

Teacher

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It's who we are



BCTF President Jinny Sims visits Forest Grove Elementary School in the Cariboo, to offer the support of the BCTF. Forest Grove was the 113th community school closed since the Gordon Campbell Liberals took office. The parents who occupied the school in a vain attempt to keep it open were eventually removed by the RCMP. Approximately 20,000 students have had their neighbourhood schools closed in the last three years. The province has 2,500 fewer teachers, larger classes, and fewer services and resources for students. The BCTF is launching a public campaign to ensure that public education is a high priority for the next provincial election, scheduled for May 17, 2005.

by Ken Novakowski

“We won't live with it!” With those words in 1972, then BCTF President Adam Robertson heralded a new political stance for the B.C. Teachers' Federation. On behalf of all teachers, Robertson declared the BCTF's intention to fight to change the government of the day in the next provincial election. Teachers were angry with government legislation restricting a school district's ability to raise revenue, with government attempts to chip away at the tenure rights of teachers, and with the government-imposed ceilings for arbitrated teacher

The government has destroyed collective bargaining for teachers...

salary increases. All that came on the heels of the BCTF's first province-wide strike action in March of 1971, when teachers across the province shut down all schools to protest the government's unwillingness to improve pensions for retired teachers. The BCTF went on to play a major role in the August 30, 1972, election that defeated the W.A.C. Bennett Social Credit government.

The success of the 1972 teacher involvement served notice to all political parties that teachers would stand up for their rights, for their students, and for public education and that, if necessary, they would use the electoral process to achieve those results. This political-activist stance of the BCTF did not come about overnight. It was the result of many meetings and extensive debates by teachers within the organization over the five years leading up to the 1972 election. And it included a BCTF foray into the electoral process in the 1969 election called the “Apple Campaign.”

In 1972 and subsequent elections, electoral strategies adopted by the BCTF were tailored to the needs of the time, but they have never involved endorsing a political party. The BCTF remains non-partisan as an organization and actively advocates for its policies regardless of the government in office.

While the BCTF ran political-action campaigns in elections in 1979, 1983, and 1986, not until the election of October 1991, did the organization mount a full-scale initiative to defeat the government of the day. The key issues were again reductions in education funding and attempts by government to intervene in the collective-bargaining process by legislatively limiting teachers' salary increases.

Teachers wanted four things out of that election: fairness in bargaining (no more government interference), stability in

Openly and blatantly adding insult to injury, the government attacked the professionalism of B.C. teachers by legislatively taking over the B.C. College of Teachers.

the system (an end to government always changing the rules), support for the job they are doing (adequate resources), and respect for the profession and for the work they do.

Teachers' involvement in the 1991 “Teachers make a difference” campaign was extensive. A survey of locals following the campaign showed that about 6,000 teachers were active in the election campaign. The result was a change in government. In the two elections (1972 and 1991) where the organization (BCTF) went all out to seek a change, there was a change. That doesn't mean that teacher and BCTF involvement was the only factor in the electoral result. It does mean that when we have been capable of mobilizing large numbers of

members to become actively involved in the electoral process along with thousands of other British Columbians with whom we can find common cause, we can bring positive change to the politics of B.C.

The current Gordon Campbell Liberal government of B.C. has given the teachers of this province good cause to throw them out. Cutbacks in education funding have resulted in 2,500 fewer teachers in the system and 113 closed schools. This has meant larger class sizes for teachers and students and less support for students by teacher librarians, learning assistance teachers, counsellors, ESL teachers, and special education teachers. The government has destroyed collective bargaining for teachers, removing the right to strike and legislatively imposing terms and conditions of employment that remove class-size limits and other teaching provisions long fought for and once won by B.C. teachers. Openly and blatantly adding insult to injury, the government attacked the professionalism of B.C. teachers by legislatively taking over the B.C. College of Teachers.

Any one of the aforementioned acts of government would be just cause for teachers to stand up and say No more! This government has tried to undo all the good work of a whole

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President's message



Jinny Sims

A new school year always brings excitement and apprehension. This year, more than ever, we will face many challenges in our classrooms and communities.

Since the B.C. Liberals took office, we have lost 2,500 full-time teaching positions. A shocking total of 113 public schools have been closed.

In July, I visited Forest Grove, a small community in the Cariboo-Chilcotin School District. Parents, grandparents, and others know that the struggle to save Forest Grove Elementary School is not only for their school but also for the very survival of their community. Although the school has been closed, the citizens have become more outspoken and determined to turn things around.

Over the last three years, we teachers have dedicated much of our energy, time, and funds to minimizing the damage done by the B.C. Liberals' agenda of underfunding and privatization. Despite all the cuts and the scarce resources, we are continuing to deliver quality education to B.C. students.

We know that British Columbians share our concerns. In coalitions around the province, we are united in the goal of building quality, inclusive public education for all. But it's more than that, too.

Our goal, in the broadest, most visionary sense, is also to advocate for the kind of society we want. We want to live in a caring society that cherishes children, values youth, supports families, respects workers, and cares for the elderly with dignity. We want to live in a democratic society that upholds fundamental freedoms, fights for social justice, and stands for peace.

That's the kind of society I want to help build for my children and grandchildren. I'm sure it's a dream we all share, one we will help create through our advocacy.

To every teacher, Thank you for the amazing job you do!

Jinny

Before school choice

Donald Gutstein's article of April 2004 deserves praise for its incisive documentation of the involvement of The Fraser Institute in the decentralization of education in B.C. However, as much as libertarians may be advocates of school choice, neither by extension nor by default does this necessitate that they are advocates of the bureaucratic ends of the Fraser Institute any more than any other institution.

It is true that historically, both libertarians and conservative, evangelical religious groups have resisted compulsory schooling. On October 13, 1909, Francisco Ferrer, the founder of the Modern School in Spain, was executed by a Spanish military court for his anti-authoritarian views. He stated, "Rulers have always taken care to control the education of the people. They know better than anyone else that their power is based almost entirely on the school, and they therefore insist on retaining their monopoly on it." From the point of view of libertarians, perhaps little has changed in this regard in the last one hundred years.

Adrian Hill
Victoria

Cuba teacher looks for letters

The BCTF has for several years offered in-service workshops in Cuba for Cuban teachers who are teaching English as an additional language. This is one of the projects of the BCTF International Solidarity Program. Some 25 B.C. teachers have had the opportunity to work with hundreds of Cuban teachers.

One of these teachers has asked for *Teacher* to publish his address and to invite B.C. teachers to write to him. He would like to exchange ideas about teaching English as well as other topics of interest. The address is:

Juan Carlos Caballero Puig
Cristina 364 (B)
entre San Felipe y San Francisco
Habana Vieja
Habana 3 Cuba

Letters to the minister of education

I have recently learned (from BC College of Teachers) that the certification of teachers in B.C. has been changed (*Teaching Profession Amendment Act 2004*), and is now essentially a licence, paid for annually. This seems to me a retrograde and demeaning situation. Tens of thousands of B.C. teachers have earned certificates. We value these as artifacts indicating the years of effort put into our qualification to begin a career in education. Many of us have also formally upgraded those qualifications at great personal sacrifice, and this has been reflected in our current level of certification.

We are now told "failure to pay [the annual fee] will result in cancellation of your certificate." (BCCT letter to members, June 30, 2004) What is the point of this change, and who asked for it?

It is hard not to be cynical about this change, as with so many others in the last three years. Does your government have a hidden agenda? I would urge the ministry to stop its little chess game against the teachers of this province, our union, our local boards, and other stakeholders. We are honourable people, in an honourable (understatement!) profession. I believe we should be treated better. If there is a problem, surely we can work it out together.

Don McLellan
Westbank

I am a retired teacher, and I do not intend to become a non-practising member of the BC College of Teachers. According to the new by-laws and policies (which endure at the discretion of the minister) my non-compliance will result in the loss of my Permanent Teaching Certificate.

Since migrating to Canada, in 1969, I have served the public education system of this province as teacher, principal, superintendent of schools, and field services co-ordinator with the ministry itself. It galls me that with one

slash of the pen you can deprive me of a credential earned by academic study and field practice, a credential labelled *permanent* by then Minister of Education Donald Brothers, and a credential of which I am inordinately proud.

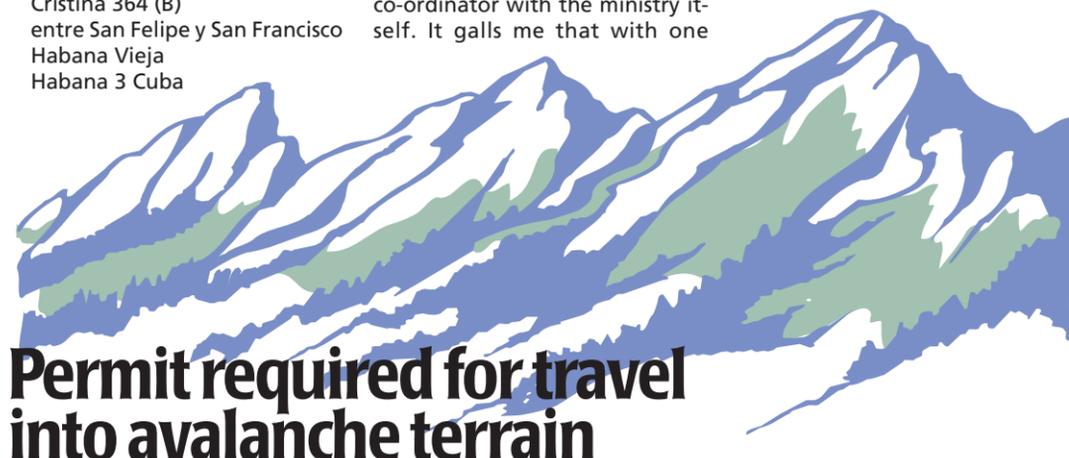
The ultimate affront to me as a trained educator is the quasi-legal form that asks me to surrender any opportunity to give something back to the system in which I was privileged to serve. In essence, you are depriving me of the chance to contribute voluntarily in a system that needs every support it can get. This I will not do!

At present, I tutor two students with special needs under the direction of the classroom teacher in a local elementary school. I give homework assistance to three neighbourhood secondary students in Grades 8 and 9, and I work as a tutor with VISE (Volunteers for Isolated Student Education) in the outback, Queensland, Australia. In each of these situations I work on a purely voluntary basis. To expect, or even countenance, that I would not utilize my professional skills in these undertakings is both ludicrous and irrational.

In my opinion, the BC College of Teachers has nothing to offer me, and I want nothing from it, nor do I wish to pay an annual fee to do nothing. However, I will not surrender my professional skill or my individual right to help those in need of that skill. I will be a teacher until the moment I breathe my final breath, Permanent Certificate or not.

Did it ever occur to you, the minister, and the BC College of Teachers to have dialogue with the B.C. Retired Teachers' Association on the ramifications of such petty measures? It is never too late to reconsider and reach a more palatable resolution. Hopefully, the Government of Canada will not tinker with the meaning of the word *permanent* and take away my permanent-resident status.

Owen P. Corcoran
President, B.C. Retired Teachers' Association.



Permit required for travel into avalanche terrain

To ensure appropriate backcountry leadership and terrain choices, effective April 1, 2004, custodial groups must obtain a permit and be accompanied by a certified mountain or ski guide before they will be allowed to travel into avalanche terrain in Mount Revelstoke, Glacier, Yoho, Kootenay, Banff, Jasper, and

Waterton Lakes National Parks.

A custodial group is an institutional group where at least one person is below the age of majority and the minor is not in the company of her or his parent. Institutional groups include, but are not limited to, school groups, scout/guide groups, church groups, cadet groups, and community youth groups.

Group leaders now have new obligations when leading custodial groups. This applies to both day trips and overnight trips between October 15 and May 31 each year; pretrip planning is essential.

For more information, visit the mountain national park web sites at www.parksCanada.gc.ca.

Teacher newsmagazine wins award

The Canadian Educational Press Association presented a Golden Leaf Award to *Teacher* for a photo story in the April 2004 issue. The article, "Beyond the chalkboard into nature's sphere," was written by Victoria's Cedar Hill Junior Secondary School teachers Thora O'Grady, Mary Howard, and Lily Wallace.

The photography, by Lily Wallace, showcased a creative art project using recycled materials that was incorporated into a book with children's poetry, *Images of Numbers and Alphabet, A Book of 36 Postcards*.

Maxwell A. Cameron Awards

The B.C. Teachers' Federation grants an award to the student completing the final year of the bachelor of education degree in secondary and elementary teaching who, in the opinion of the dean of the Faculty of Education and of the director of the division concerned, is the outstanding student in the graduating class.

The following people received the BCTF'S Maxwell A. Cameron award in 2003-04:

Cathy Benstead
Malaspina University College

Dave Hollatz & Nicole Melcher
Okanagan University College

Theresa Carroll & Roland Hinmueller
Simon Fraser University

Laura Bortolin
Trinity Western University

Jacqueline Ann Flewelling
University of British Columbia

Harmony Yvonne Watts
University of Northern B.C.

Sarah Ball & Elisa Sunderland
University of Victoria

Scent-free BCTF offices

The BCTF offices are now officially scent-free. The BCTF Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee ask that all staff and visitors to our building, at 550 West 6th Avenue, refrain from wearing scented products in consideration of those who are negatively affected by such scents. This policy follows a decision of the BCTF 2004 AGM, which makes both the BCTF Annual General Meeting and the Representative Assemblies scent-free.



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

WHO WE ARE from page 1

generation of teachers in advocating for a strong and stable public education system in B.C. Given our history, given our grievances, given our options, why would anyone be surprised that the BCTF Annual General Meeting decided to make it a priority to get teachers involved in the next provincial election? The BCTF has been a

Cutbacks in education funding have resulted in 2,500 fewer teachers in the system and 113 closed schools.

strong organization in this province for over 85 years, advocating for teachers, for students, and for public education. We will continue to be the effective voice of B.C. teachers through the next election, the election after that and beyond. It's who we are.

Ken Novakowski is the BCTF's executive director.

Blame school boards, government says

On March 3, 2002, Vancouver Province columnist Michael Smyth revealed a secret cabinet document explaining the reason the government was changing the funding formula for public schools. He wrote,

"Despite their election promise to 'protect' education spending, the Liberals are actually cutting funding to many B.C. school districts.

"And the Liberals want to shift the blame for underfunding schools away from themselves and on to locally elected school boards."

The *Cabinet Decision Document* was signed by then education minister Christy Clark and marked CONFIDENTIAL.

The document explored the advantages and disadvantages of keeping the old funding formula or changing to the new system of per-pupil funding. The old system had a clear disadvantage, according to the cabinet paper.

"The province will be seen as responsible for funding all costs. With overall flat funding and rising costs, this option would require the minister to decide annually which programs and services should be cut throughout the province."

