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* all the way through while washing hands. Grownups, choose your own 30-second ditty! If you are fortunate enough to have a sink in your classroom, give a cheer. You will probably have fewer colds and other ailments caused by viruses than your colleagues in sinkless rooms.

Drink lots of water

Staying well-hydrated helps the immune system function optimally and eliminate viruses. It helps your speaking and singing voice stay in good shape, too. Better than tea or coffee. Keep water handy.

Take care of your voice

"A noisy noise annoys an oyster," said the sign in my classroom. Instead of raising my voice to be heard over a din, I pointed to that phrase, rested my lovely golden vocal folds, and waited for quiet. ("A noisy noise annoys a teacher," my former students were wont to say.) Voice dysfunction is a major cause of lost work time. Music, tech ed, and PE teachers are very susceptible, but many other members also have what my doctor calls "teacher's throat." Is your school too noisy because of design flaws or structural problems? Is your way of speaking suitable for the size of the room, or the playground? Your worksite Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee will consider your concerns and make recommendations. (If you don't have a JOH&S committee at your school, contact your local president for advice on how to meet the WCB requirements.) Maybe acoustical tiles or structural modifications are needed. If warranted, a voice amplification device may be provided for you. File a "Worker's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease to



Employer" (WCB Form 6A), and send the WCB an "Application for Compensation and Report of Injury or Occupational Disease" (WCB Form 6). See your doctor. And if you get laryngitis, know that whispering is worse for your vocal folds than normal speech. Whispering strains them more than yelling! Don't take chances with your voice.

Locate, and learn, emergency procedures

Each school board is required by law to have several safety procedures in place at each worksite. Where and what is the fire-safety plan? The violence-prevention plan? The emergency preparedness plans for fires, earthquakes, bombs, intruders? The working-alone plan? The inspection schedule and procedures? Are they up-to-date? Have you been trained in what to do to ensure your personal safety and the safety of others if there is an intruder? What is the secret code phrase for a school lockdown? Is that phrase district-wide? What is the district's restraint policy if students are fighting? Where are the critical-incident report forms? Who follows through when something goes wrong? Once again, your JOH&S committee should be on the alert to make sure that all staff members have the information.

Don't use your sick days for occupational diseases or on-the-job injuries

If you catch measles, mumps, ringworm, chicken pox, Norwalk-like virus, or any of a long list of recognized occupational diseases at school, you must file a WCB claim. Ask your local president or health and safety rep for the list of compensable diseases. Of course, injuries at work are also compensable. You may have to use your sick leave at first, but when your WCB claim is accepted, look for reinstatement of sick days.

Too much on your mind to remember all of the above? Go wash your hands!

Maureen L. MacDonald is a BCTF health and safety officer.

Correction: The article "Safety is your business—Know your rights!" in the Jan./Feb. 2003 issue of *Teacher* contained a section called "Too cold for comfort." It stated that the outdoor temperature was 14 degrees Celsius. Of course, that should have read minus 14 degrees Celsius.

How to file for WCB compensation

1. Under Section 53 of the Workers Compensation Act, a worker must report an injury or occupational disease as soon as possible to the employer.
2. The report form for an injury or occupational disease can be a locally developed form supplied by the employer, or it can be the Workers' Compensation Board form entitled *Worker's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease to Employer Form 6A*.
3. When you file the report of injury to your employer, you should also file the WCB form called *Application for Compensation and Report of Injury or Occupational Disease Form 6*, which is sent directly to the Workers' Compensation Board. The address and fax numbers are on the second page of the form.
4. It is the employer's responsibility to file an *Employer's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease Form 7* to the WCB within three days of your report. It is illegal for an employer to suppress a claim for compensation. The employer may not agree with the teacher, but the employer must forward the Form 7 to the WCB right away.
5. When you make an appointment with your doctor, say in advance that your visit is related to a WCB claim, and make sure your doctor files the *Physician's Report Form 8/11* to WCB.
6. If you have any trouble finding the right forms or you need help with the process, please contact your local president.

— George Taylor

If you would like your name to be added to the BCTF occupational health and safety e-mail list, contact Peggy Wilson, pwilson@bctf.ca or Whitney Burgess wburgess@bctf.ca.

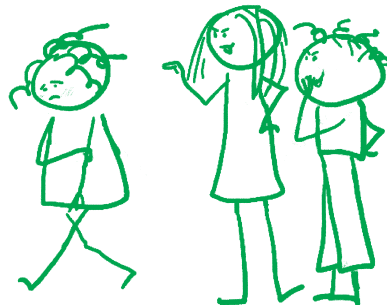
BCTF and SafeTeen: An antiviolence alliance

by Nancy Hinds

Excellent educational programs come and go. Some disappear with the exit of their creators. SafeTeen, the highly regarded antiviolence program for teens, is not going to be one of those.

Following 20 years of success, SafeTeen in partnership with the B.C. Teachers' Federation, is growing its outreach capacity by providing local district-wide training of trainers for teachers and teacher counsellors. Participants in the trainings are learning the skills to teach youth in their own schools and school districts. The initiative builds on the provincial partnership begun in February 2001 with BCTF SafeTeen associates trained to provide BCTF/SafeTeen awareness workshops to secondary school staffs, a professional development service offered through the Federation's Training Department.

Nanaimo and Vernon districts and locals, and a few surrounding districts, participated in the training-of-trainers sessions last fall. Each held a six-day intensive training-of-trainers funded by a Federation grant and district funds. Forty B.C. teachers are now trained to deliver the SafeTeen: Powerful Alternatives to Violence skills to the youth in their own schools and school districts. Approximately 500 Grade 7–12 students received the skills during the process of the two trainings.



It was no surprise, therefore, when the B.C. government's task force on safe schools rolled into town last December, teachers and teens came out in full force to applaud SafeTeen and its approach to teaching assertiveness and relationship skills to young people. In Nanaimo,

Karen Proctor and her Nanaimo District Secondary School teen facilitators wowed the exhausted MLAs at the end of a



very tiring day that started at 5 a.m. by showing them how the training had changed their attitudes. Bruce Laurie, Burns Lake, also pushed hard to get help in getting SafeTeen in the north. At the provincial Safe School District Contacts' meeting, the task force members summarized what they had heard from the communities they had visited and mentioned SafeTeen, Effective Behavior Support, and Focus on Bullying as the outstanding B.C. programs to date.

The recent local training events are contributing to SafeTeen's accessibility and future viability by handing off the skills to skilled teacher trainers so that they can, in turn, ripple the training out to more youth. Anita Roberts and Dave Hatfield, of SafeTeen, trained female and male cohort groups respectively. Christine Balfour, Vernon, writes: "We spent six full days learning about the program, studying the process, speaking the language, practising the skills, and, most important, examining our own ways of being...the program is delivered 'live' with youth. It is a powerful method, honed over many years, and delivered with passion and pride. Over the course of six days, we share stories, philosophies, meals, and, in some cases, tears... We possess the ability to deliver a program that teaches girls to 'find their power and speak their truth,' a program that encourages guys to 'break the code' and find themselves, a program that delves into issues of violence (male/female, male/male, female/female), sexual harassment, and homophobia."

One of her fellow facilitators adds, "It has been the best professional development I have ever experienced."

The Vernon teachers who were trained are now working toward implementing a local program, SafeTeens Assertiveness Training (STAT), into their schools. They make presentations to district staff and parents prior to moving to the classroom where the program will make its biggest impact.

In Powell River, trained SafeTeen facilitator Iris Kramer-Clarke remarks, "My first group was totally awesome. The girls loved it, and the program got a glowing report." Jessie Kerr-Halls and Robert Dionne, BCTF/SafeTeen associates and local trainers, report that they have co-led a number of sessions with youth in their school district with huge success.



Research on effective teen violence-prevention programs supports skill development and youth leadership as pivotal. SafeTeen incorporates both, as trained teachers empower teens all across B.C., school by school, district by district, to take charge of their lives and prevent violence.

Nancy Hinds is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division (Training).

For information on BCTF/SafeTeen awareness workshops for secondary school staffs, contact Nancy Hinds at 604-871-1840 or nhinds@bctf.ca; for information on SafeTeen regional and local training's contact Nancy Hinds or Anita Roberts at 604-255-5147 or safeteen@telus.net.



Girls in Vernon's BCTF/SafeTeen training-of-trainers workshop practise their assertion skills that build positive, healthy relationships.

Whose standards? Whose values?

by Rhonda Philpott

As a teacher interested in human/children's rights, antiracism, and multicultural and environmental education, I was excited about the most recent curriculum trend, "performance standards for social responsibility." I eagerly embraced the curriculum and began adapting ideas in my classroom. What a great concept: have students learn about rights and responsibilities and begin shaping a more socially aware generation of children.

But the more I studied and reflected, the more I realized that I had some serious concerns about the new government trend. What are the standards all about? What are the objectives and intentions supporting them? And most nagging for me, how can we measure qualities such as caring, compassion, and respect? Why do we feel compelled to always measure?

Whose standards are they? Do the standards reflect the cultural diversity in our schools? Do we not already come to school with a sense of identity shaped by our cultural and family values and histories? Do the standards of performance reflect those values, or are we influencing the identities of the students we teach by setting social standards to which they must aspire? And if we do measure such qualities and behaviours, I wonder if they might become neatly packaged skills that are covered briefly and then pushed aside for the "real three Rs." Isn't becoming a socially aware and responsible person a lifelong learning that is woven throughout daily living? Isn't it an ongoing part of discourses and dialogues with friends, family, and colleagues rather than a measurable skill? Is the goal of such a curriculum to encourage dialogue or simply to strengthen the brotherhood of authoritative discourse? In my mind, one has possibilities for

creative solutions to our current problems; whereas the other simply reinforces a status quo that repeats a stagnant cycle.

By measuring social responsibility, are we moving toward our goal of creating a peaceful, conscientious, caring society, or are we moving away? Is it possible that through the accountability compulsion to rate and measure skills and behaviours, more competition and self-centredness are encouraged? If our system is all about *making the grade*, then who's to say that the students won't simply learn to *play the game*? If we set up a system of "rating," then those who truly want to excel might simply *act out* the appropriate behaviours to obtain the highest rating but never truly *live out* a socially conscious life. Do we want children to simply play the game, or do we want them to intrinsically feel compelled to embrace a socially conscious way of life? How can we create schools centred in care within a system

based on competition and attaining the grade? And have we agreed that creating these standards and measuring our performance is what we hope for in creating educational and societal transformation?

I question our abilities or even our motivations for setting and evaluating behaviours and values of family life. In a recent course in dispute resolution, the discussion surrounding values made explicit that values are not negotiable. Setting the standard for values outside the school confirms that we are continuing to promote an authoritative concept of education and that we really haven't made much progress in our educational systems.

Is it so necessary to have common shared values? Is it desirable? Can we not explore social responsibility without prescribing standards of measurement? Historian Michael Ignatieff suggests a possibility:

"The precondition for order in a liberal society is an act of the

imagination, *not* a moral consensus or shared values, but the capacity to understand a moral world different from our own. We may be different, but we can imagine what it would be like to *be each other*."

Perhaps our next step is to work together to explore further and expand our understanding of what it means to be socially responsible. We in education (especially those making the decisions at the top levels of government) need to look at the implications of our privileged and trusted positions. Having critically examined our privilege, we then need to open the floor to a variety of voices to expand the exploration and help us understand social responsibility from a variety of perspectives. And finally if compelled to do so, we teachers need to voice our concerns...for whose voice speaks for us if it is not our own?

Rhonda Philpott teaches at Aldergrove Elementary School, Langley.

Teacher leadership and reflection

by Mark Lueke

"If we want the world to be different, our first act needs to be reclaiming time to think."

—Margaret Wheatley

With so many expectations, can educators work together to create innovative plans of action that will bring improvements to our educational system? Educators should be encouraged to go beyond merely coping with educational reform and create time to reflect on how they may participate in its transformation. Michael Fullan, in his book *Change Force, the Sequel*, suggests that hope, above all, gives us the strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem hopeless. If we want the world to change, the reflective process can provide a tool to rediscover hope and trust within ourselves. Margaret Wheatley's idea of "reclaiming time to think" along with honest

discussion with colleagues has allowed many educators to preserve optimism during these turbulent cycles of change.

Reflection, according to Joan Richardson (2002), can be simple, like clearing your head of distractions, thinking deeply about a single topic, communicating with colleagues, or it can be formal, like keeping a journal or portfolio. Richardson suggests that reflection is the belief that the closer we look, the more we can learn about ourselves. She is convinced that at the heart of reflection is the belief that educators possess the knowledge to improve their practice; all they need are opportunities to consider their work.

Reflection becomes more than just thinking; it becomes an empowering tool facilitating personal growth, development, and effectiveness. Reflective thinking is considerably more powerful when connected to a framework. Peter Senge (1999) provides a helpful model. His "Four Cornerstones of Change" are the pillars I lean on in order

to observe, reflect, and learn. The absence of any one of the cornerstones—aspirations, conversation, relationships, and conceptualization—undermines the ability to learn. Understanding how to keep members of a team or an organization positively focussed and working together is critical information to possess as we work toward improving on the status quo. Reflection tests principles, provides purpose, and generates courage.

