

# Teacher

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B.C. Teachers' Federation  
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## Taking a stand

*Because kids matter and teachers care*



by Jinny Sims

British Columbia's excellent public school system has been built by the teachers, parents, and citizens of this province over many generations. But, no one has ever given the teaching profession in this province anything significant that we didn't have to fight for. Throughout the long history of public education and the teaching profession in this province, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation has been there, representing the economic and professional interests of teachers, advocating for improved learning conditions for students, and working for a socially progressive and just civil society. And the BCTF and its locals have been there to unite teachers and to support us in achieving our collective goals.

In January 2002, the Liberal provincial government legislatively imposed terms and conditions of employment upon teachers while we were on a limited and legal job action. They stripped our collective agreement of all matters pertaining to limits on class size, composition of classes, and staffing requirements for specialist teachers. And they made it illegal to bargain those matters into our agreement in the future. It took previous generations of teachers many years, many struggles, and often strikes to obtain the teaching and learning conditions that existed in B.C. schools prior to 2002. Those conditions, arrived at by both employees and

employers at the bargaining table, are gone now, and the effect on the education system has been significant: larger classes and fewer teacher-librarians, counsellors, learning assistance teachers, special education teachers, and ESL teachers.

The deterioration of our teaching conditions and our students' learning conditions is not the only effect of the government's attack on our collective agreement. Our loss of bargaining rights as teachers has diminished our role in the education process at the school level, the district level, and the provincial level. The government no longer consults the teaching profession when introducing major changes to the public school system. And government continues to question our fundamental right to speak out.

***It's important to let parents know the needs of our classrooms and to inform the public about the needs of our schools. Together we can do this.***

One thing we have learned from our history is that when we are united, we can achieve our goals. Teachers in Victoria and New Westminster took strike action in 1919 and 1921 for the basic right to represent teachers

and collectively bargain their salaries. In 1939, Langley teachers stood up to their employer on threat of demotions, forced transfers, and dismissals to secure the implementation of an arbitrated settlement. In 1971, all B.C. teachers walked off the job to support improvements in our pension plan. Surrey teachers walked off the job in 1974 to protest large classes. In 1983, teachers walked out for three days across the province, to secure seniority rights in our agreements. And between 1988 and 1993, teachers in locals all over the province engaged in job action as necessary to obtain class-size limits, class-composition language, and many other teaching conditions that are part of our work life today. Once again, it is time for teachers to take a stand.

When we speak out as teachers about the conditions in our classrooms, the public listens. A public-opinion survey done by the Mustel group in June 2005 confirms what previous polls have shown: classroom teachers have the highest credibility of all. And 88% of the public agree that it is important for teachers to speak out on public education issues like funding cuts, larger classes, and reduced support for children with special needs. A major BCTF survey of B.C. teachers taken earlier this year indicates a significant deterioration in classroom conditions. For example, when asked to respond to the statement

"Adequate special education assistant time is available to each student who needs it," an overwhelming 82% of 14,500 teachers who responded to the survey disagreed with the statement. It's important to let parents know the needs of our classrooms and to inform the public about the needs of our schools. Together we can do that.

***It will require you to be part of a process that lets government and the public know that together the teachers of B.C. are taking a stand because kids matter and teachers care.***

Your Executive Committee is committed to doing all that we can to achieve our goals—improved learning conditions in our schools, a fair and reasonable salary increase for all members, and ultimately a return to full bargaining rights for teachers. But what we achieve will not be won by me or by the Executive Committee. It will require you to be part of a process that lets government and the public know that together the teachers of B.C. are taking a stand because kids matter and teachers care.

*Jinny Sims is president of the B.C. Teachers' Federation.*

## President's message



Jinny Sims

This fall we are living through a critical moment in the history of public education in British Columbia. Together, we are writing another chapter in our real-life saga of advocacy for students.

Teachers have never hesitated to speak up for what we know is right, for what we know is needed in our schools. When we have taken a stand, we have been able to effect positive change.

Unfortunately this provincial government, like others before it, tried to turn back the clock on many of our hard-won rights and improvements. The B.C. Liberals repeatedly attacked us with draconian legislation and punitive policies. They attacked us in the media and in our communities. They sought to divide us from parents and separate us from one another.

Through it all, we remained resolute and united. We fought their legislative attacks in the courts, resisted their bad policies in our schools, and spoke out in the media to let British Columbians know where we stand.

All of these actions took courage and conviction—qualities teachers have never lacked. It takes courage to be a teacher, and conviction to be a professional. Fortunately, we can find the strength for both roles from the solidarity within our union.

Now we must carry on advocating for our students, and not be too reluctant to advocate for ourselves as well. Just as teachers are held accountable for our actions, so too must legislators be held accountable. Their role is to build and support the institutions of civil society and democracy, not to undermine and diminish them. So we must continue to insist that this government act on behalf of all students and all citizens.

We owe it to our students and to the next generation of teachers who will lead our profession.

*Jinny*

## Thanks for taking a stand

Thank you for your letter regarding the upcoming B.C. election.

As you can see by my address, I live in the middle of Europe, very far from a voting station. I would vote by mail if there was time and the possibility. I don't think either can happen, as I never received any information from anybody on voting procedures for teacher members who now live in other countries, but are Canadian citizens.