The current minister of education is obviously reading the same script. He is claiming that education funding has increased while ignoring the significant costs his government has downloaded on school boards. Like his predecessor, he is blaming school boards for increasing class sizes and closing schools.

—Peter Owens

Good news for B.C.'s teachers

by Peter Owens

Polling results and focus-group research have shown that teachers are respected, trusted, and appreciated in British Columbia. Not only are teachers held in high esteem, but the values held by teachers are also shared by parents and by British Columbians in general.

Positive feelings for teachers

The BCTF conducted focus groups through an independent research company in January and June 2004. Focus groups are small groups of eight to ten people, randomly chosen. They are led through a discussion guide and respond to questions and ideas as a way to test arguments and messages. The participants of the public focus groups do not know who is sponsoring the research; the participants of member focus groups do.

We held groups in Castlegar, Kamloops, Nanaimo, and Vancouver. Public groups were composed of parents and non-parents. At one stage groups were given a list of 25 descriptors of teachers, some positive and some negative. Participants were asked to choose two or three descriptors they felt best describe teachers. Their choices were overwhelmingly positive. Some groups were completely positive. The few times that negative descriptors were chosen, the participants usually qualified the choice by saying that they had a specific teacher in mind but that they had a more positive image of most teachers.

The most common descriptor

of teachers were:

- have a difficult job
- have to put up with a lot from students these days
- trying to do the best they can under difficult circumstances.

All of the public focus groups were supportive of public education and teachers. Government arguments were seen as unreliable. When asked what is happening in public schools, the members of the public identified:

- larger classes
- less support for students with special needs
- loss of specialist teachers
- school closures
- loss of libraries
- lack of support and resources for our students.

Teachers most credible

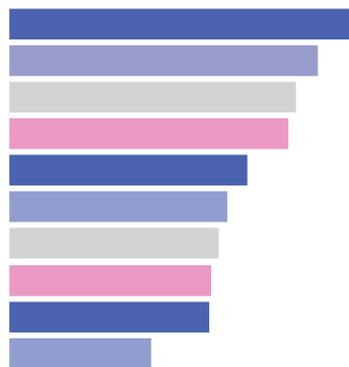
Polling conducted in June 2004 by the Mustel Group found that classroom teachers are the most credible source of information about public schools. Respondents were asked, *How reliable is each of the following as a source of accurate information about the public education system in B.C.?* Classroom teachers came out clearly on top.

These polling results confirm information we obtained through focus group testing in January and June 2004. It is unusual for a union to rate as high as the BCTF did in this poll. Over 90% of British Columbians stated that they are familiar with the BCTF.

(Mustel Group, 750 interviews conducted between June 10 and 17, 2004. Results are considered accurate to within +/- 3.6%, 19 times out of 20.)

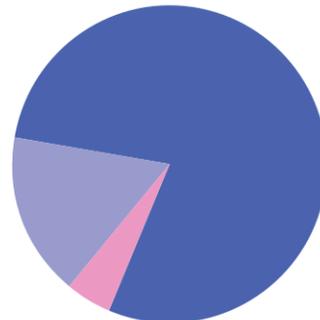
How reliable is information from:

Classroom teachers	84.5%
School boards	75.7%
BCTF	70.5%
Parent advisory councils	68.3%
Media	58.4%
The Minister of Education	53.4%
B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils	51.5%
Your MLA	49.2%
The Fraser Institute	46.8%
The Premier	34.9%



Class-size limits should be negotiable

- Agree 78.5%
- Disagree 16.7%
- Don't know 4.8%



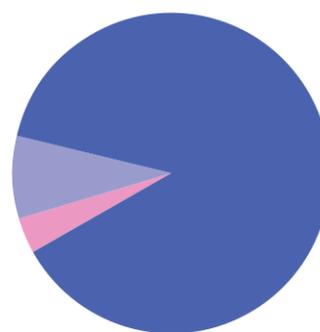
The public wants to hear from you

Not only are teachers the most credible source of information, but the public expects teachers to speak up about the conditions in our schools. In the same poll in June 2004, 750 people were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement: *It's important for teachers to speak out on public-education issues like funding cuts, larger class sizes, and reduced support for children with special needs.*

An overwhelming majority of those surveyed—88.1%—want teachers to speak out. (Mustel Group, 750 interviews conducted between June 10 and 17, 2004. Results are considered accurate to within +/- 3.6%, 19 times out of 20.)

Teachers should speak out on education issues

- Agree 88.1%
- Disagree 8.5%
- Don't know 3.4%



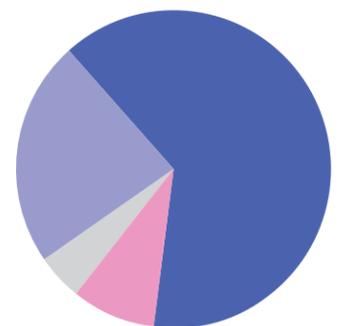
Education funding is too low

Almost two-thirds of the people polled in June 2004 feel that education funding in B.C. is too low.

These results are consistent with views expressed by the public and parents in focus groups conducted for the BCTF in January and June 2004. (Mustel Group, 750 interviews conducted between June 10 and 17, 2004. Results are considered accurate to within +/- 3.6%, 19 times out of 20.)

Funding for education in B.C. is:

- Too low 63.6%
- About right 23.0%
- Too high 4.7%
- Don't know 8.7%



The first phase of our campaign to ensure that public education is a vote-determining issue in the provincial election will begin near the end of September. Our initial message to the public will be that there are 2,500 fewer teachers and 113 schools closed since this government came to power. Teachers will be speaking out on behalf of students and public schools.

We know that parents and the public expect teachers to keep them informed about what is happening in our schools.

Peter Owens is an assistant director in the BCTF's Communications and Campaigns Division and editor of the *Teacher* newsmagazine.

LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

Canadians must be made to realize that in the education of our youth lies the only real hope for the future of our country and that no educational system is too costly if it ensures a safe and sane development of our resources, both human and physical. If our system does not ensure that, it is utterly worthless and should be discarded and replaced by one that does. It is folly to complain of the cost of education when in education lies our only hope. Who ever considers the cost of the one remedy that will save his life? September 1934, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

All teachers in the public schools of the province belong to the BCTF through their local association. An amendment to the *Public Schools Act* in 1946 made membership mandatory except for those writing themselves out before April 1, 1947. But unlike the medical profession, which admits on the basis of its own examinations, the Federation must admit all teachers certified by the Department of Education. The BCTF, however, does exert considerable control over its members. The Executive is able to suspend or cancel membership for cause. Any teacher, so disciplined because of a violation of the Federation's code of ethics, has the right of appeal to the Council of Public Instruction. Sept.-Oct. 1954, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

I realized schools had changed, attitudes on discipline had softened in the dozen years since I left secondary school, but nothing prepared me for the flagrant disregard for authority and the inconsiderate, boorish behavior shown by so many of the young people. Antics that would have meant severe punishment, if not expulsion, several years ago, are almost commonplace today and I've seen students swear at teachers, to their faces, without getting more than a lecture. Sept.-Oct. 1974, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

Bill 52, the *Public Education Labour Relations Act*, was given Royal Assent on June 10, 1994, following introduction of the bill in late May. It closely follows the government's March 10 announcement, imposing a system of provincial bargaining for all B.C. school districts. The system mandates a single bargaining unit and a single collective agreement, including major cost items negotiated at the provincial level and local items negotiated by the teachers, locals, and boards in each district. The right to strike will now be available only after a province-wide strike vote. September 1994, *Teacher*

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich.

General Provincial Election
May 17, 2005



BCTF ARCHIVE PHOTO

In memoriam Charles D. Ovans

by Bob Buzza

It's a long journey from teaching in an isolated rural school in B.C. in 1933 to working in Geneva in 1965 helping prepare a teachers' status manifesto for ILO and UNESCO. Charlie Ovans took that journey, and teachers everywhere continue to benefit from it. Charlie died July 5, 2004, at 91.

Ovans was appointed BCTF general secretary, on the death of Harry Charlesworth, in 1944, serving in that capacity until his retirement in 1973. He had started teaching when every school was its own school district, when arbitrary hiring and firing of teachers were common, and when bargaining rights were non-existent.

Charlie Ovans and BCTF staffers Stan Evans and Alan Spragge deserve the credit for organizing the teachers of B.C., for improving their economic status, and for setting the stage for their many professional development activities.

Retired staffers say that collegiality was the most precious feature of their first few years with the BCTF. In accordance with Ovans's definition of *collegiality* as "mutual coercion, mutually applied," peer review reports and proposals were the norm. The results were awesome.

Ovans was an idea-stimulator par excellence. He revelled in exchanges free of ideology, dogma, or convention, and he grew with every exchange—as did those who interacted with him.

In 1966, he received the BCTF's prestigious G.A.

Fergusson Award. The citation reads, in part: *He is held in high regard by other prominent educators, not because of his position, but because of his stature as a philosopher and an original thinker.*

Other awards and recognition abound: member of the Order of Canada, Quance lecturer, honorary life member of the B.C. Parent-Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Education Association, advisor on the future of education in Alberta, Canadian representative to the International Management of Training for Educational Change in Norway. The list is long.

Shortly after Ovans's retirement, the *UBC Alumni Chronicle* featured him in an article by Clive Cocking entitled "The loneliness of the long-distance radical." The thrust of the article is that Charlie left the Federation early out of frustration that the school structures of the day were simply not educational structures, and that his pleas for radical, fundamental restructuring to reflect dramatic changes in society were not being heeded. It would be a fitting tribute to Charlie if readers were to consider his challenge to educators then, and its relevance now:

"There is no over-riding purpose to which everybody involved in the educational system is committed. There is no agreement among all the people engaged in so-called 'educational' tasks as to the nature of the educational process.

"A new education system can be developed if educators go back and redefine, in clear terms, the basic purpose of schools today and then go on to methodically employ the increasing new knowledge in the life sciences toward achieving this purpose."

In July 2004, BCTF Executive Director Ken Novakowski attended the 4th World Congress of Education International in Porto Alegre, Brazil. While there, he obtained a copy of the "1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers." It's primary author? Charles D. Ovans. It's surely rare to have one's seminal piece influence education internationally for almost four decades!

Charlie's official obit was brief and fitting: "He was loved by his family and respected by all who knew him."

Bob Buzza is a retired executive director of the BCTF.

BCTF public campaign launched

The 2004 BCTF Annual General Meeting decided to commit \$2 million to a public campaign to ensure that public education is a vote-determining issue in the May 2005 election. Focus-group testing and polling conducted since January 2004 confirms that the public is aware and concerned about the direction of public education under the B.C. Liberals. The public identified its concerns as fewer teachers, larger classes, loss of specialist teachers such as librarians and counsellors, and less support for students with special needs. There were also concerns about the impact of school closures on communities and students who are now required to spend more time on busses.

Parents and members of the

public are very supportive of teachers and expect teachers to keep them informed about the state of our schools. For more information on public opinion please see "Good news for B.C.'s teachers," page 3 of this issue.

The first public phase of the campaign will be launched September 27 with billboards around the province. The message is:

**2,500 fewer teachers,
113 schools closed
Our students. Your kids.
Worth speaking out for.**

Members of the public in focus groups appreciated the factual information and were surprised at the loss of 2,500 teachers and the closure of 113 schools.

Teachers' right to inform parents about cuts affirmed

In the fall of 2002, teachers around the province used a card to show parents the changes in the size of their class since the B.C. Liberals removed class-size limits from our collective agreement. Some school administrators and boards told teachers they were not allowed to share that information with parents during parent-teacher interviews. We received a ruling from arbitrator Don Munroe that states that teachers not only have the right to distribute those cards, they have the right to discuss any information regarding the state of public education in the province with parents during parent-teacher interviews. According to Munroe's ruling, teachers do not have a duty of loyalty or fidelity to the provincial government. Munroe has upheld a provincial grievance filed by the BCTF on November 6, 2002, and determined that attempts by school boards to prevent teachers from using school bulletin boards, parent-teacher interviews, and other means to advise colleagues and parents of the union's and its members' views with respect to class size and bargaining matters are violations of teachers' rights to free expression under the charter.

In holding that the boards were interfering with teachers free speech and that such interference was not justified in a free and democratic society,

arbitrator Munroe wrote:

[T]he posting of the subject bulletins or flyers on the teachers' bulletin boards, or the handing out of the "cards" at parent-teacher interviews, would in no way interfere with the effective and efficient operation of a school; and neither would it result in loss of instructional time or other educational disturbance. There is no suggestion in the Alleged Actions that the intended communication by the teachers, either as to form or substance, would in any degree have impaired the performance of their duties as teachers.

I make this additional point. The common law duty of fidelity owed by a teacher, and arising from his or her employment, is a duty owed to the School Board

employing that teacher. A teacher does not owe a duty of fidelity arising from employment to the provincial government. To the extent the expressive content of the materials intended by the teachers to be posted or otherwise communicated was aimed at the provincial government, the duty of loyalty or fidelity has no application.

This award is a significant victory for teacher (and employee) free speech, and it should give school boards pause in attempts to use their power as employers, on behalf of BCPSEA and the provincial government, to suppress the voices of teachers and teacher unions on educational matters.

Last year, the teachers' contract limited this class to _____ students.
This year, there are _____ students in your child's class.

Common sense and research tell us that smaller classes are better for students. A 20-year study of 11,500 children from Kindergarten through post-secondary, found that small classes of 13 to 18 are better than classes of 22 to 26.

To support improved learning conditions for students, go to bctf.ca/firmlimits

Cards that teachers gave to parents in the fall of 2002. Distributing the cards has been approved in a significant ruling by Arbitrator Don Munroe.

Political appointees still at it

Even while teachers were voting to elect college councillors, the political appointees on the college council were changing the rules and by-laws. The last regularly scheduled meeting of the politically appointed BCCT Council was held on August 27, 2004. The 90-minute meeting was filled with self-congratulatory talk about how effective the interim council had been.

The appointees on the council adopted revisions to all by-laws and policies of the college (more than 200 pages). The BCTF and other partner groups were given notice of the proposed changes in June 2004. Most of the changes were required because of Bill 55.

This is the first time that a proposed by-law/policy document has not been available to the public at a BCCT meeting.

However, at the August meeting, the chair of the by-laws committee circulated a document containing additional changes to the by-laws and policies (over and above those proposed in June). A BCTF representative asked for a copy of the document, but the chair denied his request saying that the document was too complicated and could be misinterpreted and open to miscommunication. That was

the first time a proposed by-law/policy document has not been available to the public at a BCCT meeting. A member of the council claimed that the document was only housekeeping. It was not.

The BCCT adopted the entire package of amendments to all BCCT by-laws and policies with no debate. The matter had obviously been discussed behind closed doors. The by-laws will be sent to the minister, who can disallow them within 60 days.

The adopted by-laws and policies document were posted on the BCCT web site later in the day, www.bcct.ca/about_us/bylaw_amendments.aspx.