I believe in the power of reflective thinking because stories with strong moral purpose have positively affected my personal and my professional life. Michael Fullan (1999) suggests that we pursue moral purpose in complex times of change. He sees the teaching of our youth as a great moral act. Moral role models include people or characters from all facets of society, including educators, students, writers, actors, sports figures, and even characters from mythical tales. My "go-to guy" is Father Damien (Neiman, 1980), a Saint from

Belgium, who lived most of his life on the island of Molokai in Hawaii. Father Damien had a strong moral purpose; he followed his heart and helped innumerable lepers by providing comfort and dignity. He planted faith and hope in the minds of his community. History provides challenging moral perspective to which many may aspire. Father Damien demonstrated great leadership, especially as he encountered considerable resistance from his colleagues. He encountered many barriers in life, one of which was a physical obstacle called *Pali*. Pali, a cliff-shaped mountain, separated the sick from the healthy. Father Damien climbed this mountain regularly to encourage the community to help the lepers. He demonstrated fierce determination to do the right thing even when many of his colleagues failed to support him. His effort shows us how the power of belief and strong moral purpose can make change happen. I use this moral anchor as I aspire, converse, form

relationships, and conceptualize change. I would encourage others to reflect on a moral figure to help them overcome their personal Pali so they can sustain their own hope and trust.

If educators are willing to take a purposeful deliberate pause to make use of reflection, they may discover a powerful moral purpose that permits them to reclaim or maintain hope. Meaningful communication and collaboration may allow educators to become more than individuals simply coping with educational change. Roland Barth (2001) suggests that if you want to predict the future, you must create it for yourself. If we want the world to be different, our first act may be to take time to think. If we become more effective reflective thinkers, we may make our schools not just different places, but improved places, to learn for everyone.

Mark Lueke teaches at Dover Bay Secondary School, Nanoose Bay.

Politics in the classroom

by Verena Foxx

Grade 4 students at David Livingstone Elementary School, in Vancouver, are making democratic decisions that affect the daily operation of their classroom. On the first Tuesday of every month, at 2:20 p.m. sharp, the students stop their regular curricular activities and begin important student-led meetings.

In support of their social studies curriculum, the students closely followed the Vancouver civic election. The entire class learned the name of their city's new mayor. They know which political parties were in the running, and they are able to identify several of the newly elected councillors, school trustees, and park commissioners.

During the community civic election, the class simultaneously ran their own campaigns, complete with posters, ballots, and correct voting practices. All 28 students in the class now hold elected

positions. They have one mayor, one deputy mayor, 10 councillors, nine trustees, and seven commissioners.

Job descriptions and decision-making powers of the various groups were collaboratively discussed. The teacher and students together decided that the students could make decisions about certain aspects of their classroom's management. Classroom jobs. Beverages on desks? Coats in cloakroom or on chairs? Computer rules? Classroom furniture? Desk-assignment intervals?

The nine-year-old class mayor and one representative from each of the other groups was given a micro-session on chairing meetings: set an agenda, elect a secretary to record the decisions made, keep speakers in order, and vote to make decisions.

Mayor Bryan Hong runs class council meetings like a pro. Using a PAC gavel to call the 10 councillors to order, he follows the agenda, which has been previously set in consultation

with the teacher. A secretary records the decisions made at the 30-minute meetings, and results are reported to the class before 3 p.m. the day of the meeting.

Hong devised his own way of voting without influence. Councillors must place their heads face down on the table and vote with their right arms high in the air. This mayor allows no peeking.

Decisions made by the councillors to date include:

1. No pop bottles on desks; water bottles only. Pop cans have been mandated to the cloakroom only.
2. Desk assignments to be changed on a monthly basis. Teacher has input on desk assignments.
3. Computer rules—tracking sheet on who uses class computer and for how long.
4. Carpet or no carpet in the classroom? Decision to remove the common area carpet and replace it with a long table for games, art, assignments, etc.

Trustees and commissioners

hold meetings concurrently with the councillors. Their agendas focus on monthly classroom job rotations. The trustees' jobs include posting overdue library notices, compiling home reading lists for assemblies, reporting lost/stolen items, and discussing minor classroom purchases.

The commissioners' duties include emptying the recycling bin, watering the class plant, handing out Scholastic order forms, and finding something special in the playground for the class vase.

After several months of classroom meetings, the class decided to visit City Hall to view the council chambers and to meet some real politicians. To their delight, the mayor's office promised a five-minute welcome that turned into a lively 30-minute exchange between the classroom decision makers and the mayor of Vancouver. Larry Campbell answered questions about his work, invited the class mayor to sit in his chair, signed 28 autographs, and enjoyed a photo session. His deputy mayor,

Jim Green, was in on the fun, inviting students to try out the councillors' comfortable chairs. Mayor Campbell thanked the attentive students for visiting his place of work and told them he would like to be invited to their school to see where they work.

Following that unique experience, Livingstone's Grade 4 students are now more serious than ever about their monthly meetings. They are learning to define issues that are important in their classroom community. They are beginning to engage in discussions with their peers and to find resolutions in a democratic way. They can present several perspectives on an issue. Not only are social studies and personal planning IRP criteria being met, but, more important, the students are proud of their classroom input. They own their decisions.

No pop cans will spill on desks any more. Ever.

Verena Foxx teaches at David Livingstone Elementary School, Vancouver.

Small steps can make a big difference for Aboriginal students

by Cammy Coughlin

By the end of the first day of school, my students know that I am a Mohawk person from the Six Nations of the Grand River territory, in Ontario—and proud of it. Most teachers have their students introduce themselves to their classmates, but I take it a step further and have students share their cultural backgrounds as well. This is just one small way a teacher can show that he/she honours and cares about all students' interesting and diverse backgrounds. During the first week of school, we make classroom rules together, but one rule I insist on is showing respect for one another. I am firm that we do not tease, hurt others' feelings, or say negative comments against others because of their skin colour, background, clothes they wear, food they eat, etc. Every teacher, whatever his/her culture or background, can take this step when starting off the year.

Students probably don't realize that they come to school with stereotypes already in place.

There are many small, subtle ways that teachers can encourage non-racist teachings in their classrooms. Starting your year with letting the students know that you welcome and accept all differences is an easy first step. As an Aboriginal person, I also try to integrate Aboriginal curriculum (through the *Shared Learnings* document, Ministry of Education, 1998) across all subject areas. This can be done in language arts through literature with fables, writings, and readings; through social studies by studying cultures and looking at the contributions of the Aboriginal people to Canadian culture. In science, you can explore the forest plants and see what Aboriginal people used for food and medicines. In visual arts, many Aboriginal artists' work can be discovered and emulated. The list goes on and on, particularly if teachers take a bit of time to see what their districts have to offer in their local curriculum resource centres.

Before I start teaching the unit of the Holocaust in Grade 6 social studies, we spend some time discussing what stereotyping, discrimination, and racism mean. It is amazing what kids will share about their experiences when you have established a safe, caring, learning environment early in the school year. Students usually have no problem telling others what they have heard about Aboriginal people. I had one student tell me, and insist that all Aboriginal people were drunks. He had heard this before and believed it to be true. I asked him if he has ever seen me come to school drunk? He said of course he hadn't, and seemed confused. I reminded him that I am an Aboriginal person, so if all Aboriginal people were drunks, why aren't I? He wasn't sure how to answer. I then asked my students if they have ever seen a drunken person who wasn't Aboriginal. Almost every hand shot up. That discussion helped



to dispel that student's negative stereotype that he had learned earlier in life. In a respectful classroom, students will be honest and feel safe sharing their opinions. In another situation, I gave a scenario that I suspect gets played out, for real, all too often. I asked my students who would be the first choice to be hired for a job, an Aboriginal or a non-Aboriginal person? They all answered the same. The non-Aboriginal person would get the job. Why? Because at 11 years of age children already know (think) that an Aboriginal person is lazy, unreliable, and dirty. As educators, it is up to us to change this mindset that has been ingrained since their early learning years.

Students probably don't realize that they come to school with stereotypes already in place. It is up to us teachers to open up and broaden students' minds to reality. In my class, we talk about other stereotypes such as those against the elderly, women, teenagers, and even animals, such as wolves and bears. We explore the ways children acquire beliefs: through family discussions, overhearing jokes, watching videos, television, movies, media, computer games, and reading literature. Have you ever wondered why so many children perceive Aboriginal people with the stereotypical feathers, head-dress, and tomahawk? Where does this come from when we know that Aboriginal people do not run around looking like this? Just go look in your school or regional library, and it won't take long to find stereotypical pictures and words in alphabet books, Clifford stories, poetry books, etc. Watch the new children's video release of *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*, and you'll see how young children are viewing Aboriginal people today. Part of a teacher's challenge is to find books and learning resources that are culturally relevant and respectful to Aboriginal people. It may take some time, but your efforts will be well worth it for all students.

Some teachers are nervous to teach Aboriginal content. However, a teacher just needs to get in touch with the district's

Aboriginal Education Department, or ask an Aboriginal advocate in the school for assistance in teaching content. They can direct you to the right person, or arrange to have a local Aboriginal person come into your classroom to chat or answer questions. If we expect and hope that our new generation of citizens will grow up being open and accepting of all cultures and differences, then we teachers need to get educated as well.

Why teach Aboriginal content? Today, only a third of British Columbia's Aboriginal students graduate each year. Why aren't they continuing on in school? Ask yourself, are Aboriginal students feeling a sense of belonging? Are they accepted and encouraged? Here are some questions that I have had from new and veteran teachers during conversations and through workshop discussions:

Q: Why bother teaching about Aboriginal people, anyway? Why not teach about Ukrainian people? I'm Irish; why not teach about Irish people?

A: The Aboriginal people were

Aboriginal parents may not feel welcome in the school, and may not partake in school functions (conferences, assemblies, PAC, etc.).

the first people in Canada. Their culture is to be honoured and respected because of the many contributions they have given to Canadian culture. There are huge historical lessons to be learned from before Columbus.

Q: Why don't the Aboriginal parents come into the school? Don't they care about their kids?

A: Not until the late 1980s was the last residential school closed in British Columbia.

Many families have terrible memories of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in many schools around the province and in the country. They were not allowed to speak their language, and the common goal of the "schools" was to make the Aboriginal student more "white"—no language, culture, spirituality, customs, or family ties.

Aboriginal parents care deeply about their children and want them to succeed as much as non-Aboriginal parents do. My mother strongly believed that only through education could Aboriginal people be successful and make a difference in society. (Incidentally, my mother never set foot in my elementary or high school). Aboriginal parents may not feel welcome in the school, and may not partake in school functions (conferences, assemblies, PAC, etc.). Remember that parents can take an active role in their children's school life, at home, rather than in the school setting.

Q: When I talk to my Aboriginal student, Sarah, she never looks me in the eye; she is not showing me respect and acts like she doesn't care what I am saying. Why won't she look at me when I speak to her?

A: In some Aboriginal cultures, children are taught that to make eye contact is to not show respect; therefore they look down or away, to show that they do respect you. Keep in mind, though, that not all Aboriginal families follow this (in my Mohawk home, it was the opposite belief).

Q: Why teach Aboriginal content in elementary school? Isn't the Grade 4 social studies curriculum enough?

A: No, it is not enough. Aboriginal students need to feel, as all students should, that they are unique, special, and valued. However, non-Aboriginal students do not know what it is like to go through life being looked at or treated differently or spoken to unkindly. Racism is alive and well in our society, and we need to begin with our young people to change old attitudes. Honouring Aboriginal culture is simple to do all year long, and it fits nicely into all curricular areas. Making an Aboriginal child feel valued when young will

give him/her the confidence and desire to continue on through graduation. Give Aboriginal students support all the way through, just as we do for our non-Aboriginal students. Don't view them as not being smart enough or capable enough. Don't suggest they take the easy route after high school, but challenge them to achieve their highest goals in their post-secondary life. Believe in them, and they will rise to the challenge.

Q: When will the focus on giving the Aboriginal students more, stop? (In other words, why do Aboriginal students get more funding than non-Aboriginal students?)

A: I guess we can stop the big push when there is parity in graduation rates. We are climbing ever so slowly. Teachers need to get educated themselves so that they know how to best support, understand, and encourage their Aboriginal students.

Those are just some of the questions I get from colleagues and teachers from the Okanagan to the Vancouver Island. We all need to work together to support Aboriginal students in this province, but the teachers are the frontline workers who can make a huge difference for students. Begin with a small unit on antiracism, or read Aboriginal stories at the end of each day. How about having your students share items from their culture? You can teach about the Holocaust or the Japanese internment camps during the Second World War. Do you know any Canadian Aboriginal role models you can share with your students? How about Daphne Odjig (artist), James Bartleman (Canadian Ambassador), Judge Rose Toodick Boyko, Graham Greene (actor), Buffy Sainte-Marie (singer), Brian Trottier (hockey player), Tantoo Cardinal

Making an Aboriginal child feel valued when young will give him/her the confidence and desire to continue on through graduation.

(actress)? For more role models, visit www.ammsa.com, and click on "People of Honor."

I will close with a cute story told by a good friend of mine who is an Aboriginal advocate in an elementary school. She was asking her Grade 3 student what nation he belonged to, and he was confused. He had no idea what she meant. She suggested that when he went home, he ask his parents if he was full or part native, and ask which nation he came from. She asked him to repeat what he was going to ask Mom and Dad. He replied, "I am supposed to go home and ask my parents which one of them is part Dalmatian."

Remember, start with small steps, and aim, every year, to add to those steps. You have the power, ability, and means to make a big difference for our Aboriginal children in the school system. Let's start making a difference today.

Cammy Coughlin teaches at Ellison Elementary School, Central Okanagan, and is a member of the BCTF's Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee.