One of the more offensive changes made without any notice or debate was the following:

Bylaw 3.A.03 Election of Members of the Council—Call of Election 3.A.03—now reads: *The representative of each zone shall be elected by secret ballot of members of the College having their principal residences in the that zone.*

The previous by-law stated the following:

3.A.03 (prior to August 27, 2004):

That the representative of each zone shall be elected by secret ballot of members of the College having their places of employment by a board in that zone or, if not employed by a board, having their principal residences in that zone.

This is a significant change. Now members employed in one school district but living in another will be unable to vote for the candidate in the zone

where they work. Members will have to vote for the candidate in the zone where they reside. For example, a member employed in Vancouver and living in Coquitlam will now vote in Zone 8 (New Westminster, Coquitlam, Burnaby), not in Zone 10 (Vancouver, Richmond).

...they would like to use member fees to pay for these political appointees to attend college conferences.

Another change in policy, which can be changed by a majority vote of future council, reads as follows:

New policy P.L.01 College-Sponsored Conferences: *Former College Council members will be invited to register for College-sponsored conferences at no charge.*

This means they would like to use member fees to pay for these political appointees to attend college conferences.

As this issue of *Teacher* goes to print, seven BCTF-endorsed candidates have been elected by acclamation and teachers are voting in five zones.

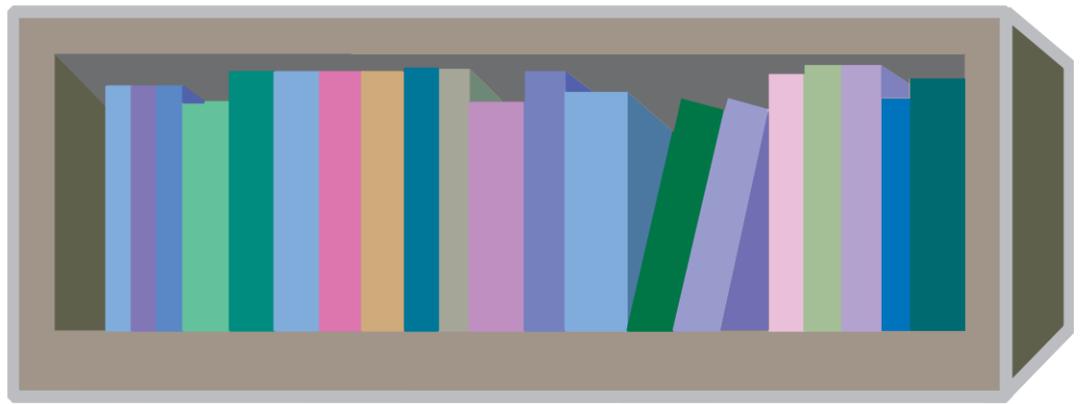
The college fees for the 2004-05 school year are not due until November 30. The BCTF Executive Committee will be making recommendations regarding the payment of the 2004-05 college fee and the disposition of the BCTF Democratic College Fund.

— Peter Owens

Summer conference 2004 well-attended



WHITNEY BURGESS PHOTO



The school library

by Randi Louise Hermans

All children in Canada should have access to a school library run by a qualified teacher-librarian. Does your school have one? A teacher-librarian is a certified teacher who has an additional education diploma in the professional and management functions of a school library.

In 1998, the B.C. teachers' contract had ratios for non-enrolling teachers. Schools were required to have one teacher-librarian for every 702 students. The language for non-enrolling teachers was stripped from our collective agreements by the B.C. Liberals in January 2002. Since then, many schools in our province have no teacher-librarian running the library, or the teacher-librarian time has been cut back to such a degree that there is no time to offer a quality library program. Many teacher-librarians have been forced to incorporate prep-time coverage into their library assignment. This is not the answer.

Teacher-librarians do far more than sign out books to students. Besides managing the collection, they teach research skills, encourage children to read, provide book talks and story times, work with teachers on co-operative units, organize author visits and book fairs, and select and purchase material to support the school curriculum.

Research...shows that schools that have well-stocked school libraries, staffed by qualified teacher-librarians working with staff on co-operative units have higher levels of student achievement.

Teacher-librarians serve all students and every educational level, as well as every area of the curriculum.

Research done in nine states since 1999 shows that schools that have well-stocked school libraries, staffed by qualified teacher-librarians working with staff on co-operative units, have higher levels of student achievement. The research shows that

scores are 10 to 20% higher in those schools. Similar results are likely in Canada.

In June 2003, the first Summit on Canadian School Libraries was held in Ottawa. Roch Carrier, the National Librarian of Canada at the time, deplored the state of school libraries in Canada: "The state of our school libraries can only be described as desperate in almost every province." British Columbia is one of the best provinces for

"Studies show that qualified teacher-librarians have systematically sought out Canadian books and other media to ensure that the Canadian experience forms a significant part of each child's education."

school libraries in Canada, but unfortunately cuts continue to happen in all districts. A clerk or parent volunteer in the school library is not the answer. Many children are introduced to Canadian authors and Canadian stories at school. Children learn about our country's culture and heritage by reading both fiction and non-fiction books written by Canadian authors. When teacher-librarians are eliminated or have their budgets slashed, these books don't get purchased for the school library.

In his report titled "The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Reinvestment," published in June 2003, Dr. Ken Haycock states: "Studies show that qualified teacher-librarians have systematically sought out Canadian books and other media to ensure that the Canadian experience forms a significant part of each child's education."

The Canadian Coalition for School Libraries was formed in March 2002. Publishers, parents, authors, teachers, and teacher-librarians have joined forces to advocate for school libraries across Canada. The CCSL advocates for well-funded school libraries staffed by qualified teacher-librarians. More information is available on its web site: www.peoplefor

education.com/librarycoalition.

As well, the B.C. Coalition for School Libraries was formed in the summer of 2003 to provide a provincial view and to advocate for school libraries in B.C.

Now that most homes and schools have access to computers and the Internet, parents, teachers, and administrators may feel that print resources are unimportant. But children need to learn the research steps in elementary school using print resources. The Internet can be a valuable resource tool, but students need to learn the process so they are not plagiarizing. Teacher-librarians working with classroom teachers are the best providers to teach this skill.

The School Library Manifesto was prepared by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and approved by UNESCO in 1999. It states:

The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's society, which is increasingly information and knowledge-based. The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

October 25 is National School Library Day and International School Library Day. Schools across Canada and around the world will be using this day to celebrate school libraries. Please find out what is happening at your school and help to celebrate it. The web site for NSLD is www.nsls.ca/.

If your school or your child's school doesn't have a teacher-librarian, find out why.

If your school or your child's school doesn't have a teacher-librarian, find out why. Teachers, parents, and grandparents need to demand that their children have access to a quality school library.

In future columns, we'll be sharing ideas about how you can work with your teacher-librarian. My sincerest hope is that you have a teacher-librarian in your school.

Randi Louise Hermans is a teacher-librarian and is vice-president of the B.C. Teacher-Librarians' Association.



PETER OWENS PHOTO

BCTF Summer Conference delegates drum together in a unifying post-dinner exercise. Carolyn Leckie, a member of the Scottish Parliament, shares her experiences fighting privatization and the attempted victimization of unionized workers in Britain.

Jinny Sims takes the helm as BCTF president

Since the B.C. Teachers' Federation was founded, in 1917, only five women have risen from the classroom to the office of BCTF president. This year, Jinny Sims became the sixth.

Born in India, Jinny was nine when her family emigrated to England. A native Punjabi speaker, she had to struggle with English. "There was no ESL instruction in those days. It was total immersion!"

Even so, Jinny loved school. As a teen, she was active in community service, competed in fencing, and earned a black belt in judo. After graduation, she headed to the University of Victoria at Manchester, where she completed her B.Ed degree. There she met her husband, Stephen Sims, also a teacher. In those days, cross-cultural relationships were so rare that "we'd bring traffic to a halt when we passed by!"

Once she started teaching, Jinny worked with highly academic students and with youth in a juvenile prison. "I loved working with all those kids. I ran the judo and fencing teams, the multicultural club, all kinds of activities," she said. "We were young, and there was lots of energy and excitement."

Jinny's involvement with the union movement began with the National Union of Teachers in Britain, and continued after she emigrated to Canada in 1975. The Sims family settled in Nanaimo, where Jinny taught



PETER OWENS PHOTO

social studies and English, and worked as a school counsellor.

When B.C. teachers began the drive to unionize, Jinny was deeply involved in the first round of local bargaining. She served on committees including the Status of Women and the Program Against Racism, as well as the executive of her local. She was elected president of the Nanaimo District Teachers' Association in 1992, holding that position until 1995. Since 1998, Jinny has served on the provincial Executive Committee as a member-at-large, second vice-president, and first vice-president.

Jinny and Stephen Sims have two children: Keeran, 27, and Michael, 22. As well, they are proud grandparents of Emily, eight, and Jacob and Jessica, five-year-old twins.

Why is there a women's history month?

by Jane Turner

In October 1929, the Privy Council of England declared that women in Canada are persons and therefore entitled to receive the same rights and privileges afforded to men. Yes, that was a significant event for women in Canada, and every Canadian should know about it. But why designate one month every year—October—Women's History Month? If October is women's history month, is every other month men's history month?

If women's history were mainstream, we wouldn't need a special month designated to study women's past. It is a huge mistake, not just a loss, to eliminate half of humanity from our view of the way the world has unfolded and the events that have shaped it. We end up with a pretty skewed view of the way the world was and is. It also is misleading to those whose stories are being told. Their view of the world and how it was shaped is incomplete. Let's look at the contemporary example of the war in Iraq.

To feel a rightful sense of place, all people need to know their history, the stories of their past.

History will explain George Bush and Tony Blair's public posturing. It will list Saddam's sins, and it will probably analyze the importance of oil. But will that give us a good understanding of the war in Iraq? It will only if we don't care to understand how the war affected the people who live there and the long-term impact it had on their actions. If history's account includes the effect the war is having on women then the history expands to include the effects of the bombing on the infrastructure of the cities, the alienation of the population from the "American liberators," and the potential increase in anti-Western terrorist activities.

How can we know all of this from studying about women? you might ask. Well, women are the ones who do most of the cooking and caring for children and the elderly in the society. If they can't get water through their taps; if their children and parents become sick with typhus because the sewer systems have been destroyed and they die because there is not enough medicine and the hospitals have been bombed; if the schools are closed because it's too dangerous to send the children to them as they might become regrettable, collateral damage—the ifs can go on and on, and each one builds an understanding of the effects war has on a population. Those understandings give us glimpses into the mindset of people who have so completely lost hope, who are filled with so much hate that for them, taking the lives of civilians and killing themselves in the process becomes an option.

Fortunately, with our current ability to access many sources of information, we see a wide

range of events connected to the invasion and bombing of Iraq. We have the ability to open up current events to include women's lives as part of our understanding. But when the history gets written, what will it tell us and, more important perhaps, what will it teach us? To feel a rightful sense of place, all people need to know their history, the stories of their past. It is hard to have that connection to the past when their story is never told.

But the stories need to be told in meaningful and integrated ways. History that attempts to include women, without fundamentally altering the way it is structured will result in tokenism—what is sometimes referred to as "the shadowed box." How many of us have seen texts that have part of a page shaded, boxed, and focussed on some woman's contribution or peripheral connection to the main core of what is being explained? The first woman in space, the first woman director, the first woman parliamentarian is token information unless it is woven into the core fabric of the history being explored. We don't need tokenism. We need a real exploration of women's lives that will help us build a more complete understanding of the past.

The best example of a history book that opens up women's lives and situates them meaningfully in the broad historical context of their time is the Pulitzer-Prize-winning history by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich entitled *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary 1785–1812* (Vintage Books, 1991). Thatcher Ulrich has used a midwife's daily journal entries to shed light on the society, its norms, laws, medical practices, and economy. This is a history that is relevant any month of the year, not just in Women's History Month.

And that is the point, isn't it? The history of half the population shouldn't be trotted out once a year to commemorate an anniversary. Women's lives, women's past, deserve to be woven into the fabric of all history so that everyone's understanding encompasses a

The history of half the population shouldn't be trotted out once a year to commemorate an anniversary.

bigger and broader picture of the past. I hope that historians and those of us who teach history will get it before too many more Octobers come and go.

Jane Turner is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division.

Resources

The 75th Anniversary of the Persons Case is an excellent opportunity to highlight the important contribution of women to Canadian society and the vital role that they play in shaping the country's future.

To assist you in organizing an activity to mark this special month, Status of Women Canada (SWC) has developed a poster and a Virtual Organizer's Tool Kit (available on-line only)

The Organizer's Tool Kit provides background information about Women's History Month and suggestions to help you plan activities for this special month (suggested books, Web sites, etc.).

Visit the Canadian Status of Women web site: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca and click on "commemorative dates."

JULY
AUGUST
SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH
APRIL
MAY



The Campbell government and the B.C. education agenda

by Noel Herron

In the countdown to the next provincial election, over the course of the next eight months, you can expect to be inundated with advertisements, reports, surveys, and pronouncements from Victoria delineating how the Campbell government's "New Era" education agenda has wrought wonders for B.C.'s public schools.

Don't believe a word of it.

The premier has asserted that public education has been his number-one priority since he was elected; yet the Campbell government's agenda over the past three years has been nothing short of disastrous for one of the finest public education systems in this country.

Chronic underfunding has resulted in closed schools, laid-off teachers, shortages of basic classroom supplies and materials, program disruption and cancellation (particularly

Never mind the fact that over the past three years the B.C. Liberals have drastically cut school-based teacher-librarian positions...

for thousands of vulnerable kids), a veritable tsunami of education changes (some superficial, with little or no consultation, increased class size, and record levels of local fundraising by parent groups).

After appointing Christy Clark minister of education—one of the most arrogant and confrontational ministers of education this province has ever seen—and leaving her in that portfolio for two years, Campbell belatedly realized that she would be a severe impediment heading into the next election. (The near collapse of the scandal-ridden Ministry of Children and Family Development provided the opportunity for an overdue cabinet shuffle.)

And so the kinder, gentler Tom Christensen surfaced as the new minister to repair the damaged relationships with parents, teachers, and school trustees.

Christensen was also left, in late August, to mop up the mess from the abrupt withdrawal of Christy Clark's much-trumpeted and partly fatuous fitness plan for B.C. schools scheduled to be implemented this year.

Whether the new minister is successful in rebuilding relationships remains to be seen, but one thing is painfully clear: his predecessor's dismissive and condescending approach to teachers is not repairable within a short period of time. And this situation is not helped by the premier's insistence in his public pronouncements that teachers, through their Federation, constitute a "special interest" group and as such their opinions are to be discounted.

Adding another and bizarre dimension to this overtly political strategy was Global TV's Victoria political correspondent Keith Baldrey's statement to a B.C. school trustees' gathering last

December, that a sizeable segment of backbench Liberal MLAs have a "pathological hatred" for the BCTF.

It appears that ideological extremism knows no bounds for many in this government. And with this attitude it is not difficult to foresee an ongoing and unrelenting campaign to demonize the Federation over the next few months particularly in an attempt to separate the organization from its rank and file members.

But what perfectly symbolizes the Campbell government's approach to education is, we are told, the premier's intense interest in "literacy" and its relationship to student improvement. Indeed, this has been the topic in several of his public addresses.

Speaking at the most recent B.C. School Trustees Association (BCSTA) annual general meeting in Victoria, Tom Christensen went out of his way to inform us of Campbell's abiding support for "literacy" and of his commitment to ensure that no B.C. kid would be left behind. The minister waxed eloquent on this topic.

Never mind the fact that over the past three years the B.C. Liberals have drastically cut school-based teacher-librarian positions—a key component in the promotion of any worthwhile literacy program. B.C. now has one of the worst per-pupil-school-librarian ratios in Canada with "closed" signs prominently displayed on many school library doors.

As the May 17, 2005, election date approaches, we can expect the Campbell Liberals to use two strategies for their return to Victoria—the sweetening of the education pot with added funding for schools, but

B.C. now has one of the worst per-pupil-school-librarian ratios in Canada...

nowhere near what is required to rebuild the system, and accompanying this will be the time-worn don't-blame-us-blame-them (school boards) strategy to blunt the criticism of the impact of provincial underfunding. Even the cheer-leading *Province* newspaper, in a mid-summer editorial, excoriated the provincial government as being "irresponsible" for repeatedly using this diversionary tactic.

However, that won't stop the B.C. Liberals as they are deeply worried about the downward slide in the premier's personal approval rating, having appointed an internal committee to bolster his performance. Although they are quick to deny it, they will, if past performance is an indicator, be preoccupied with spin and worried about future newscasts from now until next May.

Hold on to your chalkboards folks, as public relations dominate the upcoming B.C. education agenda.

Noel Herron is a Vancouver School Board trustee.

Health and safety

by Maureen L. MacDonald

The goal is prevention

The goal of the BCTF's Health and Safety Program is prevention of workplace-caused illness and injury. That is the stated goal of school boards' health and safety programs, too. Employees and employers travelling down the same path? Mm hmm. Can you feel the unity of purpose? If you can, please share how it works in your local. If you can't, you are not alone. Help is available in the form of the *Workers Compensation Act*, the Workers' Compensation Board Occupational Health & Safety Regulation, the BCTF Occupational Health & Safety Manual, the many workshops in the BCTF Health and Safety Training Program, your local health and safety rep, your local president, and BCTF staff members dedicated to prevention.

Know your rights

Employees have four rights in the law:

1. The *right to know* about dangers in the workplace.
2. The *right to participate* in workplace health and safety activities through the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or worker representative.
3. The *right to refuse* unsafe work.
4. The *right to no discrimination* for participating in OH&S activities.

Know your employer's duties

All employers in B.C. have general duties stated in the *Workers Compensation Act*, Section 115. This is my favourite: "Every employer must ensure the health and safety of all workers working for that employer." Other parts that make the act interesting reading include: "An employer must remedy any workplace conditions that are hazardous to the health and safety of the employers' workers." "An employer must ensure that the

Prevention is the name of the game



employer's workers are made aware of all the known or reasonably foreseeable health and safety hazards to which they are likely to be exposed." "An employer must make a copy of this act and the regulations readily available for review by the employer's workers and, at each workplace where workers of the employer are regularly employed, post and keep posted a notice advising where a copy is available for review."

(In old schools, look for the four WCB Blue Books that were

"An employer must remedy any workplace conditions that are hazardous to the health and safety of the employer's workers."

provided free to all worksites. Some of the regulations are outdated, but the act hasn't changed. It is in Book 1. In brand new schools just opening this month, you may have to ask your principal to order a copy of the *Workers Compensation Act* (\$16.50) and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (\$65) from Crown Publications Inc. An example of free enterprise, but that's another story.)

Workers have duties, too

Section 116 of the *Workers Compensation Act* says "Every worker must take reasonable care to protect the worker's health and safety and the health and safety of other persons who

may be affected by the worker's acts or omissions at work." (*Other persons* means just what it says. It includes students.) It further states: "A worker must report to the supervisor or employer any contravention of this Part, the regulation or an applicable order of which the worker is aware, and the absence of or defect in any protective equipment, device or clothing, or the existence of any other hazard that the worker considers is likely to endanger the worker or any other persons."

Reporting is not the same as complaining. Report in writing. Ask your worksite Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or workers' representative for assistance.

Take advantage of training

The second annual training for local health and safety reps, on August 24 at the BCTF Summer Conference, was a big success. Dozens of locals sent reps to get health and safety facts and skills and to learn where to find more.

Something new

The *BCTF Health and Safety Workshop for Beginning Teachers* is our newest workshop. Local health and safety reps at the summer conference received a copy of the beginning teachers workshop containing facilitators' notes, overheads, and materials for participants' kits in order that they may give the workshop in the local. Beginning teachers are not the only ones who could learn from

attending! If your local presents the workshop at a local general meeting or other event, plan to attend.

Is there more?

We've only just begun to list the goodies.

The BCTF offers the following tripartite workshops (for teachers' reps, support staff union reps, and employers' reps, usually principals), which meet the educational-leave requirements of Section 135 of the act.

- A. BCTF/WorkSafe Basic Committee Training (five modules)
 1. Occupational Health and Safety Program
 2. Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees/Worker Representatives
 3. Safety Inspections
 4. Incident Investigations and Reports
 5. Refusal of Unsafe Work.
- B. Violence Protection and Prevention.
- C. Indoor Air Quality.
- D. Ergonomics in the Classroom.
- E. School Construction/Renovation.

"Every employer must ensure the health and safety of all workers working for that employer."

Still more

Just for teachers, School Union Rep Training (SURT) workshops are available four days per year in each local. One

of those days can be used for training school health and safety reps. Current workshops are:

1. General health and safety
2. Indoor air quality (IAQ): How to breathe easier
3. Violence protection: Keeping teachers safe
4. The role of the union health and safety rep on-site.

Be vocal in your local

That's one of my favourite sayings. Don't be backward about stepping forward. Expect, nay, demand, that health and safety be a priority for your elected officers and for all members. Insist on the same from your trustees. Remember the squeaky wheel? Silence is consent, so make hazards known in order to prevent illness and injury whenever possible.

Three things to do this week

Immediately report to your principal, your engineer-custodian, and your worksite joint occupational health and safety committee rep all school-opening problems such as dust, musty smells, off-gassing from new carpets, poor ventilation, renovation hazards, and the need to move furniture and boxes. Document your concerns. Make health and safety issues a regular item on your staff or staff committee meeting agenda. Wash your hands. Often. (You knew I'd say that, didn't you?)

Thanks

The BCTF Health and Safety Program runs mainly on the volunteer efforts of teachers like you. Here's a big thank you to the nine members of the Health and Safety Advisory Committee and the 10 health and safety trainers who devote much time and talent to providing advice and workshops. Show your thanks by helping to make the health and safety program at your school work to everyone's benefit.

Maureen MacDonald is the prevention officer in the BCTF Health and Safety Department.

To put your name on the BCTF occupational health and safety e-mail list, please e-mail your request to Whitney Burgess, wburgess@bctf.ca.

On being well

by Julia Johnson

The summer is over. The long, hot, lazy days of reading, interspersed with barbecues and family vacations will soon be forgotten as the onset of autumn calls us from our varied resting places to step into the rhythm of school, where myriad challenging circumstances await.

In June, we left our workplaces eager to be away from it all, eager to empty our minds of the refrain Too much to do and too little time. We sought respite from the expectation Do more with less. We left behind classrooms overcrowded with desks and lacking resources. We stepped into summer seeking restoration and renewal. We hoped the slower pace would give us an opportunity to dream that maybe teaching could once again be satisfying and inspiring. We hoped to store enough energy to last another school year. And we wished that our fairy godmother would come wave her magic wand to resolve the social, economic, and emotional issues of our students that leave us heartbroken. With

Wellness is seeking BCTF support

anticipation and renewed vitality, we crossed the threshold of another school year, only to realize that our dream that things would be different was indeed only a dream.

The issues and the circumstances we left behind did not go away when the school year ended and now we must continue "to fight the good fight"

Where else in an educational setting can you be valued for your diverse training, your experiences, and your opinions?

by seeking creative solutions to whatever is before us. How to do that is the big question. A good place to start is by enlisting the support of the B.C. Teachers' Federation and the many workshops the BCTF provides.

In August 20-22, the BCTF Training Department held a summer institute for PD associates and leadership

trainers at BCIT. The theme of the summer institute was "Teacher Leadership Supporting Learning." Over the last 26 years, the BCTF has acknowledged classroom teachers' expertise and the skills to teach other teachers. PD associates and leadership trainers are chosen from teacher applicants who respond when a call is made by the BCTF.

Classroom teachers and PD chairs can request BCTF workshops in Aboriginal education; French programs; global education; social justice; student behaviour; health and safety; teachers on call (TOC); engaging conversations (teachers mentoring teachers); school culture including sensible school planning and strengthening relationships in schools; performance standards for numeracy, reading, writing, and social responsibility; teacher wellness in personal wellness, workplace health, and stress; and parent workshops.

Teachers who are already overwhelmed with the multitude of tasks that are part of a working day may not see that

the answer to their turmoil is their participation in a workshop. However, being in the company of PD associates and leadership trainers who understand the working and learning conditions of today's classrooms, who have empathy for the issues teachers face, and who are passionate about their role to support teachers and learning can indeed be uplifting.

Where else in an educational setting can you be valued for your diverse training, your experiences, and your opinions?

In a BCTF workshop, you have experiential learning activities; you can explore what you know, as you learn about

Attending a workshop may be the solution to maintaining your personal well being.

other structures and strategies regarding teaching and learning. The interactive, social approach used in BCTF workshops creates a safe environment for risk taking and encour-

ages conversations where meaning is constructed. This type of workshop facilitates the transfer of learning to the classroom enabling you to use what you have learned.

It is the mission of BCTF professional development to nurture the mind, body, and spirit in all learning activities. Knowing the intent of these workshops and considering that the job of teaching isn't getting any easier, it would be worthwhile for you to access the lifeline being offered by the BCTF when you become dissatisfied with working and learning conditions and feel you are drowning in teacher expectations and responsibilities. Attending a workshop may be the solution to maintaining your personal well being.

To book a BCTF workshop, call 1-800-663-9163 (local 1857) or 604-871-1857, or check the web site pdonline.bctf.ca.

Julia Johnson, a learning resource teacher at Red Bluff School, in Quesnel, is a BCTF-PD wellness associate. E-mail johnsonj@abccom.bc.ca.

Labouring under an illusion

by Marian Dodds

I will never forget their “Madam, Madam, cigarette, madam,” as several young boys pursued me in Sierra Leone in West Africa a decade ago, hoping I would buy an American cigarette from them. One cigarette at a time, these 9- and 10-year-olds were working to survive, likely unaware of their role as victims of the worldwide tobacco industry and its lust for new markets. Child labour was calling out to me.

For much of my career, I have taught and encouraged colleagues to teach global education to raise awareness about topics such as child labour and to support actions to decrease it in the developing world. I was under the illusion that child labour is something that we do not condone in Canada. I never dreamt I would have to fight child labour here. With Bill 37, the B.C. government has lowered the age at which children can work to 12 and has lifted restrictions that would protect them if they do work. The government has put our youth at greater risk for injury, exploitation, dropping out of school, and a life of poverty in the long run. I am disheartened to think that we now have the lowest age in all of North America at which employers can hire children.

Realistically, I do not expect that masses of youth in B.C. will go off to work 20 hours a week during school months and spend 35 hours a week working in the holidays as a result of this legislation. I am not talking here about paper routes, child minding, mowing the lawn, working at summer day camps for kids, volunteering at community centres, and so forth. I agree that those are generally good opportunities for youth to learn to be responsible, to contribute to their community, and to earn some pocket money for themselves. What concerns me is that this legislation opens the door wide for unscrupulous employers and naive and/or desperate parents to use children in ways that have long-term negative effects for those children and for our society.

As a school counsellor, I want my students to be successful. Whether counselling them about school matters, career choices, personal problems, or post-secondary opportunities, my overarching goal is supporting each one to reach her or his potential as a healthy and socially responsible individual. In speaking to colleagues at my school, to counsellors in other Vancouver schools and to students, I found that, once people became aware of this legislation, they had serious reservations about it.

What do young people need in order to develop into healthy, socially responsible adults? And how might the changes to the legislation affect the outcome?

Social/emotional health

Some may argue that work can increase self-esteem and build a sense of responsibility. In fact, several of the youth I spoke to mentioned this. That is one reason schools encourage volunteer work at the younger grades and work experience at Grade 11 and 12. The difference is that these are well-supervised and appropriate places for young people to gain experience. I would question the emotional/social development that might occur on a job where youth may be harassed or expected to work longer shifts than they want in order to keep their jobs.

The assumption that parents are able to ensure that the workplace is safe is not always reasonable. As a counsellor, I've heard how hard it is for parents to supervise TV, video, and Internet activities at home. The workplace further removes their ability to supervise the activities of their children. We all know that these are the years of limit testing by youth and that their parents are not always aware of what they are up to.

- How will the parents be able to keep track of every hour worked and what they are doing on the way to and from work?
- How might work affect a 12-year-old emotionally in the long term?
- Stress is a major concern for young people as they struggle to balance very busy lives and to cope with less than ideal home lives in some circumstances.

The most at-risk youth may also be the most likely to see working as an option to escape problems at home. What will the long-term consequences be for her or his emotional health?

- Might such young workers become world weary, resentful, “adultified,” depressed?

Exposure to negative adult/peer behaviour

- Drugs (including cigarettes) and alcohol may be offered.
- Sexual harassment may occur. What about the power imbalance between the supervisor and the employee?
- What life lesson will young workers learn if they witness dishonesty and disrespectful behaviours from their supervisors?
- How many operations in sales and service may be run by youth? What peer culture might develop in such circumstances? Imagine a night shift at a fast food restaurant with a 16-year-old supervisor and a crew of 12- to 14-year-olds, responsible for handling money and kitchen equipment.

Effect on family life

- Where is the time for the social support of the family?
- What does this teach about the priorities we have?
- What will young workers miss out on at home?
- What hobbies, sports, and extra-curricular activities will the young workers lack the time to pursue?

“This is so disgusting I can hardly believe it. This will further break down the family. It seriously puts kids at risk and will affect their physical, mental well being.” – school counsellor

Intellectual development

A huge challenge at this age is to find enough time to complete schoolwork and balance all the rest of their lives. And, face it; schoolwork may not be the priority! With the additional time taken up by working, what quality of homework and test preparation will result? No wonder research shows that working youth are more likely to drop out of school.