Counselling for their lives

by Pam Hachey

As an elementary counsellor in a northern district, I looked forward to attending the B.C. School Counsellors' Association (BCSCA) conference in October 2002 in Vancouver. It was my hope to meet and consult with other counsellors from across the province. As is often the case at a conference so packed with valuable speakers, I spent my time listening to many presentations but making few connections with other counsellors. The few I did meet told compelling stories of the stress in their jobs, of limited community resources, and of growing caseloads.

In attempting to learn more about counselling conditions throughout the province, I posed several questions on the BCSCA e-mail list. Responses came from the North Coast, the Kootenays, the Central Interior, and the Lower Mainland.

- As an elementary school counsellor, my days are varied, interesting, and challenging. My schools have populations anywhere from 100 students to 350. My caseload varies throughout the year, but I usually carry about 70 clients. This year, the referrals seem to be for more serious issues, but the community resources are fewer. I deal with cases involving death, trauma, anxiety, bullying, violence, underachievement, family violence, self-mutilation, family separation, behaviour issues of non-compliance, and children who are or have been apprehended for abuse of many forms.

The mental-health support in the communities where I work is severely limited, especially for children and youth. Every counsellor has wait lists for services, sometimes for several months. One school district psychologist who does assessments for funding purposes is available for consultation, as well as another elementary counsellor. The counsellors

from local agencies have made themselves available for debriefing and consultation at a once-a-month meeting. The local doctors will refer children to a pediatrician in a nearby community, but transportation is often a problem for families in poverty or at risk. A reliable vehicle or funding to take a bus is not always available. A child psychiatrist has made visits to the region, but the waiting list is horrendous.

- I am in three communities, with seven schools. I have created half-hour slots and put one kid in each. When they are full, I panic and try to shuffle things around, double kids up, etc. I have some kids that I see on a priority basis and others that I sacrifice for meetings and stuff. I do some class teaching but try to keep that to a minimum.

Parent contact is generally by phone and usually in the evening. I arranged supervision with a local psychotherapist last year. I paid for that with my pro D funds, our Employee Assistance Program, and some of my own money. I have not pursued that again (yet) this year.

- I work 0.8 FTE, and I have two schools, population 620 and 350. The smaller school is designated "inner city" and has a higher caseload. In the past years, I estimate my referral rate at 10% of student population; however the schools designated "inner city" refer at a much higher rate—this year it seems to be close to 20. I try to deal with each concern as presented. I also refer out as much as possible, but in many cases it is not possible due to financial reasons, as well as the long wait lists of mental-health services.

We are "peer-supported" but there is not enough time to do the case consults and debriefing because of very high caseloads. The community mental-health team is also a good support, but also not enough time to meet, discuss, consult. We do it by phone, and tend to play phone

tag. The mental-health team has a consultant psychiatrist, but she is only there on a part-time basis and we don't get to see her much. She has expressed a willingness to join us for one of our local school counsellors' (LSA) meetings, which includes secondary and elementary counsellors.

- I have 13 elementary schools—two are very rural and the others more medium in size. My caseload is probably approaching 90.

I work with two school psychologists and a speech pathologist, and we also have a part-time secretary. I think this is vital and it gives me a classroom converted to an office in my home school. I have one supervising principal (for day-to-day stuff) who is not that accessible as he is so busy, and I also have a board office supervisor for the broader philosophical issues. A group meeting of all 22 area support team staff meet seven times a year.

Pretty well most services are available, but psychiatric services are very limited. We do have an adolescent psychiatric unit here in the hospital. Cuts in services have been affecting the caseload and the nature of cases we encounter. There just seem to be more serious issues and concerns, and there are more referrals of internalizing, anxiety disorder/difficulties of students (refusing school, panic attacks). We tended to get the behaviour/acting out students before; now we get both groups of students.

Teacher morale is low because of colleagues layoffs, contract stripping, class-size increases, special education cuts, overall cuts, and CUPE custodial, secretarial, special ed assistants, childcare worker cuts. Our referral rates are affected because we also support the staff in our schools.

- There is definitely not enough support for students with mental-health issues.

There are very few psychiatric beds available, and they are not available locally. Everything in

the community is wait-listed or time-limited, very brief, service. Seriously disturbed children are sent back to the community to be supported by schools and parents. (Many times, parents have their own issues and find it hard to access service/advocate for their children.) The process requires pediatric consultation, then referral to Children's Hospital for assessment; we currently do not have enough pediatricians.

- I am also an itinerant counsellor in a small school zone. I used to go to seven schools, but we closed two schools last year so I now go to five. We have approximately 1,000 elementary students in our zone. I drive 45 minutes to one school in a community in one direction and 25 miles to another community in the opposite direction. I go to three schools in three separate communities. I go to two schools in our biggest community.

My caseload is between 80 and 100. I have no office time, aside from an hour at the end of the day. Most of my case notes, file updates, forms, etc., get done on Saturday or Sunday.

This year I'm trying hard to maintain a caseload of 70 students, but I am already up to 77. The speech language pathologists in our district maintain a caseload of 40.

We have three zones in our district, and they're all at least an hour-and-a-half drive apart in good driving conditions. We're in the mountains, so our roads are usually closed by blizzards a few times a winter.

There is a full-time elementary counsellor in two of our zones and a 0.8 counsellor in the third. We get to meet two or three times a year. And those are student-services meetings, so we actually get to work and meet together for about two hours on one of those meeting days.

I am fortunate to have the district psychologist only two doors away from me in the board office. The other two

counsellors seldom get to see him. There used to be a clinical group in the community, but I can't attend their meetings as they occur in school hours.

- One counsellor tells of frustration and concern: "The economic realities of life in resource-based communities are not good. The layoffs of the last year have left many families without the resources they need. Cuts to social assistance have increased the stress in families, as help is not readily available. The cries for funds and assistance over Christmas were met by well meaning neighbours, but those supports are not continuously available. Food banks and neighbourhood charities are overwhelmed by the volume of need. When stress in families increases, children often are the hapless victims. Increased substance abuse, crime, and violence take a terrible toll in our classrooms and our homes."

Conclusion

The situation would seem very bleak were it not for the dedication of so many caring and compassionate colleagues within the ranks of education. My message in writing this is not to add to the burdens but to recognize the realities of the lives of many of our students and the contributions we make to their lives and to those of our colleagues as we continue to do our daily work. Counsellors and teachers are often a significant factor for students without family support. We are also the support for one another in times of distress and fatigue. A supportive school community encourages a caring atmosphere, a climate of safety and trust, where individuals can belong, be involved, and aspire to be their best. Together we are building tomorrow.

Pam Hachey is an elementary school counsellor in Vanderhoof and a member of the Teacher Neumagazine Advisory Board.

To join the B.C. School Counsellors' Association, visit www.bctf.ca/About/PSA

Book clubs for professional development

by Sheila Miller

How many times have you attended a workshop or a conference or conversed with a colleague and come away with a recommendation about an excellent professional resource? You may actually purchase the resource with the best of intentions to read it. But like many of the other good intentions, it likely takes a backseat to day-to-day planning and classroom management, and the book is relegated to shelf, bedside table, or desk, never to be cracked.

Recognized as a valid form of professional development for some time (Donohue, Van Tassel & Patterson, 1996) professional book clubs offer a structure that encourages reading and professional dialogue about educational issues. Ultimately, professional book clubs enhance classroom practice and thus student achievement. The following describes one model for this form of professional development.

In 1997–98, a group of 14 educators from six elementary schools in Saanich School District accepted an invitation to join a professional book club.

The group committed to meeting once a month from January to May to discuss assigned readings in *Guided Reading, Good First Teaching by All*, by Fountas and Pinell. The participants took turns hosting the study groups at their schools and led the discussions, often using an instructional strategy to facilitate the process. Members benefitted from practising a strategy they might be able to use with students in classrooms, as well as processing the specific readings for that month. To encourage participation and enhance the collegial exchange, a light supper was provided (for those wishing to partake). A school tour was often an enjoyable part of the session, pointing out that teachers appreciate the opportunity to visit other schools and glean ideas from

bulletin-board displays and classrooms. In that initial year, costs of books and dinners were born by individual participants. In feedback at the end of the book club, members indicated they considered it was one of the best forms of professional development.

Since that time, professional book clubs have expanded in the Saanich School District. From the initial 14 members in 1997–98, it grew to 125 elementary, middle, and secondary educators representing 17 schools in 2001–02. Book selections expanded to include up to eight study-group choices. The growth is attributed, in part, to the support of the district's *Educator-as-Researcher* format. That support allows groups of educators to make application and receive some funding to assist with book costs and refreshments. A small amount of release time—a one-time offer—encourages reading or related study or observation related to the book topic.

The professional book clubs employ a variety of reading and discussion formats. Some use *Focused Reading* (Wellman & Lupton, 2001) to direct personal reading. *Save the Last Word* (Vaughn and Estes, 1986) or *The Final Word* (Wellman & Lupton, 2001) are strategies sometimes used for facilitating the group discussion. They provide a structure for all participants to engage fully in the conversation.

Professional book clubs have included related professional endeavors such as demonstration lessons and/or author's visit to the school district. Barrie Bennett, Michelle Borba, Joy Paquin, and Colleen Pollitano have all made personal contact with groups studying their books, enabling a meaningful exchange.

As part of the educator-as-researcher cycle in this district, each book club submits a report outlining the timeline, assigned readings, and key discussion points. Often personal or group reflections serve as a summary for the report. The reflections may include individual

affirmations, new learnings, and plans to apply discussed concepts to classroom practice. "I found ideas that confirmed what I already do and at least five new ideas I would want to establish in any classroom." An interesting innovation last year included oral presentations made to the district's Professional Growth Council. The enthusiasm and feedback from the presentations assured us that professional book clubs will continue and likely expand in Saanich School District.

Sheila Miller is an instructional support teacher, Saanich.





On January 28, 2003, the anniversary of the provincial government stripping learning conditions from the collective agreement, Cowichan teachers, support staff workers, and parents reminded the public on the Island Highway that cuts to education hurt us all.

They were stationed beside and over the highway from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. and found the public very responsive and supportive.

CAROLYN PRELWITZ PHOTOS

Locals assist TOCs in need

by Francis Zeni

Last year's imposed contract has had a detrimental impact on the BCTF's most vulnerable members, the teachers on call. With already inadequate pay, no seniority in many districts, and no benefits to speak of, TOCs across this province now face a significant shortage of work. Brian Bradley's letter (*Teacher*, Nov./Dec. 2002) sufficiently illustrates how recent layoffs have caused an "extreme downward pressure" on TOCs. Bradley is correct when he states that TOCs are the "hidden casualties." Yet there is some good news out there, as TOC committees from across this province have worked hard to illustrate and speak on the plight of the TOC. Local presidents and executives are listening and responding to the crisis facing TOCs. The following three examples describe how TOCs in the Fraser Valley have received much-needed assistance.

Many commented that it was not just the financial support that meant so much, but also the moral support, as TOCs often find themselves isolated from other colleagues.

This attitude toward assistance first came to light at the Metro/Fraser Valley zone meeting this past September. Langley President Sharon von Hollen shared a harrowing story of the poverty facing TOCs. At a recent Langley TOC conference, a TOC had thanked her, with tears in her eyes, for the food provided during the day's session. It had been her only real "adult" food all summer as the single parent's money went

to feeding her children. As stated in the zone meeting summary, "poverty amongst members must be recognized and addressed."

The Langley Teachers' Association immediately responded to the drastic situation facing its TOCs. The LTA executive hosted a "Harvest Table" event just before Thanksgiving. They invited teachers "to drop off their extra garden harvest items and other food items to be shared with families of TOCs, laid-off and under-employed teachers." At Christmas, the LTA also held a "Winter Break" party for them. A potluck dinner for the event was provided by the contract teachers. TOCs and their families left with gifts for the children and turkey vouchers donated by a local business. Many commented that it was not just the financial support that meant so much, but also the moral support, as TOCs often find themselves isolated from other colleagues.

President Laurie Lenardon and the Chilliwack Teachers' Association also responded to the difficult times their TOCs were facing. The CTA Executive incorporated TOCs into its campaign plans during the November school-board elections. TOCs most in need were provided with lunch and an honorarium in exchange for help with a call-out to promote pro-education candidates. The extra spending money was greatly appreciated by TOCs who had worked only a few days a month throughout the fall. In terms of members' wellness and moral support, the CTA puts on monthly "First Friday" socials for TOCs and contract teachers alike. The annual TOC Christmas social was of even greater importance, as the need for unity and solidarity becomes more essential during uncertain times.

In Mission, the same attention was given to the TOC crisis, as a flooded call-out list afforded TOCs only a few days a month of

work. President Mark Bradshaw and the Mission Teachers' Union Executive passed a motion not to have its annual Christmas social but to put those funds toward a "TOC Plan of Assistance." The executive decided that the money "would be better spent helping

These acts of compassion have an immediate effect on their members in need. This support will also bring about future activism for the BCTF.

members who have greater need at this time," in light of the job constraints facing TOCs. Another element of the plan was to ask members with contracts to consider donating to a fund for teachers on call. With a great outpouring of generosity from its members, the MTU was able to provide assistance to many TOCs during the holidays by way of a Christmas basket that included gifts and much needed funds for their families. Many were moved to tears by this support and kindness, especially in the face of these difficult and tough times.

The examples from these three locals signify the many creative ideas being implemented throughout the province. The ideas will help other locals respond to the growing needs of their teachers on call. More important, these actions by local executives and their members have shown the essence of the union's benevolence and commitment to social justice for their members. These acts of compassion have an immediate effect on their members in need. This support will also bring about future activism for the BCTF.

Francis Zeni is a TOC in Mission and Chilliwack.

Fair call-out for TOCs

by Patrick Schreck

Changes are needed to the way teachers on call (TOCs) are called out to fill the absence of a contract teacher. TOCs, like contract teachers, should have their opportunities for employment—even a one-day call-out—governed by seniority or some other objective criterion. Their opportunities for employment should not be simply left to the determination of an administrator or another teacher.

In most districts, the practice is for contract teachers to call or select the TOC to fill in for their absence. This is understandably convenient and comforting for the contract teachers during their absences. However, there are serious and negative consequences of the practice. I believe the practice is unprofessional, is contrary to the spirit of the BCTF Code of Ethics, is contrary to trade-union solidarity, compromises TOC workplace rights, and is contrary to BCTF principles of social justice.

Professionalism: TOCs are required to have the same professional qualifications as contract teachers, and they are hired as teachers on that basis and in the same manner. For contract teachers to express a preference among TOCs undermines our professionalism.

BCTF Code of Ethics: Article 5 of the BCTF Code of Ethics makes it inappropriate for members to openly critique the teaching performance and related work of a colleague. Contract teachers rightly expect not have their teaching performance openly ranked or evaluated by their peers. The selection of one TOC over another implies that a contract teacher has evaluated the performance of the TOC. This appears to be contrary to the BCTF Code of Ethics.

Solidarity: Divisions, competition, and power inequalities among the members of any trade union undermine the

effectiveness of the trade union to achieve its goals and bargaining objectives. A system where contract teachers express a preference for TOCs creates an informal employer/employee relationship. In addition, the need for TOCs to "sell themselves" creates competition among TOCs. This also undermines our solidarity and the dignity of our profession.

Workplace rights: Contract teachers have fought for, and rightly demand, due process. In appointments to teaching positions, contract teachers rightly expect a clear objectivity based on seniority. This removes favouritism in a process where teachers' livelihoods are at stake. Transparency, due process, and accountability are great assurances for contract teachers. A call-out is the livelihood of the TOC and, as teachers, TOCs deserve no less. When a contract teacher calls out, selects, or expresses a preference for a TOC, there is no transparency, no accountability, and no due process available to the TOC.

Social justice: In a system where contract teachers select their preferred TOCs, those TOCs that have the time, money, and assertiveness to market themselves receive the most call-outs. This puts those who are less assertive, without transportation, or unable to bear additional childcare costs at a distinct disadvantage and runs counter to the BCTF principles of social justice.

Contract teachers rightly expect to be treated in a way that respects their professionalism, their bargaining strength, their rights, and their sense of fairness. Contract teachers expect this, they have fought for it, and they count on the BCTF and their local to defend it. TOCs deserve the same.

Patrick Schreck is a TOC in Greater Victoria.

Preventing crimes against humanity: Lessons from the Asia Pacific War (1931-1945)

On March 21-22, 2003, a conference on crimes against humanity comes to UBC where scholars, human rights activists, and victims will examine the history of the Asia Pacific War (1931-1945) and relate lessons learned from it to current events. Survivors of the war, including a former sex slave, victims of biological warfare and Hiroshima, will bear witness to these events. Thekla Lit, conference co-chair stated, "World War II is a chapter of forgotten history in Canada. Survivor testimonies will challenge our role as global citizens on how to prevent crimes against humanity." The conference will include panel discussions and workshops including some specially designed for teachers.

The conference is jointly sponsored by the (Canada) Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II in Asia (ALPHA), Canada Asia Pacific Resource Network (CAPRN), Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association Human Rights Committee (JCCA), UBC First Nations House of Learning, UBC Women's Studies and Gender Relations, and UBC International House. The registration fee is \$50, \$20 for students. For more information or to register online, go to www.aplconference.ca or call 604-822-4904.

Le bilinguisme, bouée de sauvetage pour le Canada

Selon Benoit Aubin, journaliste montréalais, c'est grâce au bilinguisme que notre pays survit. Être bilingue, c'est pouvoir communiquer adéquatement dans deux langues. Au Canada, c'est pouvoir utiliser de manière convenable le français et l'anglais. Pour les jeunes, c'est un apprentissage amusant et stimulant qui s'échelonne sur plusieurs années. Pour les moins jeunes, c'est un apprentissage ardu et frustrant entrepris souvent pour des motifs de carrière. Pour la majorité des Canadiens bilingues, le bilinguisme n'est pas un état d'esprit nature ; c'est une habileté qu'ils ont acquise dans la rue, sur les bancs de l'école, dans les cours privés ou à la suite de séjours dans des pays étrangers.

Il y a trente ans, Pierre Élliott Trudeau faisait face à une résistance féroce lorsque son gouvernement a introduit sa politique de bilinguisme. Et encore aujourd'hui, le Canada est loin d'être bilingue. Le Nouveau Brunswick est la seule province officiellement bilingue. Ce statut a permis à Bernard Lord, premier ministre de cette province, de faire adopter une réforme linguistique qui a eu comme effet secondaire une baisse du taux d'assimilation des Acadiens. Quant à Ottawa, la capitale nationale, celle-ci refuse toujours de se reconnaître officiellement bilingue. Et de même pour le Québec où de plus en plus de citoyens parlent les deux langues officielles. En dépit de

ce bilan politique quelque peu décourageant, le changement est dans le vent. C'est un changement au niveau de la société qu'on ressent. On n'a qu'à revoir les statistiques d'élèves inscrits dans les programmes d'immersion pour se rendre compte des progrès du bilinguisme. Rappelez-vous aussi le match de la coupe Grey en novembre dernier lorsqu'on s'attendait à une confrontation de mots et d'idées et peut-être même de gestes ; rien de tel ne s'est produit. Enfin, ce qui est de plus en plus encourageant dans le domaine du bilinguisme canadien, c'est le nombre toujours en hausse d'anglophones qui utilisent le français sans que la situation ne l'oblige. C'est 'cool' aujourd'hui d'être bilingue.

Le bilinguisme est perçu comme un atout culturel, économique et social. Selon Karl Moore, spécialiste en administration à l'université McGill, il y a un surnombre de citoyens canadiens, par rapport à la population du Canada, à la tête d'entreprises internationales. Il cite leur biculturalisme comme qualité intrinsèque qui leur permet de mieux comprendre les différences culturelles en jeu dans le monde de l'économie mondiale.

Comment expliquer le succès du bilinguisme ? Benoit Aubin, dans son article pour la revue *Macleans*, l'attribue en partie au phénomène de la peur, cette émotion issue bien souvent de l'ignorance. Il nous rappelle l'exode des entreprises

anglophones vers Toronto, suite aux élections du parti québécois. Les gens, se sentant victimes d'un mouvement politique, ont fui le Québec et ont fait connaître leur angoisse et leur colère dans leurs provinces d'adoption. Il y a eu des années difficiles pendant lesquelles on a annoncé la mort de Montréal et dénoncé les politiques linguistiques du Québec. Mais, pendant ces années de débats, de querelles et de compromis, les enfants dans toutes les provinces canadiennes s'inscrivaient dans les cours d'immersion et apprenaient une langue seconde. Le résultat est un pays qui devient de plus en plus bilingue.

Félicitez-vous, chers collègues, du rôle que vous avez joué et que vous continuez à jouer dans cet enjeu canadien. Profitez de la semaine de la francophonie qui se célèbre du 9 au 23 mars pour fêter non seulement la francophonie mais aussi le bilinguisme. Il ne reste plus qu'à espérer qu'un jour prochain, on nous demandera de boucler notre ceinture dans un français compréhensible et qu'on jettera par la fenêtre cette misérable cassette !

Synopsis

Bilingualism is one of the forces that has kept Canada together and FFWL members have played a crucial role in helping shape a bilingual society.

— Paule Desgroseilliers

New teachers' conference

Over 150 new teachers and student teachers attended the New Teachers' Conference in Vancouver, January 17-18, 2003. A number of new teachers shared their experiences and views with *Teacher* newsmagazine.

Who influenced you the most in your practicum or first year of teaching?



My mum! As a new teacher, I am fortunate to live with my mother. My mother, Paula Campbell, is also a teacher in North Vancouver, and, needless to say, over the last few years, we have had many dinner-table "meetings" and brainstorming sessions. Paula has helped me to begin my teaching career in countless ways from sharing teaching strategies and lesson ideas, to even making me a lunch on days when I've been overwhelmed.

— Emma Campbell, Sherwood Park Elementary School, North Vancouver



Dr. Gary Sinclair, former professor at UBC, taught me that in the long run you get back what you put in!

— Damien and Clara Liu



My school associate, Vicky Nudds, guided me by modelling what an effective teacher looks like, and she challenged me by giving me the freedom to develop my own style as a teacher. I will always remember her dynamic authoritative presence in the classroom—something I am just starting to develop. Thanks to Vicky, I was well-prepared for the challenges of my first year of teaching.

— Anita Lennox, Mackenzie Secondary School, Mackenzie

Black days for educators

by Marvel Rogers

As 45,000 teachers in British Columbia begin a new term, their worlds in our schools have been turned upside down by a government that legislates, demands, and demoralizes us. The tactics of the government and their informers have been to:

1. strip our contract, which was negotiated using democratic procedures and a legal framework.
2. insult, humiliate, and demoralize staff (principals and senior management included).
3. disgrace staff in the eyes of their colleagues, clients, and students.
4. threaten and humiliate school trustees. (Conform or be replaced—fired!)

Historically governments consulted educators at all levels, embraced their ideas,

and chose pathways based on solid research to drive best practice in education. Our government has lost its way. It would rather spend \$6 billion on the Olympics and give itself up to 45% salary increases than invest in our educational system.

In February 2002, pollsters McIntyre and Mussel found that only 11.6% of respondents believed that educational changes would improve the quality of education in this province. So why has the wrecking ball been taken to our profession?

History has proven that no plan can work without the involvement and respect of the stakeholders. Today, every functioning organization believes in inclusion; yet this government storms on, excluding and demoralizing stakeholders. Its process of rushed reform is more like an ambush, which has led to disruption and confusion.

In stark contrast to B.C.'s black days in education, the Saskatchewan minister of education speaks about cele-

brating excellence, reinforcing shared desires of teachers, administrators, and government to provide every student with high-quality learning opportunities so that students can be successful in education and in life.

How refreshing it is to know that some government officials who do have a north star, a focus, to embrace quality education and to commend the stakeholders—the ones to make the process function.

World Teachers' Day is celebrated in a number of ways around the globe. Does our government know that this is a concept? Canada Post honours teachers with a World Teachers' Day stamp. It pays tribute to teachers, who, with passion and dedication, shape the minds of tomorrow.

Here in B.C., our minister has the worst relationship with the teachers of this province of any minister of education in the past 40 years. This minister misleads

all of us, including the taxpayers of our province, with her constant refrain, "We increased the overall educational budget by \$20 million, even though her statement on CKNW radio (Rafe Mair show, September 3, 2002) was, "Really this funding is to cover increased MSP costs."

She drones about increased funding when our province has a \$200 million funding shortfall. This is a crippling withdrawal of funds, rendering our system dysfunctional on many fronts.

This blackness though, will not last forever. Parents are beginning to sound off, too.

At the beginning of the last century, Tagore, a Nobel poet, wrote, "Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark." Dedicated teachers are Tagore's bird.

Marvel Rogers teaches at James Hill Elementary School, Langley, and is chair of the district's professional development committee.

Salary Indemnity Plan fee for 2003-04

by Dale Lauber and Patti McLaughlin

The Salary Indemnity Plan fee for 2003-04 needs to be increased—after four years of fee decreases.

The Executive Committee, on advice from the Income Security Committee, is making two recommendations to the Annual General Meeting, one regarding the fee for 2003-04 and one regarding consideration for reimbursement from the employer to members for the Salary Indemnity Plan fee.

The recommendation is that the Salary Indemnity Plan fee for 2003-04 be 2.0% of salary. That fee is based on the actual cost of the Salary Indemnity Plan over the past three or four years: 2.0% of salary. There has been a slight increase in the short-term cost and a larger increase in long-term costs. The fee will increase from the current fee of 1.2% of salary, which does not cover the cost of the plan.

Why is the fee increase necessary?

The actual cost of providing disability benefits has been increasing. The Salary Indemnity Plan experience is consistent with disability plans in B.C. and is not unlike teacher disability plans in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In Alberta, the increase in costs, and therefore fees, occurred several years ago, and costs have since stabilized. Teachers in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba are expecting higher fees for disability coverage.

Higher costs are the result of an increase in the number of claims and an increase in the length of claims. For the past three years, the increased cost to the Salary Indemnity Plan has been covered by the use of the Salary Indemnity Fund surplus. It is anticipated that the surplus will be gone by June 30, 2003. As well, the diminished rate of return on investments in the last three years has decreased the income from that source.

The Salary Indemnity Plan was introduced in 1985, and by the late 1980s, the cost of the plan was about 1.4% of salary. The original fee was less than 1.0%, and the plan developed an unfunded liability. In 1991, the fee was increased to 1.6% of salary. It was intended that part of the fee would cover the ongoing cost of providing the disability benefits (1.4%), and the remaining part (0.2%) would pay off the unfunded liability

over a period of time. The extra funding payments, which started in 1992, along with strong investment performance, led to a fund surplus in 1994. The investment returns continued to be strong throughout the 1990s, and the surplus continued to grow. Teachers enjoyed a partial fee holiday from 1997 to 2003 because of the large surplus.