Bottom line

Is there enough time for a 12- to 14-year-old to do all the tasks required and work 20 hours a

week? Not likely. What will be sacrificed for the money earned?

Effect on school success rates

- Will young workers be more likely to drop out of school?
- How will there be adequate time for homework?
- Will grades drop, thus disqualifying the young workers for financial awards and scholarships that would enable them to go on to post-secondary education?
- We know that the more education one has, the more one will earn.

“I would rarely recommend 20 hours/week of work for a senior student. They would have to be super-organized individuals to accomplish this and maintain their grades and place in the community.” – school counsellor

Physical health and safety

- Will children have time for adequate sleep? Teens need more sleep than adults, up to nine hours a night.
- Will they be eating properly and having time for physical fitness?
- How safe will they be?
- Youth are injured more often on the job.
- The legislation does not restrict potentially dangerous workplaces.
- How safe is it to work at night, supervised by others who may be not much older?
- Away from parental supervision, what influences may the young worker be exposed to?
- Bill 37 makes the parent responsible for ensuring a safe workplace. Some parents may be unable to speak English and may be unfamiliar with workplace safety standards. In particular new immigrants may be unaware of Canadian standards and rights and could be victims of exploitation.

Adultification/Maturity

- Brain-development research shows that the last part of the brain to develop is the pre-frontal cortex, where “executive functions” occur (including planning, setting priorities, suppressing impulses, weighing consequences of one's actions). How might this affect safety on the job?
- Would young workers have the ability to speak out about unfair working conditions?

- Would they be able to stand up to an abusive customer?
- Would they be able to deal with a robber/flasher, etc.?
- Is it acceptable to expect children/youth to take on the responsibilities of an adult?

Potential for exploitation

- Since the training wage is lower for the first 500 hours, what will stop employers from bringing in new 12-year-old recruits every 500 hours to keep their costs down? How many 13-year-olds are going to insist on a raise after they have worked 500 hours?
- Youth may be pressured by parents to work to contribute to family income.

“Even 16-year-olds have trouble not being exploited in the work place. This could result in sexual harassment, physical abuse, and financial exploitation. Didn't we do this already? Wasn't it called the Industrial Revolution?”

– school counsellor

What kind of message does this send about our society?

“It is Un-Canadian—Canadian values do not include child labour but do include education. Many of our students live in poverty and might be forced to work. This might mean that school would be gone. For children under 15, their job is school, not work. Our laws require school attendance.”

– school counsellor

- Are children the property of their parents?
- What message does this send to developing countries struggling to raise their standards and looking to us for guidelines?
- How will B.C. look in the eyes of the world through the International Labour Organization (which has 15 as the minimum age for work) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child?

Marian Dodds an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division is on leave from her counselling position with the Vancouver School District.

Resources

“Who's looking out for our kids? Deregulating child labour law in BC.” CCPA brief, go to www.policyalternatives.ca

2. bctf.ca/social/childlabour

O, Mom let me play

Short is the phase of tender age,

O mom
Do not interrupt my simple pursuits
At the dawn of my life, O mom
Let me play, let me play

Machines and tools are not toys
They crush my little hands
They hurt my brain, O mom
Let me play, let me play

In the workshop or the eatery
Despite my toil I am thrashed
Tattered is my apparel, O mom
Let me play, let me play

To hell with woeful knots of rugs
Injurious to my little bones
They cause pain in my neck, O mom
Let me play, let me play

Wretched are our days and nights
A burden to carry for whole of life
Chain me not to a sinking weight,
O mom
Let me play, let me play

Let me play with my simple toys
Do not snatch them, O mom
Childhood shall be gone tomorrow
Let me play, let me play

Just for a loaf of bread, O mom
Don't barter way my charm
Crush not my hopes, O mom
Let me play, let me play

Destroy not slender twigs, O mom
Crush not the floral branch
You are my only hope, O mom
Let me play, let me play

My wishes may not die out
My hopes may not wither away
Time is like a hanging sword,
O mom
Let me play, let me play

Small is our home no doubt
Dark is our fate no doubt
But I have a vision to change it,
O mom
Let me play, let me play

To ward off our crass poverty
To blot out our perpetual gloom
Encourage me a lot, O mom
Let me play, let me play

For building up my career
for brightening up my future
Send me to a school, O mom
Send me to a school

– Sharif Anjam

“Katchian Kaliyan” a poem on child labour in Punjabi by Sharif Anjam—literal translation by Ritaz A. Chaudhry.



Child labour polling results

More than 70% of British Columbians oppose the B.C. Liberal changes to the labour laws to allow employers to hire children as young as 12 years of age. People over 55 had the strongest negative reaction to the change, with 49.8% “very negative,” 28% “negative” for a total negative of 77.8%.

The question asked was:

“The B.C. government recently changed the law to allow employers to hire children as young as 12 with a note from a parent. While school-aged children are limited to working 20 hours a week during weeks that schools are in session, there are no other special regulations, such as inspections of the work sites or special restrictions on the nature of the work. Overall, do you view this legislation as: very positive, positive, negative, very negative, don't know?”

The phone poll was conducted by Mustel Group between July 2 to 6, 2004, and is accurate +/- 4.4 per cent, 95% of the time.

Youth voices on child labour

A co-operative learning strategy

These results are summarized from an activity undertaken with eight CAPP 10 classes and one Grade 8 English class in May 2004 at Templeton Secondary School, Vancouver. Students were first given very brief factual information about Bill 37 and then asked to “take a stand” on the statement—**Twelve-year-olds should be allowed to work.**

Students were asked to stand together with peers who shared the same position on the statement and to discuss their reasons for their position. Next, they circulated around the room to present their own position and to listen with respect to peers with differing positions. Having broadened their perspectives on the statement, they returned to their original groups to create a poster listing their key arguments for their position. The entire class then heard a summative report from a representative of each group. This was followed by an individual survey that allowed each student to reflect on her or his work experiences to date and to provide their opinions/comments on the issue.

This activity is adapted from a co-operative learning strategy called “Tackling a Statement” from *Global Teacher, Global Learner* by Graham Pike and David Selby (1988).

“Twelve-year-olds should be allowed to work.”

Strongly Agree

- Better for future jobs
- Give them life experiences
- Have their own money
- If they are not being forced to work then they should be allowed to work
- Make them more mature/independent
- Need money for extra clothes
- Not have to depend on parents
- Saving up for a car and future
- They could help their family
- Understand society
- Will teach them responsibility/commitment

Agree

- Allowance is not the only way to make money anymore!
- Gain experience
- Get out in the world, meet new people, make new friends
- New opportunities
- Gain a realistic view of life
- If it is by choice, not by force
- Just because you are young doesn't mean you don't have the ability to work
- Learn from older workers
- Learn responsibility/maturity
- Some kids need to spend their time more wisely and not get in trouble
- Some low-income families need money to help pay bills
- There would be more workers and money in the economy
- They now have workers' rights
- They would learn self discipline
- Why not, this is a free country?

Not Sure

- These groups were asked to brainstorm pros and cons. Their ideas have been integrated into the agree and disagree categories.

Disagree

- Could get the worst, most dangerous jobs and get ripped off
- Disrespected in the workplace
- Easier to exploit children than teens
- Hazardous work conditions, may get injured or killed
- Imbalanced development in younger children
- Kids might get hurt or stressed out
- Less social and recreational time with peers
- May be exposed to drugs and bad people and learn bad habits
- May drop out of school
- May feel too responsible
- May not be mature enough to take responsibility
- Money might open the door to all sorts of expensive things they shouldn't be using yet
- No time for homework
- No time for sleep
- Should be enjoying their childhood
- Should not have to support their family
- Take jobs away from older, more qualified people who need them
- They could be forced to work by their parents
- Too small, too young, may not be competent
- What is the reason for them wanting to work in the first place?
- Won't be properly paid
- Would not know how to react under pressure or in dangerous situation (e.g., robbery)

Strongly Disagree

- Already have too many things happening in their lives
- Can they handle their emotions—how would they treat customers?
- Child abuse/sexual abuse could happen
- Could increase runaways
- Could be corrupted/exposed to adult drug and alcohol use
- Does not teach kids the value of money/the idea of money could go to their heads/may give the message that money matters most
- Do they have the attention spans for long hours?
- Fall into peer pressure easily
- Fewer jobs to go around
- May drop out of school to work more
- Not mature enough/going through puberty/not ready
- Not mature/responsible enough
- Shouldn't the parent provide?
- Studies will be affected
- Too stressful
- Takes jobs from older teens
- The transition from elementary to high school is enough
- They have less time to be kids/grow up too fast/let kids be kids, don't make them grow up too fast
- Unhealthy: lack of sleep, poor work environment/dangerous
- Unions: what do they feel?
- Using children to do adult work is child labour.
- What if the parents have broken up? Only one needs to sign.



Representatives of the BCTF attended the third World Forum on Education in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Thousands of delegates from 44 countries analyzed common attacks on public education and explored ideas to support, protect, and build public education in communities world-wide. Local students entertained the delegates.

The World Education Forum

by Jacqui Birchall

This, the third World Forum on Education (WEF) is called “Education for a Better World.” Activists from 44 countries are crowded into the Estadio Gigante, in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Political chants ring out from university students in one part of the stands. The opening ceremonies fail to materialize. Someone starts the “Let’s go” hand clap, and everyone takes it up. At last, the lights dim, and classic, folk, and samba dancers accompanied by wonderful orchestras and singers provide a dazzling display. (All the performers are local elementary and high school students.) Politicians brought in to open the ceremonies are booed and finally the serious debates begin.

Debates are led regarding the individualistic logic that sees education as a commodity that can be sold. The forum examines who has access to knowledge in the globalized world, whom the information society has privileged, whom it has excluded, and ways to deal with the issues. We need to think of a new world where the struggle for education is based on humanitarian, ethical, social principles that defend our right to life. This event is designed to internationalize the WEF and to create guidelines for a World Education Platform to guide the considerations concerning education the world over as well as to be a reference for policies, programs, plans, and projects related to every level of teaching.

The program provides the theoretical, philosophical, and political bases for writing the guidelines. It is also intended to mobilize institutions, governments, networks, and social movements to participate in the debate; to allow the exchange of information among educators, researchers, social-movement members, NGOs, and students; and to share educational experiences that are based on the educational democratization process with the idea that “another world is possible.”

The three major plenary sessions are *Education beyond capital*, *Knowledge, power and*

emancipation, and *Solidarity, democracy and peace—another world is possible*. As well, some 79 smaller workshops occur. One that I attend and enjoy very much concerns the dangers and effects of GATS, NAFTA, etc., on public education. Led by Steve Stewart, of Co-development Canada, a B.C. NGO closely aligned with the BCTF, and including a presentation by Larry Kuehn, director of the Research and Technology Division at the BCTF, the workshop includes presenters from Mexico, Argentina, the U.S.A., and Ecuador. The workshop also

How, one presenter asks, can standardized tests measure the ability of students to be critical thinkers?

investigates the effects of the neo-liberal assertion that standardized tests are important and relevant. How, one presenter asks, can standardized tests measure the ability of students to be critical thinkers? Standardized tests make the companies that create the tests wealthy. In the U.S., the companies that prepare such tests are then able to compete globally, winning international rights to provide standardized tests to developing countries. They win the right to do this because they have already been overpaid to provide such irrelevant testing in the U.S. and they can easily outbid indigenous companies vying for the same contracts. Thus, the standardized testing of such G8 powers as the U.S. is then able to make further inroads into the cultures of others.

How does the right succeed, and what can the left learn? There are four dominant groups now in power in the world.

1. The *neo-liberals* believe public is always bad and private is always good. Standardized tests are essential to neo-liberals so they can tell the good schools from the bad. They favour a national curriculum and a test to measure teachers.

2. The *neo-conservatives* enjoy cultural struggles in

favour of dominant groups. The “Real America” for instance, is the battle cry of neo-conservatives in the U.S. The neo-conservatives believe in the control of national values.

3. The *conservative evangelicals* such as George Bush believe that capitalism is God’s economy, and one must not deal with race, sexuality, etc.

4. The *new professional middle class* has dominated education. This group believes that cultural capital is the measurement of capital, that educators must show they are competent through results and more testing, more often, and that if it moves in the classroom, it must be measured.

All of these beliefs will disempower those who already struggle for and in education.

We teachers must join the fight to keep education from becoming a commodity in the NAFTA, etc. We should become very aware of what is happening to our education in B.C., where we have a neo-liberal government willing to ruin what has been achieved over decades.

If you would like to learn more, check out the IDEA Network, (Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas), at www.vcn.bc.ca/idea, e-mail the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York at ccage@psccmail.org to receive copies of the publication *Globalization, Privatization, War: In Defence of Public Education in the Americas*.

To learn more about the World Forum on Education, check out their web site at www.portoalegre.rs.gov.br/fme/interna.asp?mst=5.

The World Social Forum takes place in Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 26 to 31, 2005. This very important conference provides space for discussion among civil society actors dedicated to alternative globalization. Go to this multilingual web site www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/home.asp.

Jacqui Birchall is a teacher at Fraser Heights Secondary School, Surrey, and a member of the BCTF’s International Solidarity Committee.



Retired Delta teacher Gary Storsley travelled to Ghana as part of a joint Canadian Teachers' Federation and Canadian International Development Agency Project Overseas team to share teaching ideas and methods. The project was developed with the co-operation of the Ghana National Association of Teachers.

Project Overseas: GHANA

by Garry Storsley

As part of a six-person team for the CTF Project Overseas, I was to be responsible for junior secondary science, Grades 5–9. There would be no reliable power, and things would be very basic, so we were to come with an open mind. That proved to be the best advice.

Janet Wilkinson (leader), Ron Ball, and Dean Kokanas, from Alberta, Dianna Van der Zalm and Phil Beveridge, from Ontario, and I were assigned to Ghana to share with the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) teaching skills, experiences, and culture. All project teams had a four-day orientation in Ottawa before departing.

GNAT officials met us late at night in Accra. The next day, we met the full team of nationals—three GNAT officials and an individual co-tutor for each of us. We were very warmly welcomed and wonderfully treated. For the next three days, we planned our schedules and topics for the sessions—administration and leadership, elementary and junior science, and Grade 4–12 math.

We saw much of the country as our schedule was at three teacher-training centres in

remote areas far from the main cities. Our team for the next 23 days included 15 nationals and five trucks and drivers. We left Accra at 9:00 a.m. on a Saturday, and after 14+ hours of dust, heat, blockades, mosquitoes, a lunch, rough roads, many small villages, and frequent stops to stretch we arrived in Wa, a small town in far northwest Ghana. An earlier storm wiped out all telecommunications to the outside for the next five days. About 160 teachers from as far as 380 km came, some triple bunked in the college dorms. Travel was mostly by walking and bicycle, often riding double, and occasionally a motorbike.