The cost of the plan rose sharply in 1999-2000 to about 2.0% of salary. As the fund investment performance was strong in the late 1990s, the impact of the rising cost was masked by the investment returns. With the surplus now virtually gone because of the higher cost of benefits that started around 1999 and the weak financial markets of the past two years, the fee now required has increased from the recent 1.2% of salary to 2.0% of salary, which is the true cost of the plan.

Some limited research indicates that an insured plan with an insurance company taking all the risk would be priced at 3% to 5% of salary for similar benefits.

In 1999, the Teacher Rehabilitation Program was expanded, and both the plan and members benefitted from the program. The Pilot Rehabilitation Project, from 1993 to 1997, found that the rehabilitation program produced a net saving to the plan. Current plan costs would likely be even greater without the rehabilitation program, which facilitates the return to work of disabled members. The program has also made teachers more aware of the benefits available from the Salary Indemnity Plan and that increased awareness may have contributed to the increase in the number of claims, an experience consistent with the experience in Alberta. In 1995, Alberta introduced a rehablike program, and the number of claims increased but has since stabilized. The 2002 BCTF Annual General Meeting requested a rehabilitation program audit to analyze the service provided by the rehabilitation program. That report will be available by the 2003 AGM.

The Executive Committee did consider a change to the benefit levels provided by the Salary Indemnity Plan but decided not to change the benefit level. An extensive review of the issue and a study on the impact of such a change must be done prior to any change. The co-ordination of disability benefits with earned income when teachers are able to gradually return to work or to maintain some level of work while disabled also needs further study.

The original purposes of the Salary Indemnity Plan were to

provide assistance to our colleagues whose financial well being is threatened by disability, to provide a disability plan that is controlled and managed by teachers, and to provide a disability plan at less cost than an insured plan. BCTF members overwhelmingly adopted the plan in 1985 to share that financial risk when disability strikes. Those purposes are still being met by the plan and are the strengths of the plan.

Though the fee increase may appear to be sudden, it must be remembered that the fee decreases from 1997 to 2001 were just a temporary reduction to use the surplus. BCTF members still need to and do care about their colleagues and support sharing when their colleagues are in need. The Salary Indemnity Plan exemplifies that caring and concern for our fellow teachers.

The second Executive Committee recommendation is that teachers be paid an allowance or bonus, from the employer, that is equivalent to the Salary Indemnity Plan fee. At this time, teachers, through the Salary Indemnity Plan fee, pay the cost of disability insurance. The objective is that each teacher be reimbursed, by the employer, with an allowance or bonus, to compensate for the cost of disability insurance. The teacher would still pay the Salary Indemnity Plan fee directly, so the disability benefits would remain tax-free. This conclusion is supported by an opinion from a tax consultant, Price Waterhouse Cooper. As well, members would retain control and management of the Salary Indemnity Plan, including both disability benefits and the rehabilitation program.

There are at least two ways the recommendation could be implemented. Negotiations at the provincial level could begin soon, with the approval of the AGM, and, if successful, a midcontract modification made to the imposed contract. Alternatively, the AGM may support this as a bargaining objective for the next round of bargaining.

Nurses, healthcare workers, public service workers, and 44 CUPE locals have all bargained for some or all of the costs of disability insurance to be paid by the employer. In Alberta, most teachers are covered for disability insurance, with the employer paying about 70% of the cost. This recommendation supports a reasonable request for a benefit that is provided to many other employees.

Further, if employers are responsible, even indirectly, for some of the costs of disability, they may take greater interest in fostering a healthier school environment and make a greater effort to accommodate disabled teachers' return-to-work plans.

Dale Lauber is director of the BCTF's Income Security Division and Patti McLaughlin is the Salary Indemnity Plan administrator.

1933 AGM

The Hotel Vancouver management has quoted attractive rates for convention delegates. They are as follows:

- Single room and bath, one person—\$2.50
- Single room without bath, one person—\$1.50

Excellent restaurant service is offered as well. The menu prices are: Plate dinners—65¢, 75¢, and \$1.

—The BC Teacher, March 1933

87th Annual General Meeting Agenda

Saturday, March 15

FIRST SESSION

7:00 p.m.

Welcome

First Nations Recognition

Preliminaries

a. Adoption of Chairpersons, Scrutineers, Tellers, Resolutions Committee

b. Adoption of Agenda

c. Adoption of 2002 AGM Minutes

d. Stewardship Report on 2002 AGM

President's Report

Public Affairs

Recommendations 29-32
Resolutions 137-145

8:30 p.m. – Timed Item

Greetings from Jim Sinclair, President, B.C. Federation of Labour

Continuation of Previous Items

9:30 p.m. – Timed Item

Election Statements from Candidates for Table Officer Positions

Call for Nominations

10:00 p.m. Adjourn

Sunday, March 16

SECOND SESSION

9:00 a.m.

Leadership Report

- Presentation on context and progress on Public Education Advocacy Plan
- BCTF Leadership Report

12:30 p.m. – Lunch

THIRD SESSION

2:00 p.m.

Greetings from B.C. School Trustees Association and parent

Doug Willard, CTF president

Recommendation 6

Constitution and By-laws

Recommendations 1-4

Resolution 101

AGM Standing Rules of Order

Recommendations 36-38

Annual General Meeting

Resolution 102

Ombudservice

Resolution 112

Organization of the BCTF

Resolutions 113-116

Unfinished Business

4:15 p.m.

Report of the Executive Director, Ken Novakowski

4:30 p.m.

Election Statements from Candidates for Member-at-Large Positions

Call for Nominations

5:00 p.m. Adjourn

Sunday Evening Social

Monday, March 17

FOURTH SESSION

9:00 a.m.

Guest speaker

Education Policy

Recommendation 8

Resolutions 106-109

Health, Welfare, and Safety of

Teachers

Recommendations 18-21

Ministry for Children and

Families

Recommendation 25

Ministry of Education

Recommendation 26

Professional Development

Resolutions 124-136

Unfinished Business

12:00 p.m.

College of Teachers' Report

Recommendation 7

Resolutions 104-105

12:30 p.m. – Lunch

FIFTH SESSION

2:00 p.m.

Charter for Public Education

presentation by the panel

Political Action

Recommendation 27

Resolutions 121-123

Social Justice

Resolutions 146-149

Teacher Education

Resolution 150

Unfinished Business

4:00 p.m.

Pensions

Resolutions 117-120

Unfinished Business

5:25 p.m.

Final Call for Nominations

5:30 p.m. Adjourn

Tuesday, March 18

SIXTH SESSION

9:00 a.m.

Elections

9:30 a.m.

Bargaining

Resolution 103

Labour Affairs

Recommendations 22-24

Professional Ethics, Rights, and

Standards

Recommendation 28

Strikes and Job Action

Recommendation 33

Teachers on Call

Recommendations 34-35

Affirmative Action

Recommendation 5

Unfinished Business

12:15 p.m.

Questions on Committee Reports

12:30 p.m. – Lunch

SEVENTH SESSION

2:00 p.m.

Finance

Presentation on BCTF Finances

Report of the Financial

Statements

Recommendations 9-17

Resolutions 110-111

Presentations

Unfinished Business

Late Resolutions

New Resolutions

5:15 p.m.

Closing courtesy motion

5:30 p.m. Adjourn

NOTE: Evening sessions will be scheduled if required.

Special resolutions to the AGM

Recommendation 1

That the second paragraph in by-law 8.2, reading "Notwithstanding the provisions of By-laws 1 and 2, Honorary Associate Members are hereby empowered to select voting delegates to represent them in like proportion. Such delegates shall be entitled to vote only on resolutions concerning pensions," be deleted.

Recommendation 3

1. That by-law 8.2 be amended by deleting the following sentence: "Effective July 1, 2001 until decisions of the 2003 Annual General Meeting respecting governance are in place, locals that amalgamated in or after 1996 shall have the same levels of representation as they had in 1996."

Resolution 101—Burnaby Teachers' Association (endorsed by Executive Committee)

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



BCTF president Neil Worboys addresses healthcare workers on January 28, 2003. Workers walked off the job in protest of the government ripping up its collective agreement one year ago. Workers belonging to the HEU are seeing their jobs disappear as the government privatizes healthcare.

PETER OWENS PHOTO

For President



Neil Worboys

Given the nature of the year we have just experienced, it has sometimes been difficult to see signs of hope—but they're there! It's been a challenge but we are making a difference and people are listening. Parents, students and community members throughout B.C. have organized themselves to resist the cuts, save neighbourhood schools and demand proper education funding. The tide of public opinion has turned and people are coming together to tell this government to stop the cuts before it's too late. Our Federation

must continue to be a leader in organizing students, public schools and communities in our struggle for a strong and stable public education system that promotes success for every child.

As we mourn the loss of hard-fought rights we must never lose sight of our main objective to achieve the best learning conditions for students and working conditions for our members. I firmly believe in listening to and involving the members every step of the way. A strong bargaining strategy is built

on the commitment of the membership.

A strong team player, I offer you experience, commitment and proven leadership. I ask for your continued support.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF President (1 yr.), BCTF 1st Vice-President (2 yr.), BCTF Executive Member-at-Large (4), Provincial Negotiating team member, CTF Director (1), BCTF Bargaining Division Staff (4.5), North Coast Agreements/Bargaining Co-ordinator (8), Provincial Agreements/Bargaining Cttee. (8), Provincial

Bargaining Cttee. Chair (4), AGM Delegate (25), Summer Conference Participant and Workshop Presenter (13), Bargaining Council Rep. for Local #80 (Kitimat), Alternate Bargaining Committee Member (Zone 19), LR or Alternate (9). *Local:* President (6), Bargaining Chair and Member (24), Staff Rep. (8), Grievance Cttee. (14), Personnel Cttee. Chair (8), Local Advocacy Committee (2), Interim Council member (5), Negotiator Interim Council (1). *Teaching:* 34 yrs. Secondary and Elementary. B.Sc. & Teacher Training (UBC)

For First Vice-President



Jinny Sims

Together we have developed and implemented a strategic plan to resist the government's attack on our profession and public education. Teachers through locals, networks, and coalitions have played a significant role, and continue to be leaders in their communities.

Our work with parents, unions, community groups and others will help to rebuild strong and healthy communities with a focus on public education. While our strategies may differ from local to local within the BCTF, the common objective of

defending public education and our social safety net remains central. We are not alone. We have allies. We ARE making a difference.

As we advocate for our students and our communities we cannot allow our professional voices to be silenced. Members have been courageous in speaking out and must continue to defend our professional autonomy, our working and learning conditions, and public services. Working with you to take on the challenges I will draw on my strong background in bargaining, pro-d, social justice,

and political campaigns to advocate for our members and students.

These are difficult times but together we can protect our profession and our public education system. I ask for your continued support.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 1st Vice-president (1 yr.), BCTF 2nd Vice-President (2 yr.), BCTF Executive member-at-large (1), CTF alternate (2), CTF delegate (3), Ministry for Children & Families (3), Coalition for Public Education (3), Rehab Expansion (3), CUPE Liaison (2), Social Justice (3), PDAC (3), PSA/PSAC (3), Health & Safety (3), Income Security (3), Finance

Cttee., Pensions, Summer conference workshop presenter/facilitator, Advisory council of local presidents, pension plan training, Bargaining training; AGM delegate (12), LR (5), Bargaining council rep (2). *Local:* Nanaimo President (3), 1st VP (2);, Bargaining cttee. & neg. team (7), Grievance cttee. (6); S/W member & chair (3), ProD cttee. (2), Program Against Racism (2), Staff rep (10), Staff committee chair (5), member (15), Malaspina College partnership cttee. (2), EAC advisory board (4), Co-ordinator for multicultural curriculum (3), Facilitator for conflict resolution, *Teaching:* 24 yrs., English, social studies, counsellor. *Education:* B.Ed, UVic & Manchester, UK.

For Second Vice-President



Irene Lanzinger

Teachers are facing the results of disastrous government policies in education. Those policies have reduced services to students, increased teacher workload, and introduced regressive and excessive "accountability" procedures.

The BCTF has embarked on a long-term political action campaign to counter damaging government actions and to advocate for public education. We have made considerable progress on that campaign in the past year by building a stronger relationship

with parents, trustees, and other supporters of public education. Pressure on the government to increase education funding is mounting. Our challenge is to continue to broaden our support and intensify the pressure on the government.

The next round of bargaining will soon be here. Our bargaining strategy must be grounded in our political action campaign. We need to use this round of bargaining to achieve gains for our members and make progress on our goal of gaining full and free collective

bargaining rights.

It has been a great pleasure to serve teachers this year. I am always impressed by our members' vision, strength, and unfailing commitment to public education. It is our greatest asset as we work to strengthen teachers' rights and improve public education.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 2nd Vice-president (1 yr.), Co-chief Negotiator Bargaining Team (2000-02), Advisory council of local presidents (3), AGM delegate (8), Summer conference (6), Job action planning cttee., LR (1), (alternate) (5). *Local:* President (3), Vice-president (2), Member-at-large (2), Staff rep (2), Bargaining Cttee. (2), Status of Women (2). *Teaching:* Secondary (8 yrs.), Elementary (4). *Education:* B.Sc. (UBC), Teacher Training (UBC), M.Sc (SFU)

For Member-at-Large



Linda Burkholder

I am an independent candidate for Member-at-large. I believe...

The BCTF must be an organization that values every member and is committed to serving them. When we restructure the BCTF, it must be to meet the needs of its members. We must not model this organization's structures and governance upon the decisions of others.

Added to the problems caused by larger class sizes, difficult class compositions, and lack of support for classroom teachers, accountability contracts are

translating into increased workloads for teachers and a focussed attack on teachers' professional autonomy.

We must provide support for teachers in the areas of bargaining and professional development. I believe in full, free collective bargaining. I believe decisions about teachers' professional development belong in the hands of teachers. We must expand bargaining, and preserve and protect professional development.

We have been through tough times recently, but we have been

through tough times before and we have managed to survive, to succeed, and to come back even stronger. Now is not the time to give up or quit. Now is the time to work. I am prepared to work hard to represent and serve the teachers of B.C.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (14 years), Participant at many Bargaining Conferences, Leadership conferences, and Summer Conferences. *Local:* PRSTA President (3.5 yrs), PRSTA Vice-President (5 yrs), PRSTA

Bargaining Chairperson & Local Chief Negotiator (7 yrs), Member of PRSTA Bargaining Team (12 yrs). *Teaching:* Secondary classroom teacher (4 yrs), Elementary teacher-librarian & prep teacher (24 years). *Education:* B.Sc.Ed., University of Texas @ Austin, 1971, Currently working on M.Ed. at the University of Lethbridge.



Jim Gill

The BCTF is facing a government that is determined to privatize education and destroy unions. As a profession and as an organization, we must meaningfully challenge the Liberal agenda and spending priorities.

The provisions stripped from collective agreements, free local collective bargaining, and a properly funded public education system must be restored. Teachers have made some progress toward these goals during the past year. In January 2002, we stood nearly alone as other education

stakeholders succumbed to the Liberal temptation of "greater flexibility." Since then, teachers have built coalitions with parents and unionists and have been instrumental in electing trustees who share our view that education is an investment, not an expense. We must expand and build upon these successes.

Our most recent gains have been built upon the solidarity and commitment of our members. Solidarity has been facilitated by a leadership that has been collaborative, consultative, and

accessible. As we prepare for another round of bargaining, this model of leadership will be essential to developing a bargaining strategy that is responsive to both the needs of members and the bargaining climate.

I am committed to working with you to ensure students learn and teachers work in appropriate educational settings.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* ACLP (3 yrs), LR (2 yrs), Alternate LR (4 yrs), AGM delegate (10 yrs), Summer Conference delegate (6 yrs), Bargaining Conference delegate (2 yrs). *Local:* President (3 yrs), Vice president (2 yrs), Member-at-Large (1 yr), Finance Committee (5 yrs), Co-Chief Negotiator (1 yr), Staff Rep (7 yrs), Staff Committee member (9 yrs). *Teaching:* 34 yrs, secondary Social Studies and English. *Education:* BA (SFU), Teacher Training (SFU)



Murray Helmer

In our efforts to challenge government changes to public education, the balance the Federation once had between its professional and political initiatives has been lost. The more our focus moves away from educating students, the more we alienate the majority of our membership, whose main focus is the classroom.

As working conditions deteriorate and it becomes more difficult for teachers to meet their classroom responsibilities, the Federation must be there with member support. We must provide

the professional strategies to assist teachers with their educational realities, and be seen to be the educational leaders we are.

We must realize that collective bargaining may not yield the results we seek, and consequently must find alternative ways to influence the broader educational community. We must welcome the ideas of our new and younger members; engaging our future leaders in discussions, placing value in their suggestions, incorporating their input into our

plans, and resist conforming to our status quo.

As a Member-At-Large, I will ensure our professional values remain at the forefront while we maintain our political struggles. The message we deliver in support of teachers and students will be strengthened if we are perceived to be the respected professional body we are.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive Committee Member-At-Large (1 yr.), BCTF AGM Delegate (7 yrs.), BCTF TOC Advisory Committee (4 yrs.), BCTF Social Justice Review Steering Committee, BCTF First Nations Education Steering Committee, BCTF Education Finance Work Group. *Local:* President (Cariboo-Chilcotin) (8 yrs.), Vice-President (1 yr.), Bargaining Chair (2 yrs.), CCTA Executive (12 yrs.), Staff Rep (3 yrs.). *Teaching:* 14 years, Intermediate level.

For Member-at-Large



Susan Lambert

"No longer respected...now expected," wrote one teacher recently describing her school's climate. The phrase captures the frustration of many teachers as our professional autonomy is eroded, resources dwindle, and our practice is judged accountable on the basis of narrow, superficial data such as FSA scores.

So what's a union to do? I believe we must determine the motives and understand the consequences of policies shaping public education these days. We must help build communities of informed citizens

who understand the value and role of public education in civil society. And we must find strength in our collective voice.

Public education in B.C. is second to none. Its quality has been built, in large measure, by teachers working through the BCTF. I am proud of our commitment to student learning and to public education. I am proud of the democracy within the BCTF, the broad scope of our union's work, and the ability of the BCTF and its locals to protect the welfare of members.

I will always work to encourage member participation in decision-making, to strengthen our commitment to global social justice and responsibility, and to gain respect for our profession. Our students deserve no less.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (19 yrs), Trainer/facilitator in Namibia (5 sessions) and South Africa (1 session), Staff Rep Trainer (5 yrs), WOW facilitator, Summer Conference Participant and workshop presenter, BCTF OSD/PD Administrative Staff (4 yrs), Federation Appeals

Board (2 yrs). *Local* (Prince Rupert): Staff Rep (4 yrs), S/W Committee (1 yr), Program Against Racism Chair (2 yrs), Communications Officer (2 yrs), Labour Liaison Officer (3 yrs). *Local* (Burnaby): Vice President (1 yr), LR (4 yrs), Leave of Absence Committee (2 yrs), Grade 7 Girls' Conference (1 yr), BTA Scholarship Committee (2 yr), Job Action Committee (1 yr). *Teaching:* 23 years—intermediate teacher, teacher-librarian, learning assistance, gifted education, special needs. *Education:* Hons Engl BA (SFU), PDP (SFU), Teacher-Librarian Diploma (UBC).



Jill McCaffrey

It has been a difficult year for teachers. Education, health, and social service cuts have impacted children, families, and communities in ways never imagined. Our public education system, the cornerstone of a democratic society has been under attack by the Liberal government.

Yet, there have been significant gains. Drawing on membership involvement, guided by a common purpose and thoughtful planning we endorsed a strategic plan for our actions enabling teachers to stand strong against the government agenda.

We hold the moral high ground, but our task is not complete and the challenges substantial. The future requires unity and adherence to our goal of fully funded public education and success for every child. We will need to build and strengthen our ties with parents, labour, coalitions, and other organizations. We must continue to strengthen internal solidarity and enhance membership involvement.

I am an advocate for the rights of teachers and children and am

committed to full and free collective bargaining. As local president I have successfully built membership support and organized an active community coalition and network. These ties have brought together diverse organizations in support of public education and social justice issues.

I offer my passion, energy and enthusiasm. I have an excellent work ethic, organizational strengths and experience as a local president as well as knowledge and skills to build and sustain networks.

EXPERIENCE: *Local:* President (2 yrs), Vice-president (2 yrs), Local Bargaining Committee (6 yrs), Staff Rep (3 yrs), AGM Delegate (5 yrs), Summer Conference (4 yrs). *Teaching:* Middle and secondary both locally and internationally (24 yrs). *Education:* MA, UBC, Home Ec Concentration UBC, PDP SFU, BA Honors SFU.



George Popp

Given what has happened in the past two years of Liberal "government" it is only natural that teachers feel besieged. What is important is how we respond. Do we allow the clock to be turned back, negating a generation of hard-won gains? What do you think?

I say "No!" Our best hope in this struggle is a united and democratic BCTF supporting strong local unions; enabling committed teachers. To maintain the vitality of our Federation and of public education

we need determined members and strong, imaginative leadership, dedicated to democratic principles.

The Federation must apportion its resources wisely to meet the challenges ahead. We ask many things of our Union. To meet members' needs will require intelligent and pragmatic leadership.

As a classroom teacher with a record of dedicated union service, locally and provincially, I feel that I can contribute such leadership. I believe that the teachers of this province have the collective

wisdom and will to tackle the challenges set in our way. The strength of the BCTF *is in its members!* I look forward to working with you and for you on an executive that is dedicated to serving the teachers of British Columbia.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (10 yrs), Summer Conference participant (5 yrs), Professional Development Associate 2 yrs (Secondary School Project), LR (10 yrs), Agenda Committee (rookie!). *Local:* President (2 yrs), Vice-President (5 yrs), Grievance Committee (13 yrs), Bargaining Team (5 yrs), Disputes Chairperson (2 yrs), Liaison Committee Chairperson (4 yrs), Staff Representative (5 yrs), Education Change Committee (4 yrs), Technology Committee (2 yrs), BCSPAC co-ordinator (8 yrs).



Kelly Shields

Teachers' predictions have come true. We are seeing the Liberals dismantle our public education system and the social fabric of our communities. Our Union's existence is being threatened at all levels.

The "heart" of our collective agreements—the working and learning provisions have been decimated. It can't be business as usual as we enter our next round of bargaining.

Members must be integral to our strategy for regaining rights lost through legislation and setting our political agenda. In setting that

agenda we must continue to reach out to our communities.

As a past president of the largest local in the Federation and a current member of the BCTF Judicial Council, I recognize the importance of unity and respect for our differences. We can not pit small locals against large locals. We must work together to advocate for public education and to defeat our common enemies.

Our Federation has vital work to do. We will work through our budget concerns together, while maintaining our union principles.

I have been and will continue to be a tenacious advocate for the four pillars of our union—professional development, social justice, service to members, and bargaining. These are the principles that unite us as British Columbia teachers.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial* (BCTF): Provincial Bargaining Team (2), Judicial Council (3, 3-yr. terms), Local President's Advisory Committee (1), Local Representative (6), AGM delegate (19). *Local* (Surrey Teachers' Assn.): President (3), Acting President (6 mo.), First Vice President (1), Second Vice

President (2), Grievance Officer (1 yr. full time; 2 part-time), Surrey Teachers' Assn. Executive (14), Grievance Committee (13), Political Action and Public Relations Chair (2), Working and Learning Conditions (2), Local Bargaining Committee (1), Staff Rep Assembly Chair (2), Staff Rep (9). *Teaching:* 22 years, Primary, Learning Assistance, Tutorial Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Segregated Special Education Classroom Teacher, District Integration Support Teacher. *Education:* B. Ed. in Special Education, UBC Early Childhood Education diploma, Capilano College.



Kathleen Thomson

Teachers are tired. The government's deliberate agenda to underfund and privatize public education hampers children's learning, yet teachers are expected to do more with far less. The spectre of further cuts, closed schools, and unfair media scrutiny diminishes teachers' optimism. Many members feel insecure about their professional future and disenfranchised from their union.

I am seeking re-election as Member-at-Large because I believe our immediate mandate is to determine what teachers most

need now. The fight to regain lost protections will not be won overnight. Along with proactive work with coalitions, our Federation strategy must involve choosing political campaigns more wisely; resisting overburdening members and locals; and placing greater emphasis on professional support for classroom and specialist teachers.

I am also running because I believe past Federation practices will not always provide solutions to present dilemmas. This means we must examine and change less than

successful bargaining strategies. This means we must encourage different representational views within our internal structures. This means we have to provide a public voice that turns members' distress and detachment into hope and resolve.

I would be honoured to lend my experience, intelligence, and courage to help teachers formulate that hope and that resolve.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive member-at-large (3 yrs.), CTF delegate (3), Staff pension plan

advisory committee (2), Negotiations training; Bargaining conference (2), Summer conference delegate and workshop presenter (6), Chair, Metro West zone council (1), AGM delegate (9). *Local:* President (6), Vice-president (1), Executive committee (7), Grievance panel (2), Staff Rep (5), Negotiations, job action, advocacy committees, etc. Community: Co-chair, Municipal planning/environment committees, SFU senate (2). *Teaching:* Secondary English, French, German (11), SFU TA (2). *Education:* BA, PDP (SFU).



Val Windsor

As a union of professionals, the purposes of the BCTF are clear: to promote the cause of public education, to raise the status of the teaching profession, and to promote the welfare of teachers. Currently, we are fighting to save public education. In doing that, we are raising the status of our profession by advocating for our students. There is, however, another critically important purpose we must serve.

We must find a way to respond to the needs of the teacher in the classroom—a teacher who may

never attend the BCTF AGM or get actively involved in the local but is no less important nevertheless.

The BCTF will soon need to make a number of difficult decisions and we must make them with that member in mind. We must review our bargaining strategies and processes to ensure we are effective at the table in just over a year. We must reconcile our shrinking financial resources against our demand for programs and services. We must take the governance review recommendations into staffrooms so that our

members can decide how best to renew and further democratize our union structures to make the most efficient use of the Federation's resources.

It is a fact that members are questioning the relevance of the BCTF in their professional lives. We must face that reality and prove our relevance. The future of the BCTF hinges on our ability to provide that proof.

I seek to bring that teacher's voice to these critical deliberations. I seek your support as a Member-at-Large.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Local Rep (8), BCTF AGM delegate (12), Judicial Council (3), Staff Rep Trainer (2), CTF AGM delegate (3), Organizing Committee CTF AGM Vancouver (1), G.A. Fergusson Award Trustee (4). *Local:* President (2), 1st Vice-President (3), 2nd Vice-President (3), Secretary (3), LR (8), Bargaining Chair (3) and member (6), other committee membership: Health and Safety, Working and Learning. *Teaching:* 34 years in the profession, Grades 3-7. *Education:* BA, PBD, PDP SFU.