We met with over 450 Ghanaian educators, most from small-town and village schools...

Sunday was a prep day. Monday we were officially introduced by the zone GNAT rep and then on to our specific sessions, about 25 to 30 in each, ages 18 to 50s, with from 0 to 30 years of teaching experience (most 0–3 years). Classes went from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.,

then lunch, at the college cafeteria. Our sessions included labs, demonstrations, model lessons, lesson planning, practice teaching, teaching strategies, leadership styles, and classroom management. The sessions on administration and leadership with administrators (95% males) were at times controversial, especially when dealing with the decision-making models. The co-tutors held afternoon sessions. Our four evening sessions were on HIV/Aids, equality/gender equity, and human rights, a Canada night, and an awesome Ghana night, featuring national music and dancing.

Saturday was a travel day and sight-seeing time as we journeyed to Tamale, a larger town in north central Ghana. We repeated our program. A village chief—a junior secondary teacher—rode his old bike 7 km at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday morning, on only a trail, just to see us off. Our final training college was in Berekum, in west central Ghana.

We met with over 450 Ghanaian educators, most from small-town and village schools, most without even the basic facilities, conveniences, and resources of our schools. The ministry had recently mandated

public education to include the remote regions of the country.

The admin and leadership classes were 90% male; there were only 5% women in my junior secondary science, and none in the junior/senior math. The major concerns included low salaries, student difficulties

The major concerns included low salaries, student difficulties with English, most class sizes of 50 to 65...

with English, most class sizes of 50 to 65, no teacher incentives to do well, little or no input into the school's operation, few women teachers in the sciences and math, very few teaching resources, books, and supplies, no other colleagues in the same subject area, high absenteeism among the women teachers and the students, most women omitting the elementary science and math curriculum, a heavy curriculum with reduced time for the sciences and math, and no opportunities for in-service education and professional development.

Many had few writing

materials. Daily I gave out 15 sheets of lined paper and a blue or black pen. On Fridays, each received 25 sheets of paper and a red pen. For most this was their first sight of a red pen! Thanks to Staples and Office Depot for donating a full suitcase (32 kg) of paper and pens. On Friday afternoons, each participant received a certificate and we were presented with gifts of Ghanaian clothing.

The time went by too quickly, every day brought more cultural experiences to treasure. The participants openly expressed their appreciation to us and especially to the CTF and CIDA. I received several letters from participants, all expressing thanks and some requesting educational information. Our financial and volunteer support brings great educational returns! GNAT is highly respected in the communities. They are a wonderful people, very happy and patriotic and, enjoy their life fully. We can learn much by observing their appreciation, excitement, and exuberance to life. Thank you CTF, BCTF, CIDA, GNAT, and Ghana!

Garry Storsley is a retired Delta teacher and UBC faculty associate.

La rentrée : Le succès et le bien-être

par Ghislaine Varin

La rentrée scolaire marque la fin des vacances et nous ramène à la réalité du retour au travail et de ses tâches infinies. Avec tous les changements qui continuent à prendre place dans notre profession et leurs effets de responsabilités accrues pour les enseignants, il devient de plus en plus important de gérer notre travail de façon efficace tout en s'assurant de bien prendre soin de nous-mêmes. L'équilibre entre le rôle d'enseignant et notre vie personnelle doit être maintenu afin d'être heureux, de se garder en bonne santé et de pouvoir compléter notre travail avec enthousiasme.

Nous savons tous que le travail de l'enseignant n'est jamais fini. Nous pourrions y consacrer tout notre temps et il resterait encore des choses à faire. De plus, il est essentiel de reconnaître que nous avons moins de services et moins de

ressources dans notre système scolaire et que nous ne pouvons plus continuer à compenser pour les coupures budgétaires imposées par notre gouvernement au détriment de nos familles et de notre santé. Nous devons être réalistes dans notre approche au travail. C'est une question de survie.

Plusieurs éducateurs insistent sur l'importance de bien planifier tout en reconsidérant certaines de nos façons de faire et d'apprendre à mieux faire appel à nos collègues et à nos élèves. Voici quelques bons conseils :

- Commencez par dresser une liste des choses qui doivent être faites tout de suite, ce qui doit être fait sur une base quotidienne, puis les autres tâches. En autres mots, établissez vos priorités.
- Arrêtez de compliquer les choses; gardez la simplicité. Évitez de perdre trop de temps à tout raffiner.
- Entrenez une seule tâche à la fois et méfiez-vous d'un

surplus d'enthousiasme qui pourrait vous amener à passer trop de temps sur une seule activité.

• Reconnaissez que certaines leçons, unités sont sans aucun doute originales, éducatives et amusantes mais qu'elles exigent des heures de préparation et/ou de corrections. Il y a plein de leçons simples qui offrent un contenu riche en information et en pédagogie. Respectez cet important critère durant votre processus de planification et de création.

- Partagez vos unités et votre matériel avec vos collègues.
- Abonnez-vous à la liste de diffusion bctf-enfrancais pour avoir accès à des idées pratiques tout en établissant un contact avec d'autres enseignants dans notre province. Pour vous abonner, visitez le site www.bctf.ca/francais.
- Lisez *Le Coin français*.
- Examinez votre approche à la correction de tests, de travaux et de projets ainsi que

vos systèmes de compilation de notes-observations et discutez-les avec vos collègues afin de découvrir de nouveaux trucs.

• Rappelez-vous aussi que vos élèves peuvent compléter plusieurs de vos tâches autant dans vos évaluations qu'au niveau de vos corrections. L'auto-évaluation et l'évaluation avec un partenaire en utilisant une grille sont des méthodes reconnues et valorisées dans l'apprentissage de l'élève ce qui réduit le travail de l'enseignant. La préparation de matériel utile pour la classe tel qu'une affiche peut être complétée par l'élève. Laissez tomber le perfectionnisme qui n'est pas nécessaire et donnez le plaisir et la fierté aux jeunes de créer leur propre matériel de classe.

Il y a beaucoup d'autres bonnes idées à considérer pour réduire le travail sans fin d'un enseignant. Il faut prendre le temps de ré-évaluer notre approche et d'y apporter les changements nécessaires afin

de survivre dans un système de plus en plus exigeant et épuisant. Et lorsqu'on vous demande de vous porter volontaire dans des projets en dehors de la salle de classe et que vous vous sentez débordé et sous pression et que vous n'êtes pas vraiment apte à le faire, il est permis de dire 'non merci, je n'ai pas le temps présentement'.

Finalement, n'oubliez pas de prendre bien soin de l'un et l'autre, de vous encourager et de vous appuyer mutuellement.

Ghislaine Varin is the Coordinatrice des Programmes et Services en français in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division.

Synopsis: Maintaining a balance between our personal and professional lives contributes to teaching effectively and with enthusiasm. Steps can be taken to maintain personal wellness.

Green street... helping the planet... one classroom at a time

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Green Street is a national program, managed in English by the organization Learning for a Sustainable Future. We aim to deliver credible, accessible and affordable programs that are relevant to students' concerns, curriculum-linked, encourage a sense of personal responsibility for the environment, foster a commitment to sustainable living, and promote an enduring dedication to environmental stewardship. All programs are curriculum-aligned, action oriented, and require minimal teacher preparation.

The program links schools in Canada to reputable environmental education organizations across the country.

To browse our selection of programs and to register online, visit www.green-street.ca and go to Approved Programs. Or contact Allison Freeman at afreeman@green-street.ca or call toll-free at 1-877-250-8201. Also available in French at www.marueverte.ca.

Obsessive compulsive disorder with primary obsessions

The Anxiety Disorders Unit of the UBC Hospital is conducting a treatment study for people who suffer from recurrent, unwanted thoughts, images or urges called obsessions. They are typically sexual, violent or blasphemous in nature and it was previously thought to be untreatable.

Researchers are seeking participants for a study that compares the effectiveness of two different therapies to treat OCD with primary obsessions. An OCD subtype, the disorder accounts for about 20% of all OCD patients.

If you think that you are suffering from obsessions and would like to find out whether you qualify for free psychological treatment from experts in anxiety, please call 604-822-7676.

Youth and engineers without borders

Engineers Without Borders (EWB), with over 6,600 members from 23 Canadian universities, believes it is important for every individual to develop a sense of social awareness and responsibility.

The high-school outreach program offers interactive and educational workshops for Grade 8–12 students on global issues such as health, sanitation, and nutrition. Last year, our Water for the World workshop taught nearly 750 students about water filtration and the wide impact of clean water: from increased agricultural productivity to improved maternal health.

The two workshops prepared for 2004–05 academic year are *Food for Thought* (new!) and *Water for the World*. Presentation kits for schools outside the Lower Mainland are also available. To learn more about EWB, visit the national web site www.ewb.ca. To book a workshop or for more information, contact Neha Bangar, n_bangar@excite.com, 604-816-6237.

CNIB sourcebook

A Strong Beginning: A Sourcebook for Health and Education Professionals Working with Young Children who are Visually Impaired or Blind, can help early intervention specialists, occupational therapists, preschool teachers, nurses, speech language pathologists—anyone who works with preschool-age children with vision loss.

The sourcebook covers different eye conditions, how a blind or visually impaired child learns and plays, and how parents and professionals can work together to enhance a child's learning, social and emotional development.

Almost two years in the making, over 230 professional clinicians and front-line community service providers, including CNIB staff, contributed to or reviewed this sourcebook that was funded by the Population Health Fund of Health Canada.

Available in English and French, the sourcebook can be

ordered for \$39.95 (Cdn) through any CNIB Technical Aids Centre. Visit www.cnib.ca for office listings.

Resource looks behind the pandemic

Behind the Pandemic: Uncovering the Links Between Social Inequity and HIV/AIDS is a resource kit to help educators explore the pandemic, and demonstrate how Canadians can take part in the global response. It is ideal for high school social studies and global issues classes.

The kit, which was developed by two Canadian organizations—USC Canada and AIDS Vancouver—in partnership with the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, is being made available in both print and PDF formats free of charge.

Many Canadians still view HIV as strictly a personal health issue. *Behind the Pandemic* is divided into three modules designed to walk students through from a basic understanding of the pandemic to exploring how to help.

An extensive background information section is included in the kit. The teacher guides students through an exploration of the issue, so the teacher is not cast as the source of all knowledge on the subject.

Behind the Pandemic addresses many of the prescribed learning outcomes in the Grade 11 Social Studies curriculum. It is also suitable for locally developed sociology and global issues classes.

To order your free print copy, send an e-mail to Pandemic@usc-canada.org, or check USC Canada's web site at www.usc-canada.org for an electronic version.

Improve heart health

A research project combining a prototype report card (with letter grades), in conjunction with tailored lifestyle counseling, will help people become actively involved in improving their cardiovascular health.

To be eligible you must live in Fraser Health Region, which spans from Burnaby, east to Boston Bar and south to the

Canada/U.S. border. In addition, you must be 45–64 years of age, and at moderate or high risk of future cardiovascular disease because you have two or more risk factors (smoker, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes) or if you have already experienced some type of cardiovascular disease.

Counselors will work with project participants to reach attainable targets based on evidence-based guidelines.

If you are interested in participating in the project, please call 604-412-6492 for details.

A resource for Planning 10: Finances

This new resource contains a teacher binder of lesson plans and activities, a poster describing types of investments, a video on DVD describing the investment process, and a web site for teachers and students.

The British Columbia Securities Commission (BCSC), an independent provincial government agency responsible for regulating trading in securities in B.C. and protecting investors, held focus and discussion groups with teachers and students from different parts of B.C. to determine their needs and interests. A teacher advisory group reviewed the draft materials.

Michael Lesnik, a principal and teacher in School District #73 (Kamloops), assisted in the development of the BCSC resource. "The BCSC materials are unbiased, with no strings attached," he says. "There's no agenda, other than promoting financial life skills. Teachers can feel confident their students are getting sound, reliable information."

Lesnik was one of 40 B.C. teachers, representing CAPP, business education, consumer education, counselling and career education, who were instrumental in developing the materials.

The result is a comprehensive and easy-to-use resource. It covers topics like budgeting, savings, credit and debt, insurance, taxes and investing. Students also prepare a person-

al financial plan—a document they need to meet their graduation requirements.

According to Doug Hyndman, chair of BCSC, "Today's high school graduates will face a far more complex financial world than did past generations. Financial services and products are multiplying. This new world offers more opportunities but also more pitfalls, and con artists are using new and creative techniques to prey on inexperienced consumers. This means that youth need practical skills and knowledge to support financial decision-making, both in the short term and throughout their lives. That's the gap we're trying to fill with the new resource."

The resource is available free to teachers in B.C., see the advertisement on page 14 of this issue for details.

Challenging Homophobia in Schools

The 2nd edition of *Challenging Homophobia in Schools* includes many new and revised practical lesson plans from K–12 as well as a rationale on why schools need to teach about sexual orientation. A comprehensive background section on homophobia and heterosexism includes information on negative myths perpetuated against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, coming out issues, counselling ideas, violence prevention strategies, dealing with antigay slurs, and how to support students by starting gay-straight alliances in schools.

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

To order copies, mail a cheque payable to GALE-BC for \$26 CDN (includes postage) or \$21 US per copy to GALE-BC, Box 93678, Nelson Park PO, Vancouver, BC V6E 4L7.

You can view the new table of contents online at www.galebc.org, click on the resources icon on the home page to find it.

Gifts from the heart

Gifts from the Heart: 450 Simple Ways To Make Your Family's Christmas More Meaningful is by

Virginia Brucker, a BCTF member who is a primary teacher at Nanoose Bay Elementary School, on Vancouver Island. Her project was inspired by the loss of four parents and a school secretary to cancer at her small school. Now a Canadian bestseller, Brucker's book has raised \$84,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society and an additional \$110,000 for the service clubs and other groups that have also benefited from sales.

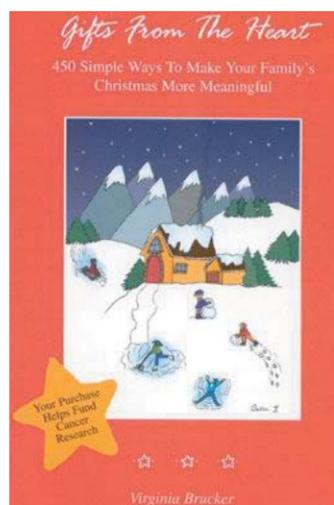
Although *Gifts from the Heart* is about Christmas, it is really about building character and community. What traditions would be meaningful for our students as well as our own children? How can we create lasting, loving, memories? *Gifts from the Heart* encourages not-so-random acts of Christmas

kindness. Many of the ideas can be used throughout the year.

Kindergarten through high-school teachers will find dozens

"Educating children's hearts is as important as educating their minds," says Brucker.

of inexpensive, kid-friendly ideas that help students develop social responsibility. Chapters include simple volunteer and craft projects that help students of all ages connect with family and community members.



Suggestions encourage "the gift of gratitude" and offset "the gimmies." One chapter offers ideas for an environmentally

"Our goal as educators is to help children grow up to be thoughtful, caring, connected adults."

friendly holiday, one offers ideas for celebrating with good books, and another offers suggestions for helping seniors. "Christmas and Divorce" has thoughtful suggestions for divorced or blended families. "Comfort and

Joy" provides sensitive suggestions for helping families that have experienced loss or critical illness. Interspersed throughout this 228-page book are inspirational quotations, recipes, craft projects, and samples of children's artwork and writing.

"Educating children's hearts is as important as educating their minds," says Brucker. "There are so many ways to integrate emotional literacy and service to others with the curriculum. Our goal as educators is to help children grow up to be thoughtful, caring, connected adults."

You can see sample chapters and read more about this book on www.3.telus.net/webelieve/. Single copies are available for \$20 (includes shipping and handling).

Contact Virginia Brucker at vlbrucker@telus.net, or call 250-468-9888.



Teachers' Pension Plan

Check it out: Your pension plan has a new look

The Teachers' Pension Plan has adopted a new, unique logo. Why the change? Quite simply, we'd like you to think of your plan as home base, a comfortable place where you can easily find the information you need. This will become more important as the amount of information and the number of services available to members increase, particularly online. Visual cues such as the plan colour and logo will help you more easily navigate this material and zero in on the resources you need.

The new logo brings a distinctive, positive look to the plan. On the practical side, it helps members identify plan material, even where the plan colour is not used.

It's a simple change, but we believe it's another step toward helping you get to know your plan and the many services it offers.

You can find the new logo and all kinds of pension information at www.pensionsbc.ca, then select Teachers'.

Teachers' reciprocal transfer agreement

Under the interprovincial reciprocal transfer agreement, you may be able to combine your service from other teachers' pension plans with your B.C. Teachers' Pension Plan (TPP) service and increase your pension benefit, or qualify sooner for an unreduced pension.

The agreement applies to teachers' pension plans throughout Canada, with the exception of plans in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Keep in mind that it is not always to your benefit to transfer service from another plan. For example, it may be financially advantageous for you to collect two pensions rather than transfer the service and collect a single pension. Before making a decision, you should contact the TPP and your previous pension plan to get more information. You may also want to see an independent financial advisor

before deciding whether or not to transfer your service.

For more information on this topic, see the TPP fact sheet Teachers' Reciprocal Transfer Agreement, available online at pensionsbc.ca, or contact the plan at the following phone numbers: Victoria 250-953-3022, Vancouver 604-660-4088, Toll-free in B.C. 1-800-665-6770.

TPP small pensions

Health benefits are now available for all retired teachers' pension plan members. Post-retirement extended health (EHB) and dental benefits are now available for retired members whose pension payment is not large enough to pay the premiums. While these members cannot have the premiums deducted directly from their pension payment, they can arrange to pay for EHB and dental coverage directly to Pacific Blue Cross via direct withdrawal from their bank account. This option is available for EHB and dental coverage, but is not available for Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage.

- If you know of anyone who lost the EHB and/or dental coverage since January 2001 because the pension payment was too small to pay the premiums let them know, they can regain this coverage. Teachers' Pension Services will explain how to do so. Members who lost their health benefits coverage before January 2001 are not eligible to regain their coverage.

- EHB and dental premiums will be based on the member's total pensionable service. For the current premium schedule, see the Teachers' Pension Plan Health Benefits for Retired Members fact sheet, available online at pensionsbc.ca and click on Teachers' or by contacting Teachers' Pension Services.

- If you know of anyone who would benefit from these changes or who may have questions or concerns about this change, please have them contact Teachers' Pension Services at the following numbers: Victoria, 250-356-9658; toll-free in B.C. 1-866-876-8877; toll-free in North America, 1-800-663-8823.

Ten new BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 2579 Canada: Who Are We and Where Are We Going? by Tony Carrigan, 290 p. This comprehensive resource and activity book is about immigration, multiculturalism, and the Canadian identity, all three are intertwined. The book includes nine chapters with over 100 related activities for students in Grades 4 to secondary on the following topics: The Immigration Story, The Immigrant's Progress, What is Culture?, Cultural Commonalities, Spiritual Celebrations, Does Canada Have a Culture?, Multiculturalism in Canada, What is Racism and Responding to Racism. Also included is an afterword, end notes, and an appendix on supporting second language learners. Grades 4+ **\$25.95**

2 LA 8098 How To Do Plays with Children produced by Evan-Moor, 289 p. This "how to" resource book provides teachers the opportunity to incorporate a play into many areas of the curriculum. Features include scripts, programs and invitations, costuming and scenery suggestions, and planning and organizing tips. Simple instructions for younger students, reproducible headbands for acting out 10 favorite stories, four rhyming plays with scripts, take-home scripts for individual parts, and reproducible masks. For older students three plays—*Things Could Always Be Worse*, *The Magic Pasta Pot* and *The Shoemaker and the Elves*—includes scenery, props and customizing directions, script, a program, and five readers theater selections, including *Cave Pet* and *The Giant Rutabaga*. Published in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. Grades 1-6. **\$28.95**

3 LA 9661 Art Making Materials: A Treasury of Recipes and Tips produced by the B.C. Art Teachers' Assn., 55 p. This book focuses on the materials with which art is created. The "Materials, Technologies and Process" is one of the four content areas of all B.C. art curricula, IRPs. This resource book provides recipes and tips that are helpful to teachers when commercial materials are not available and special affects can be achieved through some of the unique applications suggested in this book. Grades K-12. **\$12.95**

4 LA 9201 Canadian Social History: Songs and Stories of Canada by John Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat, 480-min. CD (MP3 and PDF). This CD includes a series of 16 half-hour audio presentations (in select and play MP3 format) with songs, drama, stories, and sound effects. The presentations are grouped around occupational themes (logging, mining, fishing, transportation, homesteading), geographic themes (Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, the Prairies and British Columbia), historical themes (the fur trade, settlement, the gold rushes) and musical themes (folk instruments, the transmission of songs). There are song-teaching sections for each presentation in which Jon and Rika, the host and singers teach the students directly. Included on the CD is a 125-page teacher's

guide (in select and display or print PDF format) with a chapter for each presentation containing words and music for 50 of the 83 songs, background information on the theme of the presentation as well as lesson ideas and discussion topics. Grades 2-11 **\$29.95**

5 LA 9338 Never Again—Peace Education and Remembrance Day by Jan Slakov, 285 p., 45-min. CD. Kit includes lesson plans for a variety of levels, from K-12, mostly in English, some in French. It also includes a 45-minute audio CD of peace songs and a CBC radio documentary about the Christmas truce of WW I. The lessons are designed to promote appreciation for the many cultures and other wonders of our planet and to promote critical thinking in this time of crisis with many people, from local students to foreign authors, having contributed to it. In this International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, it will help teachers and others promote nonviolence as a positive force, not just an absence of violence. Send in comments and ideas by e-mail js@saltspring.com, Grades K-12 **\$29.95**

6 LA 8458 The Complete Book of Multiplication and Division: Grades 2-3 produced by Creative Teaching Press, 144 p. This book includes activities to teach students powerful strategies to help them achieve mastery of basic multiplication and division facts and then apply that knowledge to more advanced number concepts. Activities include basic facts plus advanced number theories. Students build on prior knowledge and use a thinking or reasoning approach rather than solely rote memory. **\$18.95**

7 LA 9437 The Complete Book of Multiplication and Division: Grades 4-6 produced by Creative Teaching Press, 144 p. This book includes activities to teach students powerful strategies to help them achieve mastery of basic multiplication and division facts and then apply that knowledge to more advanced number concepts. Activities include basic facts plus advanced number theories. Students build on prior knowledge and use a thinking or reasoning approach rather than solely rote memory. **\$18.95**

8 LA 9978 Kids with Special Needs: Information and Activities to Promote Awareness and Information produced by Creative Teaching Press, 200 p. This award-winning book about kids with special needs includes background information, simulations, and classroom activities to promote understanding and awareness. Also includes a comprehensive resource list and bibliography. Topics cover all types of disabilities and health issues, as well as mainstreaming and inclusion, developing an IEP, using bibliotherapy, and more. (Note that the book is published in the USA and may contain some US-related references.) Grades 3-6 **\$19.95**

9 LA 2229 What Kind of Language is That? by Leah Kitamura and Kristi Lauridsen, SD. 42, 95 p. Teacher resource handbook presents a framework for discussing name-calling and verbal harassment in high school and how it can be stopped. Explores the issues of appropriate language, social responsibility, and challenging popular stereotypes. The intended purpose of this week-long unit is to make students conscious of the power of their use of language to affect others in their environment, specifically the school environment, and to promote a use of language at school that is sensitive, thoughtful, and appropriate for making all students and staff feel safe and comfortable. The Grade 9 level has been chosen as the primary target audience for this material, as this is a level that has been identified as a time when students begin to crystallize their identities, and an age when students are impressionable to positive role modeling that will set a tone for their senior school years. This unit includes the articulation and visual display of many powerful words for the sake of discussing their meaning and impact. Ground rules are reinforced throughout the unit to assist in the comfort level of all participants. Reproducible handouts and overheads are included for use with the lesson plans, as well as shorter workshops targeting Grade 8 students, student leaders, student facilitators and teachers. Grades 8+ **\$15.95**

10 LA 2029 Teacher Resource Pack: Teaching Global Issues produced by Victoria International Development Education Association, 135 p. This resource package provides teachers with information, tools, and resources to incorporate the teaching of global issues into the classroom. The package contains a starter pack entitled "Teaching Global Issues," two resources from the VIDEA Global Learner Series, one copy of the VIDEA Sweatshop series (Sweatshop Clothes) with facilitator's guide, and a feedback questionnaire. Designed as an introduction to the subjects, this resource is divided into teaching global issues and global learning activities. Grades 8-12. **\$22.95**

Many curriculum resources and information are available at www.bcalmer.ca/.

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 Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 or telephone 604-871-2180 or toll free 1-800-663-0163, Local 2180, with a Visa or Mastercard. GST and postage/handling are included in the prices. Orders are sent by return mail. Lesson Aids office and display room hours: 9:00-5:00 Mon. to Fri. from Sept. to June; 9:00 to 5:00 Tues. to Fri. during July and Aug.; 9:00-12:00 on Sat. during Sept., Oct., Jan., and Feb. bctf.ca/LessonAids

Get your vote on!



Young people who vote are rare, but a group of British Columbia youth have launched a campaign, entitled "Get Your Vote On," to change that. Get Your Vote On is a non-partisan campaign that aims to inform young citizens how to register to vote and how to get to the polls informed and engaged on important issues. Get Your Vote On will engage youth through fun community events like concerts and all-candidates debates leading up to the B.C. provincial election on May 17, 2005.

In Canada, since 1972, each successive generation of voters has had a lower voter-turnout rate. Large numbers of young people either are not registered to vote at all or are registered but do not vote. B.C. has 500,000 eligible-but-unregistered youth voters (aged 18-34); only one in five eligible voters aged 18-24 is on the voters list.

The percentage of eligible voters (registered or not) who cast ballots dropped from 70% in 1983 to 55% in 2001.

Young people are staying away from the polls in large numbers. Get Your Vote On wants to turn that trend around. Voting is one arena where all people have equal voices. Lots of young people say the issues they

"The world is run by those who show up..."

care about are not being addressed. The goals of Get Your Vote On include encouraging youth to come together to discuss important issues, to understand where candidates and parties stand on youth issues, to self-organize and mobilize various youth communities, and to make sure that youth priorities are on the electoral agenda. Initial survey results indicate that big issues for youth are healthcare,

environment, education, and social services.

"The world is run by those who show up, and young people in this province and across Canada are simply not showing up at the polling booth," said Sarah Rozell, from Get Your Vote On. Young people are starting to realize that the low voter turnout among youth is a significant problem, one that many youth feel they need to tackle themselves. There are many avenues to express values, and Get Your Vote On believes that a crucially important one is to vote.

Get Your Vote On is looking for volunteers. It is also seeking endorsements from B.C. unions, organizations, musicians, performers, filmmakers, and artists who believe in the importance of the campaign. For more information, visit www.getyourvoteon.ca, e-mail info@getyourvoteon.ca, or call: 604-685-6631.

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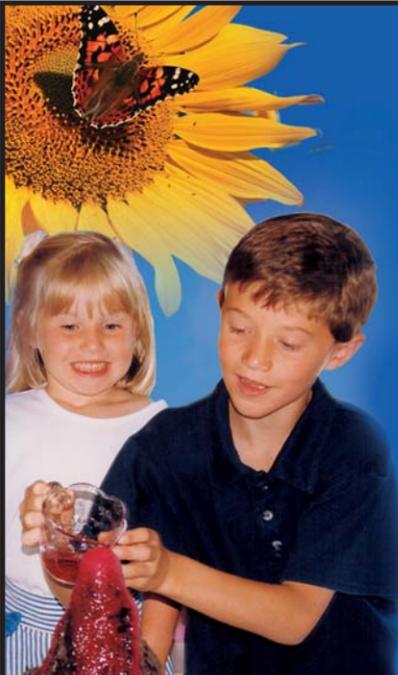
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SEND (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) • First Name • Last Name • Name of School • School Mailing Address • School Phone Number • School email address • Email to contact you • Number of planning 10 classes you will be teaching in 2004-2005 school year

PRODUCED BY THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SECURITIES COMMISSION

Italian Campaign Victory in Europe D-Day Liberation of Holland






Over the next twelve months, Canadians will commemorate the 60th anniversaries of a series of events which defined who we are as a nation and what we can accomplish together.

These anniversaries represent one of the last opportunities for large numbers of WWII veterans to participate in the commemoration of the proud history they helped create.

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PD CALENDAR

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MISCELLANEOUS

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INTERNATIONAL JOB FARE — Toronto, Feb. 7-9, 2005. Attendance is invitation only. Ray Sparks, raysparks@eastlink.ca or visit www.search-associates.com

Advertising information
<http://bctf.ca/newsamag> or contact
Kathleen Smith, newsamag@bctf.ca

OCTOBER 2004

1-2 Armstrong. Kim Sutton's newest workshop, Building a Strong Elementary Mathematics Program, Pleasant Valley Secondary School, 8:30 to 3 each day. \$209. Online registration www.creativemathematics.com, or phone 1-800-841-5193.

1-3 Burnaby. B.C. Peace Education Conference, Peace Ed 2004, Building A Culture of Peace, Simon Fraser University. Embracing diversity, teaching compassion, inspiring youth leadership. www2.sfu.ca/humanities-institute/peace-ed.html

8 Gold River. School District 84 (Vancouver Island West) one-day workshop featuring Gordon Neufeld and his Teachability of Children, Gold River Secondary School. Contact Joanne Folkins, 250-283-2538, jfolkins@cablerocket.com, by September 30.