Self-care is not self-ish

by Julia Johnson

The making of resolutions that ushers in each new year creates a collective consciousness of hope. People from all sectors of society recognize that the dawn of a new year is an opportunity to start their lives afresh and the making of new-year resolutions is a manifestation of this. This is the time when the desire for personal improvement by the masses is the greatest. It is the time when, collectively, we tune in to the indwelling spirit and consider whether or not the gifts, talents, and creative energy with which we have been blessed have been utilized. It is the time when serious thought is given to the way a life is lived and life-altering decisions are made. For teachers, it can be a time when they acknowledge how easily their work has become life consuming. As caregivers bent

Each teacher has a responsibility to value the importance of self-care and to make self-care a priority every day.

on perfection, they overlook the importance of making time for self-care, particularly when they work in an unwell system; a system where political unrest



creates more stress, anxieties, frustration, discontent. And where personal unrest becomes the norm.

"Life is difficult," says Scott Peck in the opening of his book *The Road Less Traveled*. Daily this fact is realized in classrooms across the country. No longer are teachers required only to facilitate the learning of the slow learner, the learning disabled and the gifted students. In addition, they must solve issues related to students who suffer from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, hyperactivity, attention deficit; who have physical, mental, and emotional challenges; who have different cultural backgrounds making English their second language.

Facing this morass each day requires teachers to be in the

very best of health, and this gives reason to commit to the importance of self-care. Generally, the first step toward self-care has been the making of new-year resolutions related to physical well-being. Translated, this means more exercise, eating healthier foods, consuming less alcohol, and giving up smoking. The importance of making resolutions for improving physical health cannot be minimized; for without healthy bodies, we are unable to become the very best that we were gifted to be. Specific to a teacher's life, resolutions often focus on creating time: making time to eat lunch, leaving school earlier, not taking work home, finding time to do a hobby, hiring someone to do the household cleaning.

The issue with making new-year resolutions is keeping them. It isn't long before January, the month of good intentions, is lost in our longing for spring and what it has to offer. The trick to overcoming this distraction is to sustain our motivation for change by creating a habit. What this requires is commitment. It is not enough to resolve to lose weight; the motivation to do so requires that a commitment be made to make it happen. Technically, this should not be a problem when it comes to teachers, as commitment is an esteemed quality of this profession. What is given little regard by teachers, however, is the need to make a commitment to oneself. "I will go to the gym every day at 5:00 p.m." seems

to be a difficult habit to maintain. So often a teacher's ability to keep such a commitment is thwarted by the demands of other people in the teacher's life. Within the mind, the learned message "Self-care is selfish" causes this to happen.

It is time to let go of such thinking and the emotions that are a part of this notion, particularly with the diverse issues that are present in teaching today. Each teacher has a responsibility to value the importance of self-care and to make self-care a priority every

Such a commitment will enable teachers to maintain a much-needed balance of strength, patience, skill, creativity, and wisdom.

day. Such a commitment will enable teachers to maintain a much-needed balance of strength, patience, skill, creativity, and wisdom. That balance will then be reflected in the work teachers do, and the children they teach will learn what it means to work with passion, joy, and peace.

Julia Johnson, a learning resource teacher, Red Bluff School, Quesnel, is a BCTF PD wellness associate.

Part 2

A continued in-dwelling amidst questions of student achievement

by Laura Wood Richter

Standing at the beginning of a new century, cries of unsustainable echoing and reverberating amidst the status quo, we find ourselves held with increasing urgency in a questioning of how we are to understand the responsibilities of pedagogy. Ongoing considerations of how student achievement is to be understood are placed in the context of our provincial government mandating school planning councils tasked with *improving* student achievement. When we are called to make improvements, I believe we are called to be mindful that differences understood in terms of more or less are concerned with quantity; it is differences in kind that are concerned with quality. And as differences in quantity are ever so much easier to measure and

These are ways of being immeasurable by tests concerned with getting the one right answer.

compare than differences in quality, the temptation to grasp an understanding of improved student achievement in quantitative terms is seductive.

It is profoundly important, I believe, to resist grasping an understanding of improvement entrenched in considerations of more or less. Rather, there is a need to engage in dialogue, to hold open space for considerations of an understanding of improvement concerned with

quality. We are called to consider what it is we value when we speak of quality education and how we are to go about nurturing a classroom space vibrant with pedagogic possibilities, a classroom space enlivening opportunities for quality pedagogy. And, as leaders, are we not called to consider measures of improvement within a real life context?

"Those now being educated will have to do what we, the present generation, have been unable or unwilling to do: stabilize world population; stabilize and then reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, which threaten to change the climate, perhaps disastrously; protect biological diversity; reverse the destruction of forests everywhere and conserve soils. They must learn how to use energy and materials with great efficiency... They must begin the great work of repairing, as much as possible, the damage done to the earth in the past 200 years of industrialization. And they must do all of this while they reduce worsening social and racial inequities. No generation has ever faced a more daunting agenda." (Orr, D. *Earth in Mind On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect*. pp. 26-27)

Ingenuity, creativity, and openness are called for along with a deep sense of integrity and responsibility. These are *ways of being* immeasurable by tests concerned with getting the one right answer. They are *ways of being* nurtured in classroom settings, in which the student is beckoned to enter in an embodied way, where the student is authentically valued for his/her unique perspectives, experiences,

and ways of making sense of his/her world. Here, the role of content is not to be grasped, but rather to provide a rich context in which students and teachers *together* embark on an authentic way on an exploration of ideas and perspectives.

Pedagogical leadership here calls for an attentiveness to the place students stand, an attentiveness to ways in which content and engagement with it will hold students. There is a deep interest in curriculum plans

Student achievement so understood is concerned with a willingness to struggle in the midst of open-ended questions...

that hold open a quality of classroom tension beckoning students to enter in all their irreducible differences; their unique sets of perspectives and experiences coming into play within the classroom space. In such a setting questions spring forth from the journey in-between curriculum as planned and curriculum as lived. Questions and directions of movement will emerge differently from each unique group beckoned into the space held open by the curriculum as planned; the curriculum as lived taking on a different form with each group of lives that come to it.

Such a classroom space is in itself turbulent and the teachers

who dwell there, as leaders, are ever responsible for the movement that takes place. They are ever vulnerable in letting go of an adherence to investigations of only those questions for which they already hold the answers before they even begin. To beckon students to authentically enter the classroom space, to bring with them their unique interweavings of experiences and perspectives, is to value ambiguity. It is to find comfort in the discomfort of never knowing exactly what is to come because the outcome is authentically not yet known. The teacher so understood is called to lead at times by following. Dr. Ted Aoki so eloquently expresses the call for leader to, at times, follow:

"...it is for him to know, as a sage knows, that as pedagogue, at times, he must take leave, that he must withdraw, such that in the very event of withdrawal, there may inhere a pedagogic creativity, a coming into being of a clearing that is vibrant with pedagogic possibilities. Hence, pedagogic withdrawal may, within a seeming negating of self, confer in the silence of the pedagogue's absence an opening wherein the student can truly learn what it is to stand, what it is to be in one's becoming." (Aoki, T. *Inspiring Curriculum and Pedagogy: Talks to Teachers*. p.45)

Student achievement so understood is concerned with a willingness to struggle in the midst of open-ended questions, a willingness to sustain one's efforts in the midst of frustration and to persevere in the face of difficulty. For it is when we are willing to struggle with what we

find difficult that we are offered an authentic opportunity for movement. And it is when we succeed having sustained a struggle amidst frustration, that we feel our greatest senses of accomplishment. Here scholarship is inseparably intertwined with the student's intrinsic motivation, the student's natural desire to make sense out of the world around him/her supporting a rigorous involvement with meaningful content.

How students are experiencing the content they are asked to dwell in and the ways they are expected to engage with it would be compelling questions.

And here, considerations of improvement would be concerned with differences in kind, with improving the quality of the lived curriculum as experienced by those it holds. How students are experiencing the content they are asked to dwell in and the ways they are expected to engage with it would be compelling questions. Student willingness to engage in struggle and student perceptions of the value of their unique contributions to the lived curriculum of the classroom would stand as important indicators of the quality of education taking place.

Laura Wood Richter is a former teacher whose children have just entered the school system.

B.C. would have smaller deficits without tax and spending cuts

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives says the provincial government could spare British Columbians the pain of spending cuts, while still meeting the government's three-year timetable for balancing the budget. In its 2003 B.C. Solutions Budget, the CCPA shows what would have happened to provincial finances had there been no tax cuts and no spending cuts.

The centre models an alternative scenario: no personal or corporate tax cuts; no regressive tax increases (like the 50% hike in MSP premiums); no spending cuts; and spending increases in health and education that maintain 2001-02 service and employment levels. In this scenario, called "the path not taken," provincial finances are significantly healthier than current government projections, with smaller deficits from 2001-02 to 2003-04 and a small surplus in 2004-05.

CCPA B.C. Director Seth Klein hopes the government will rethink its choices. "The tax cuts were supposed to stimulate so much bang-for-the-buck that they would pay for themselves. But in spite of the tax cuts, B.C.

went into recession in 2001, and we experienced slow growth in 2002, trailing the rest of the country. The government's economic strategy is more a leap of faith than a compelling economic plan."

"The Solutions Budget shows that we can afford a more compassionate approach. B.C. needs a creative, long-term economic strategy that addresses the growing gap between rural B.C. and the Lower Mainland, diversifies the provincial economy, and spares British Columbians the needless pain of deep spending cuts."

The Solutions Budget also takes a detailed look at the causes of B.C.'s two decade-long economic slowdown and offers options for a made-in-B.C. economic development strategy that is sustainable and equitable.

Government fiscal plan:

- Personal and corporate income tax cuts, introduced in 2001, worth over \$2 billion.
- Regressive tax increases (MSP premiums, sales taxes) worth \$750 million in 2002-03.
- \$1.5 billion in spending cuts,

introduced to cover the cost of tax cuts.

- Record budget deficits; balanced budget by 2004-05.

Impact on B.C. budget's bottom line:

2002-03: \$3.5 billion deficit
2003-04: \$1.4 billion deficit
2004-05: \$411 million surplus

The path not taken:

- No tax cuts, no tax increases, no spending cuts.
- Spending increases in health care and education in order to maintain 2001-02 services and employment levels.
- Maintains all other public service funding levels—no welfare cuts, office closures, etc.
- Much smaller deficits; balanced budget by 2004-05.

Impact on B.C. budget's bottom line:

2002-03: \$1.3 billion deficit
2003-04: \$707 million deficit
2004-05: \$47 million surplus

The 2003 B.C. Solutions Budget is available at www.policyalternatives.ca

Contact: Shannon Daub, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, B.C. Office 604-801-5509.

Open letter to the citizens of B.C.

by Daphne Hayden

I am writing on behalf of the Cranbrook Retired Teachers' Association to express our deep concern with the present lack of access to nursing-care facilities for senior citizens in Cranbrook. While we cannot speak for all seniors in this community, we are aware of many who cannot afford home nursing care and are unable to gain access to nursing-care facilities.

"Ann," an 84-year-old retired teacher and long-time resident of our community, desperately needs to be in a nursing facility. Her experience with the local healthcare system, up to this point, has been extremely stressful and disappointing. Ann struggles at home with the effects of Parkinson's disease, severe anemia, vision impairment due to an ocular tumour, a fractured vertebra, incont-

ence, and sleep disorder. Obviously, both Ann and her family are undergoing severe emotional and physical stress that only increases as the local health authority leaves Ann trying to cope with her present circumstances. The uncertainty of the quantity and quality of appropriate care has added a further dimension of fear to her existence. She has been faced with the possibility of being forced to enter a facility in a community far from her hometown and family. That she is unable to get onto a waiting list for entry to a Cranbrook nursing home frightens this lady who has faithfully paid her taxes and freely contributed her heart and soul to this community.

Not knowing what the future holds for our seniors is especially exasperating when we see a 60-bed facility being closed. Rooms in Rocky Mountain Lodge are being left vacant as residents

pass away or are moved to other facilities that may or may not be in Cranbrook. One can easily surmise the mental state of other elderly, infirm seniors from Creston, Fernie, or the Columbia Valley who have found themselves warehoused in Cranbrook facilities far from their families and loved ones.

Where are the increasing number of infirm and elderly citizens in need of nursing-care facilities to go? Surely, it was never the intention of the "Modernizing of B.C. Health Care," to leave seniors, such as Ann, in their own homes to suffer, not only the pain and indignities of poor health, but also the fear and anxiety of not knowing if, or when, they will be admitted to a nursing facility in their own community.

Daphne Hayden is president of the Cranbrook Retired Teachers' Association.

Speaking for education funding



Charlie Beresford, a Victoria school trustee and Carlene Keddie, a trustee and CUPE worker in Prince George, at the education funding conference. Both called on citizens to work together for fair funding of B.C. schools.



PETER OWENS PHOTOS

2002-03 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 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 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
March 1, 2003	Prince George, Coast Inn of the North
March 8, 2003	Kelowna, Ramada Lodge Hotel
March 8, 2003	Nelson, Prestige Inn
March 29, 2003	Kamloops, U. College of the Cariboo
April 5, 2003	Dawson Creek, George Dawson Inn
April 5, 2003	Port Hardy, Airport Inn
April 12, 2003	Cranbrook, Heritage Inn
April 12, 2003	Victoria, Holiday Inn

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term benefits and should withdraw. It is necessary for you to apply to withdraw.

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PD CALENDAR

MARCH

7-9 Prince George. Math with Manipulatives, Level Two (Advanced), with Marilyn Wardrop (CATT), Learning Difficulties Centre. Contact Richard Skinner, richard.lcentre@telus.net.