8 Vancouver. Social Responsibility: Building Students' Moral Intelligence, with Dr. Michele Borba, sponsored by the Vancouver School District, Churchill Secondary School. Contact Lisa Pedrini, 604-713-5216, lpedrini@vsb.bc.ca, vsb.bc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/875038DA-8004-4C43-802E-DB0D4905A300/0/113BORBAEXTERNAL.pdf

16 Burnaby. Teacher exchange orientation and information session sponsored by the BC Exchange Teachers Association, 12:00 to 4:00, Schou Centre \$10 per family. Contact Terri Maltais, tmaltais@telus.net

21-22 Vancouver. B.C. School Counsellors' Association (BCSCA) Conference, Building Community...With Heart, Coast Plaza Hotel on Denman. Featuring Gabor Mate and Michele Borba. Many presenters. Contact Jan Pinkerton, jpinkerton@sd54.bc.ca, Debra Cullinan, cullinan@sfu.ca, or Joanel Clarke, jlclarke@deltasd.bc.ca, bctf.ca/psas/bcsca

21-22 Vancouver. B.C. Business Education Association (BCBEA) conference, Go for the Gold, focussing on 2010 Olympics and the need for business skills to build, administer, and tidy up afterwards. \$100. Eric Hamber Secondary School. Contact Tim Ireland, tireland@vsb.bc.ca

21-22 Vancouver. B.C. Teacher-Librarians' Assn (BCTLA) conference, Celebrating School Libraries, with Ken Haycock, 30 workshops, new resources, and publishers' displays, Magee Secondary School. Visit bctf.ca/vesta/vta/celebrate/

21-23 Vancouver. 2004 Joint Aboriginal Education Conference, Reflections of the Past; Responsibilities for the Future, Sty Wet Tan, The Longhouse, and Scarfe Ed. Building, UBC. Conference sponsors: First Nations Education Association (FNEA), Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP, UBC), and Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (BCTF). Contact Laura Rudland, lrudland@vsb.bc.ca

21-23 Langley. B.C. Teachers for Peace and Global Education (PAGE) conference, Respect, Restore, Reverse: Justice circles in education, Springbrooke Retreat Centre. Keynote speaker G. Manyirons. Contact Donald Wilson, dwilson@prp.sd41.bc.ca, or Daniel Shiu, 604-588-3418, dshiu@shaw.ca

22 Okanagan. B.C. Co-operative Learning Association (BCCLA) Conference, with Spencer Kagan. Contact Kim Latval, langleyteachers@radiant.net

22 Vancouver. Joint Conference of Educators Against Racism (EAR) and English as a Second Language PSA (ESLPSA), Faces and Facets of Change, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School. Contact Jo-Anne Preston, 250-337-5730, f: 250-923-3625, jo-anne.preston@ercn.net, bctf.ca/psas/ESLPSA

22 Richmond. B.C. Social Studies Teachers' Association (BCSSTA) Fall Conference 2004, with Maude Barlow, Canada Council of Canadians, J.N. Burnett Secondary School. Contact Barb Odenwald, bodenwald@shaw.ca, or Elizabeth Byrne, rayandliz@shaw.ca

22 Vancouver. Vancouver. Computer-Using Educators of B.C. (CUEBC) Fall Conference, Learning with Technology-Integrating Computers in the K-12 Curriculum, David Thompson Secondary School. \$99. Keynote by Dr. David Jonassen. Presenters contact sreid@vsb.bc.ca; registrants contact jstassinop@vsb.bc.ca, cuebchizons.ca

22 Port Coquitlam. B.C. Technology Education Association (BCTEA) Technology Education Conference 2004, Riverside Secondary School. Contact David Romani, 604-941-6053, f: 604-941-2639, dromani@sd43.bc.ca, bctf.ca/BCTEA/Conf/

22 Langley. B.C. Association of Mathematics Teachers (BCAMT) Fall Conference, Mathematics Re-loaded: Pathways to the Future, Walnut Grove Secondary School. Keynote by David Sufrin and Fort Langley Numeracy Walk with Kanwal Neel and Mignonne Wood. Contact chair John Pusic, jpusic@sd35.bc.ca, or registrar Rebecca Rowley, rrowley@sd45.bc.ca

22 Vancouver. B.C. Teachers of English Language Arts (BCTELA) conference, East Side Stories: Taking it to Broadway, Vancouver Technical Secondary School. Contact Cathleen Peters, s: 604-596-7471, sf: 604-596-6192.

22 Richmond. B.C. Association of Teachers of Modern Languages (BCATML) conference, New and Renew, with Miles Turnbull, CASLT. Special emphasis on supporting non-specialist teachers. Contact Registrar Diane Tijman, 604-668-6055, dijman@richmond.sd38.bc.ca

22 Richmond. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association (LATA) The Vital Link Conference, Survival Skills for Learning Assistance Teachers, Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, and Administrators, Vancouver Airport Marriott. Contact Brenda Bell, bellbg@shaw.ca, bctf.ca/psa/LATA/conference/events.htm

22 Richmond. Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children in B.C. (AEGTC-CBC) Conference, Gifted Ed 2004, Teaching the Gifted Learner Through Problem-Based Learning, featuring Shelagh Gallagher, Radisson President Hotel, 604-276-8181. Contact: David Halme, 1273 Kathleen Drive, Duncan, BC V9L 5R7, h: 250-748-1955, f: 250-748-5003, dhalme@shaw.ca

22 North Vancouver. B.C. Dance Educators' Association (BCDEA) conference, Carson Graham Secondary School. Contact Linda Medland, 604-986-0644, f: 604-903-3556, Cheryl Koch, 250-752-0832, cheryljazz@shaw.ca, or Judy Herridge, 604-541-8170, f: 604-531-8442, judy_g@shaw.ca

22 New Westminster. Physical Education Provincial Specialist Association (PEPSA) and Douglas College's 17th Annual QDPE Professional and Personal Development Conference, with choices among 55 workshops, Douglas College. Contact Douglas College Centre for Sport Recreation and Wellness, Box 2503, New Westminster, BC V3L 5B2, 604-527-5492, f: 604-527-5032, David Munro, munrod@douglas.bc.ca, or Denise Rutherford, rutherford@douglas.bc.ca

22-23 Richmond. l'Association Provinciale des Professeurs d'Immersion et du Programme francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (APPIPC) congrès 2004, Le rayonnement du français, Executive Inn Airport Plaza. Dr Lucille Mandin, Faculté St-Jean de l'Université de l'Alberta nous entretiendra du processus de lecture et d'écriture en français langue maternelle et langue seconde.

Contact Anne Louise McFarland, 250-544-0304, f: 250-544-0390, almcfarland@shaw.ca

22-23 Kamloops. Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association (THESA) conference, Making Links: Getting in the 'Loops, with Victoria Maxwell, "Crazy for Life," NorKam Secondary School. Contact Denise Marr, 250-372-5515, den_marr@yahoo.com, thesaconference.ca

22-23 West Vancouver. Association of B.C. Drama Educators (ABCDE) conference, The Art of Direction, West Vancouver Secondary School. Contact Judith Hogan, 604-981-1100, judith@telus.net, or Avril Blaney, 604-981-1300, ablaney@sd45.bc.ca

22-23 Sooke. B.C. Culinary Arts Specialist Association (BCCASA) conference, Edward Milne Secondary School. Contact Al Irving, airving@sd64.bc.ca

22-23 Burnaby. Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association (PITA) conference, Work smarter, Not harder, outstanding workshops in literacy, numeracy, fine arts, PE, French, and more, Burnaby Mountain Secondary School. Contact Carol Tirk, 1-877-SEE-PITA, conf_registrar@pita.bc.ca

22-23 Richmond. B.C. Primary Teachers' Association (BCPTA) conference, with Friday keynote Milt McClaren: Counting What Counts: The Challenge of Accountability for Primary Teachers; Saturday keynote, Colleen Politano, Counting on Ourselves: Counting on Our Kids: Promising Primary Possibilities. Friday-evening Mini Conference for Teachers New to Primary features Charlotte Diamond, A World of Music. Ramada/Park Plaza Hotel. Details and registration forms: bctf.bc.ca/bcpta

22-23 Thetis Island. Fall Conference and AGM of B.C. Rural and Small Schools Teachers' Association (BCRSSTA), The Rural Voice: Building on shared experience, Thetis Island School. Contact Wendy Nielsen, UBC Department of Curriculum Studies, 2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4, h: 604-562-7073, w: 604-822-2337, f: 604-822-4714, nielsen@interchange.ubc.ca

NOVEMBER 2004

2-4 Edmonton. Online Learning Symposium: Learn, Think, Change! for teachers, administrators, and post-secondary instructors operating online programs/teaching online, Mayfield Inn. \$251.45 for AOC members, \$310.30 non-members. Over 100 workshops, keynote speaker, and trade fair. Contact Linda Withers, 780-415-8524, f: 780-427-9183, linda.withers@gov.ab.ca, Albertaonline.ab.ca

6-8 Vancouver. Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education, 20 workshops, many on math and science, Westin Bayshore Hotel. Hosted by the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the BC Ministry of Education. Contact FNEsc, 604-925-6087, jenniferw@fnesc.ca, fnesc.ca/conferences/index.cfm

18-20 Red Deer, Alberta. Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta Provincial Conference, Minds in Motion, Red Deer Lodge. Keynote speaker Richard Lavoie; break-out sessions on learning and memory in learning disabilities, transition to post secondary education, strategies for adhd students, assistive technology for literacy success, invisible disability—sensory motor dysfunction, and more. Call 403-340-3885, or visit ldea-reddeer.ca/upcoming.htm

PSA PD Day—October 21, 2005

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

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

Travel back 170 million years



Grade 6 and 7 students from Armstrong Elementary School in Armstrong, B.C. travel to Drumheller, Alberta, to study dinosaurs in their natural habitat. The annual trip in June is a tradition enjoyed by students, parents, and teachers.

by Doreen Murphy and Denise Brown

You are on a journey back in time. You are traveling back 170 million years to the cretaceous period, when B.C. was under water, and tropical Alberta was home to the amazing dinosaurs. Thus begins our journey into paleontology with our Grade 6 and 7 students. During May and June, we delve into the geological history of Western

Canada and the exploration of dinosaurs and their demise. We conclude the unit with a four-day trip to Drumheller, Alberta. A favourite memory of many of our students, the annual trip is a tradition at our brick school, Armstrong Elementary. Day One, we drive in our school bus to Drumheller. We stop for lunch at Emerald Lake and take in the beautiful sight of this glacier lake. Our first night is in a Quonset hut at the Drumheller Dinosaur Campground. We

arrange beds, eat dinner, swim in the outdoor pool, and go for a hike in the hills looking for fossils. Day Two is spent in Horse Thief Canyon searching for interesting rocks and fossils. After lunch, we head to the Royal Tyrrell Museum, and the students take part in four programs facilitated by the museum staff: a jeopardy game of information relating to geology and paleontology, a dinosaur mystery game involving solving clues from a dig site,

a gallery tour, and a fossil-making workshop. We swim at night at the local pool, and our night is spent sleeping under T-Rex and Albertosaurus in the dinosaur gallery. We spend Day Three at the Reptile World, and then we are off to Calgary. We visit the zoo, the Imax theatre, and a leisure center. We stay at the University of Calgary. On Day Four, we head for home, the return trip includes a guided tour of the Lake Louise Hotel and a picnic at Finn Creek. The

trip is action packed, aided by three parents, and a wonderful adventure for one of the last weeks in June. We don't know who enjoys it more, the parents, the teachers, or the students! A trip like this confirms our philosophy that learning goes far beyond the boundaries of a classroom!

Doreen Murphy and Denise Brown teach at Armstrong Elementary School, Armstrong.

Part 1

Why teach spirituality?

by Amber Harvey

The United Nations General Assembly's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, Principle 2, states:

"The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration."

With this statement in mind, and recalling that we aim to teach the *whole child*, I began to explore the subject of children and spirituality within the context of public education.

What is meant by spirituality? Do children develop spiritually as they do physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and aesthetically? If so, how can we map that development? And finally, what is our role as

teachers in addressing children's spirituality?

I first sought definitions of the word *spiritual*. I found that *religious* and *mystical* are two synonyms for *spiritual*. Living, as we do, in a pluralistic society, we have chosen to remove religion from our curriculum, except when we teach students to understand the tenets of world religions. The terms *mystical* and *mysticism* evoke religious practices such as meditation, contemplation, and asceticism. Are we afraid to address the spiritual development of children, lest we enter the realms of religion or mysticism? Can we define spirituality in a way that reduces this fear? Looking further, I found *spirituality* defined as, "interested in things of the spirit." *Spirit* is defined as "essential character, or soul." Yes, spirituality is difficult to define. But if we are to teach it, we first need to understand what we are teaching.

My research then led me to a paper by David G. Kibble, who teaches in Britain. Education in

the U.K. is under the direction of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). This body has deemed that spiritual development is closely connected to children's moral, social, and cultural development. OFSTED states that spiritual development is characterized, "by considering, by reflecting, and by responding." (OFSTED, 1995, pp. 89-90.)

Kibble then suggests other ways that children's spiritual growth might be developed.

"...through the development of pupils' imagination, through the challenge that is provided by new ideas and experiences, and by the change that all pupils go through as they progress through the school." "... through working with others and through examining one's own beliefs and the beliefs of others." And "...pupils expressing delight in what is good and wonderful."

This approach sounded very positive to me, and something I thought teachers would support as a body. Why then, is this aspect of a child's education not given the same focus as, say,

aesthetic or academic development?

Let's look at some of the curriculum areas we teach. Most elementary school teachers are responsible for teaching the arts: music, drama, and visual arts. Some teachers would say they aren't particularly gifted artistically. So they turn to resources that help them teach their students to appreciate the arts and to grow artistically. Some elementary teachers don't feel they are gifted mathematically. Yet with the help of resource materials and workshops, they are able to teach their students the necessary mathematical knowledge and skills.

Back to my questions of whether we are afraid to teach spirituality, and whether we can find a less troubling definition. If we accept spirituality as one of several facets of the whole child, and have confidence that we can learn to teach to this aspect of the child as we do to all the others, we will have begun to fulfill our obligations as indicated by the United Nations

General Assembly. I believe we are all doing this already, in a variety of ways.

In my next instalment, I will present the thought-provoking ideas of more authors and researchers in this subject. One of these is David Tacey of the School of Arts and Critical Enquiry, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. He writes:

"If spirit is present in students, our institutions are not fulfilling the promise that is inherent in the word *education* itself. There is more human reality to be 'led out' than the institutions are comfortable with.

"Education is not able to deliver what it promises, much less is it able to claim that it is satisfying the needs of its clientele."

Amber Harvey teaches at Quadra Elementary School, Victoria.

Part 2 of this "Teacher as Researcher" article will appear in the October 2004 issue of *Teacher*.