13-14 Vancouver. Special Education Association (SEA) Crosscurrents Conference, 32 sessions. Westin Bayshore. Keynote speaker Dr. Gordon Neufeld, The Trouble with Kids These Days. Contact Martha Tatman, 250-962-7634, matatman@mag-net.com.

21-22 Vancouver. Canadian Conference on Preventing Crimes Against Humanity: Lessons from the Asia Pacific War (1931-1945). UBC First Nations House of Learning. For more info or to register online, go to www.aplconference.ca or call Peter Scott 604-822-4904.

APRIL

2-4 Saskatoon. Eighth National Congress on Rural Education, Designing Our Future...Making the Right Decisions (policy, practice, research), Centennial Auditorium. Contact Joe Zolkavich, SELU, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Rm. 30763, 28 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1, f: 306-966-7916, selu.info@usask.ca.

3-4 Vancouver. Violence and Women's Health 2003, Coast Plaza Hotel. Contact Elaine Liau, 604-822-4965, f: 604-822-4835, elaine@cehs.ubc.ca, www.interprofessional.ubc.ca.

3-5 Vernon. B.C. Business Education Association (BCBEA) Annual Conference, Sharing the Passion, Clarence Fulton Secondary School. Contact registrar Ted Voykin, 250-545-1396, f: 250-545-1395, tvoykin@sd22.bc.ca, www.bctf.ca/psas/bcbea/conference and events.htm.

4 Kelowna. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association (LATA) Spring Conference, with Caren Cameron, of University of Victoria, on assessment (Knowing what counts: Setting and using criteria in assessment), Grand Okanagan Resort. Contact Janice Neden, f: 250-377-0860, jneden@sd73.bc.ca.

5 Burnaby. The Change Challenge—Personal and Professional Strategies for Uncertain Times, Willingdon Church Conference Centre, 4812 Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby Contact Global Learning Connections, Trinity Western University, 7600 Glover Rd, Langley, BC V2Y 1Y1, 604-513-2067, f: 604-513-2060.

25-26 Calgary. Alberta Kodály Association 20th Anniversary Reunion and Conference 20 Years: So Fa, So Good!, University of Calgary (Craigie Hall and The Rozsa Centre). Keynote by Lois Choksy; sessions by David Brummitt, France David, Jeanette Panagapka, Karen Taylor, Jan Taylor-Bilenki and other past AKA clinicians and Kodály Summer Program faculty. Contact Trish McGillawee 403-270-0951, info@albertakodaly.ca, www.albertakodaly.ca.

27-29 Victoria. Focus 2003: Leaders and Healers, featuring Swil Kanim, Silken Laumann, Don Burnstick, and Cherry Kingsley, Victoria Conference Centre. Contact Barbara Smith, 250-598-1039, f: 250-598-2368, barbarasmith@focusconferences.com, www.focusconferences.com.

MAY

2 Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices: Sixth Annual Conference on Teacher Research/Researching Teaching, Neville Scarfe Building, UBC. Teachers will share their investigations of the what, how, and why of professional practice. Contact Gaalen Erickson, 604-822-2867, gaalen.erickson@ubc.ca, or Judy Paley, 604-822-2733, judy.paley@ubc.ca, www.ocpe.educ.ubc.ca/wcs/c_investprachtml.

2-3 Richmond. B.C. Science Teachers' Association Annual Conference, Catalyst 2003, Cambie Secondary School. Contact Tim McCracken, 604-668-6430, f: 604-668-6132, tmcracken@richmond.sd38.bc.ca, or Karen Morley, 604-592-4221, f: 604-592-4221 morley_k@fc.sd36.bc.ca, www.bctf.ca/BCSCTA/.

7-8 North Vancouver. Fast Forward Educational Media Showcase, bringing educational media buyers and sellers together, Capilano College Sportsplex. Before March 6: \$107 both days, \$85.60 one day; after March 6: \$136.10 both days, \$112.25 one day. Group rates also available. Contact Susan Weber (604) 323-5533, sweber@langara.bc.ca, www.langara.bc.ca/ffwd.

9-10 Burnaby. Computer-Using Educators of B.C. (CUEBC) Horizons Conference: Learning Online, with Dr. Rosina Smith, executive director of Alberta Online, Metrotown Hilton. Broaden your understanding of distributed distance education, and blended models; examine the possibilities and pitfalls of learning through the medium of online instruction; join teachers from Alberta and

Saskatchewan to share their experiences with online learning. Contact www.cuebc-horizons.ca.

15-17 Burnaby. Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) annual national conference, Explore Beyond, Hilton Vancouver Metrotown. Educational techniques for people with Down syndrome. Keynote speaker Norman Kunc (Everything Worth Knowing, I Learned from Being Disabled). Contact Edwina Jeffrey 604-597-9639, edwina.jeffrey@shaw.ca, or Lynne Perreault 604-271-8170, lynnep@adsl.intergate.ca or www.lmdss.com.

AUGUST

11-15 Maple Ridge. Science World's Loun Lake Science Camp for Teachers, Malcolm Knapp Research Forest. \$300 + GST. Participants receive a travel subsidy. Contact 1-800-363-1611 or direct 443-7552 or Caedmon Nash, Science World, 1455 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 3Z7, 604-443-7440, f: 604-443-7430, mash@scienceworld.bc.ca.

18-22 Maple Ridge. Science World's Loun Lake Science Camp for Teachers, Malcolm Knapp Research Forest. \$300 + GST. Participants receive a travel subsidy. Contact 1-800-363-1611 or direct 443-7552 or Caedmon Nash, Science World, 1455 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 3Z7, 604-443-7440, f: 604-443-7430, mash@scienceworld.bc.ca.

OCTOBER

23-24 Burnaby. Computer-Using Educators of B.C. (CUEBC) Horizons/B.C. Business Education Association (BCBEA) Joint Conference, Metrotown Hilton. Specific software applications, learning online, effective use of existing technology, and innovations with technology, for all teachers. Contact www.cuebc-horizons.ca.

23-25 Richmond. l'Association Provinciale des Professeurs d'Immersion et du Programme francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (APPIPC), with ACPI, Executive Inn.

23-25 Whistler. B.C. Association of Mathematics Teachers (BCAMT) Northwest Math Conference, Mathematics: A Peak Experience. Contact Ian deGroot, idegroot@shaw.ca.

24 New Westminster. Physical Education PSA (PEPSA) Conference, Douglas College.

24 North Vancouver. B.C. Dance Educators' Association (BCDEA) Conference. Carson Graham.

24 Burnaby. Environmental Educators' PSA (EPPSA) Conference, SFU.

24-25 Mission. Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association (THESA) Conference, Mission Possible, Heritage Park Secondary School. Contact Susan Armstrong, f: 604-820-4589, susan.armstrong@sd75.mission.bc.ca.

24-25 Richmond. B.C. Primary Teachers' Association (BCPTA) Fall Conference.

PD Calendar web site

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

The BCTF's PD Calendar web site includes these 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.nsdcd.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

T.W. Brunan & Associates www.twblearn.com/conferences.html

UVic Continuing Studies in Education www.uvic.ca/csie/

PSA PD Day

October 24, 2003

PD CALENDAR Additions/changes?
E-mail Debby Stagg, dstagg@bctf.ca

Caravan against the cuts

Education Minister Christy Clark claims that her government is protecting education funding. Clark also informed the BCTF that she has not heard of any negative affects from her policies. Concerned that Clark's awareness is so removed from reality, we sent her the information she was lacking.

Starting February 3, 2003, the Caravan Against the Cuts, collected impact statements from students, parents, teachers, trustees, and members of the community concerned with education cuts. Busses set out from Prince Rupert, Fort St. John, Revelstoke, Port MacNeil, and Sechelt. The materials were delivered to the legislature in Victoria on February 12, 2003.

Donna Clarke teacher/reporter:

Revelstoke

February 4: Teachers showed up at the local Teacher's Association office for 8:15 a.m. They gave the Caravan 40 letters of protest, a copy of their stripped articles, a poem about the cut of a local elementary school, letters of non-confidence in Christy Clark, to the editor from the local and another from a trustee.

Golden

The bus collected a toilet adorned with a copy of all their stripped articles! One door, with a painting depicting the closure of rural schools and the three hour journey that some children have to spend on a school bus every day. Another door representing special education cuts. The theme was, "The doors on education are being closed!"

Invermere

The caravan picked up a coffin filled with copies of the tabulated data on class size increases, letters from PAC, a letter of protest from the School Board to Christy Clark, a large paper chain with individual links listing the stories of how classes have been affected and morale has suffered, and postcards of protest.

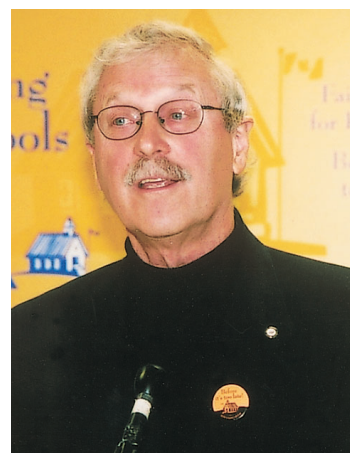
Wasa

Twelve parents and their children greeted the school bus as it rolled into the vacant parking lot of the now closed Wasa Elementary School. We collected about 40 letters of protest. Two hundred, forty-five signatures were collected on a petition to oppose the closing of Wasa School.

The stories from parents were heartbreaking. A six-year-old spends 15 hours a week going to and from school in Kimberly because her local school has been closed. Parents who were once very active on a daily basis in their children's school are now unable to participate. The roads can be very dangerous between Wasa and Kimberly in the winter making many parents worry for their children's safe return.

Cranbrook

The caravan was loaded with a laundry basket with postcards addressed to Gordon Campbell, Christy Clark, and the local MLA, Bill Bennett. Cranbrook had one large elementary school closure (300 kids) and Elk Valley has suffered two school closures.



Clockwise from top: In Prince Rupert, stick figures of laid-off teachers and support workers wait to get on the bus; BCTF President Neil Worboys announces the Caravan Against the Cuts at a news conference; Prince George local president Barry O'Neill, CUPE BC president, addresses the crowd; and a retired teacher talks about upcoming school closures.

The government's claim that it is protecting education funding and the education minister's claim that she is unaware of problems created by her government's policies led to the Caravan Against the Cuts.

Creston

The local president met the bus at the board office and passed on a box of letters and postcards and placards reading: "End the Cuts" and "Kids are Not Sardines."

Nelson

Local president and regional vice-president of CUPE met the caravan at Central elementary School in Nelson and contributed language stripped from agreements, sample layoff notices, a letter about the use of untrained counsellors in schools, and information on reduction of libraries. Nine teachers have been laid off.

Arrow Lakes

Contributed a thought-provoking letter from a teacher regarding a school closure.

Castlegar

The local president met the caravan and added a copy of the local newspaper advertisement listing over 60 classes with more than 30 students, a document circulated by the superintendent, the CUPE presentation to the Rural Education Task Force, and two newsletters illustrating the deterioration of workplace climate. If the district has to close schools to fit the budget, they won't have enough schools to fit the students!

Oliver

Another bright sunny winter day in the Okanagan but another sad day for education. The local president met the caravan at 8:15 a.m. reporting on 50 to 60 oversized classrooms, 15 teachers laid off, custodial help reduced, teacher-librarian time reduced, special needs teachers' hours and ESL teaching time have been reduced.

Penticton

Local president met the caravan and painted an ugly picture of how changes in the Okanagan-Skaha district have affected education. There is a

\$2.2 million shortfall for the 2002-03 and a projected shortfall of \$1.3 million for next year. This results in fewer services to students, FTE is down by 15, and larger classes generally throughout the district.

Funds for special ed are the same but costs have risen so there is less teacher time to go around.

Keremeos

Five parents and three teachers met the caravan. \$1.4 million has been taken from their budget and two of nine positions will be cut in 2002-03. Life-size cutouts of teachers who have lost their jobs were put on the bus and each cutout detailed statistics of losses and the affects of cuts to education in the community.

Princeton

Sixty parents, trustees, teachers, and children gathered at the cenotaph in downtown to mourn the loss to the quality of education in this community. The local district president addressed the crowd reporting that \$1.2 million was cut from their budget. Now the board is faced with making further cuts, possibly as much as \$800,000, to balance their budget. This will result in larger classes, fewer learning resources, and less support for special needs.

Richard Ajabu teacher/reporter

Fort St. John

Early morning, and the bus was loaded with a portfolio of information and a "guttled" contract for Christy Clark along with cartoons by a local artist.

Dawson Creek

Teachers delivered impact statements to be presented to Christy Clark.

Mackenzie

The caravan stopped at Mackenzie Secondary School and was greeted by teachers, parents, and support workers who added a tomb stone for the grounds keepers reduced time and a closed-school sign.

Prince George

A large gathering of teachers, parents, union leaders, and retired teachers met the caravan. The local president, the CUPE BC president and a retired teacher spoke to the crowd about the effects of the cuts and the upcoming school closures. The bus was loaded with cutouts of the teachers who have been laid off in Prince George.

Steve Naylor teacher/reporter

Prince Rupert

Twelve stick figures representing laid-off teachers board the bus to begin the trek to Victoria. A sign, a portfolio of support, a box of teacher testimonials, letters to Christy Clark, newspaper clippings all went on the bus.

Bulkley Valley

Parents, teachers, and support workers added large postcards to the bus addressed to Gordon Campbell and their MLA Dennis MacKay.

Terrace

Media interviewed the local president.