However, I do appreciate your efforts and wish you all success. I have been following developments in the B.C. educational field for many years and find that Campbell's ways are simply disgusting—no other adjectives are necessary.

How is it that in this century of technology, North America is blessed with idiots like George W. Bush, Gordon Campbell, and the inept Stephen Harper? To name just a few!

I am 82 years of age and have done my political bit to raise the status of teachers and education in B.C., at a time where there was less money than today, but a lot more honesty and awareness of what was what. We did surface, and now, we must not let it all slip away. Thank you for your energetic and aggressive fight. We will surface again. I am with you in spirit every inch of the way, and I wish I could be with you in an active way as well.

Anne Cecilia Matheson  
Slovakia

## BCTF lacks credibility when discussing the Middle East

I have often turned a blind eye when it came to BCTF political involvement in foreign affairs, but the increase in this activity by unions in general, and the BCTF specifically, needs some comment.

This situation was emphatically brought to my attention by a Jewish friend of mine who said, "Ken, have you heard some of the things that the BCTF has been saying about Israel lately?" When I indicated that I had heard them, he continued, "...and it doesn't concern you?"

I muttered something to the effect that these are resolutions that are humanistic statements being made by the BCTF, and that such resolutions really don't have much effect in reality. Nevertheless, my friend was convinced that these statements were part of a worldwide conspiracy of "the left" toward the promotion of antisemitism and anti-Israel activities. He was so intimidated by what he had heard coming from the BCTF AGM that both he and his wife decided to vote Liberal in the provincial election because the BCTF and NDP obviously supported "the leftist unions who are antisemitic."

The above is one small, but very prevalent example of a common perception of antisemitism in the political activities of the BCTF and other labour unions. This perception is further validated by the lack of first-hand knowledge and lack of balance when the unions publicly discuss the Middle East conflict.

It doesn't seem to matter if "the wall" built by Israel as a defense against suicide bombers has been shown to be very effective

for this purpose. In fact, the unions do not address acts of terrorism against Israeli civilian targets at all.

As a Jew who has had discussions on a personal level with Muslims in the occupied West Bank and more recently in Turkey, I can appreciate the historical complexities and corruptions on both sides of the conflict. The issues will not be easy to solve, and will most certainly not be helped along by the uninformed meddling of the North American labour-union movement.

If the unions and the BCTF cannot do a credible and a balanced job of discussing the educational issues concerning the Middle East (and they have demonstrated that they cannot) then they should concentrate on education in B.C. where they know the issues and can have a positive influence on them. The BCTF has more than enough on its plate in dealing with the politics around education in B.C.

Please stop alienating and intimidating our members and our potential supporters.

Kenneth Abramson  
Vancouver (retired)

In late May 2005, *The Vancouver Sun's* Pete McMartin wrote criticizing BCTF's AGM international/political agenda regarding the Israel wall.

To quote Anita Goddard in *Teacher*, May/June 2005, "I am dismayed and disturbed."

My reaction: they are adding oil to the fire. Literally. Maybe they are not aware that a few months ago a Montreal Jewish school library was set on fire.

Only a librarian can appreciate the irreplaceable loss. We, in Vancouver schools, have been lucky, so far.

Have "class size, funding, and like trivia" all been sorted out with Mr. Campbell?

It is embarrassing that the BCTF need be told of their mandate in a local newspaper column.

Celine Wolfson  
Vancouver (retired)

## Leaky schools in B.C.

Like writer Noel Herron, I and other homeowners are very concerned that both non-residential and residential structures are at risk of ongoing water damage and subsequent rot because of a combination of factors including what is going on in the building industry and what is NOT happening in the office of the Attorney General. The Attorney General's lack of teeth is appalling.

While my house was built in 2002 according to neither plan nor contract, there are also building code violations that have severely impacted the proper functioning of the home. Furthermore, the ensuing stress, delays, and legal dispute have eroded the quality of our lives. Apart from the fact that our house leaks, who will be held accountable? The insurance company with which our builder registered is currently under criminal investigation.

The builder's lawyer is trying to tie the contractual dispute to warranty issues. How and when will I be able repair all the other problems, too? To my dismay, I have learned that part of the problem might be attributed to a toxic relationship between the builder and his subtrades and

suppliers. For example, if the builder does not treat his trades and suppliers with respect, perhaps forcing them to cut costs by substituting inferior materials or even eliminating them (as in my case by not providing any flashing around the arched windows), then upon whom or what do you think these workers might take out their frustration?

I am very concerned about the effect of the furious rate of new home construction in the Lower Mainland and the lack of homeowners' protection. I know too well how the dream of home ownership can become a nightmare.

Lorelei Quidding  
Langley

## Dave Barrett's comments on being named as an officer of the Order of Canada

"Barrett gave credit for the honour to his parents, his wife Shirley, and the many teachers who influenced his life.

"What a lucky generation I belong to," he said. "Great teachers, great access to wonderful public schools. I don't allow anybody to criticize teachers or the public school system. Teachers give so much of themselves that only shows up to a lot of us later in our years."



# Golden Leaf Awards

## Teacher writers win awards

The Canadian Educational Press Association (CEPA) presented their Golden Leaf Awards in June, in St. John's, Newfoundland. The association is a national group of writers, editors, and media relations people from teacher organizations across Canada.

This year, *Teacher* and four B.C. primary teachers received a Certificate of Excellence in the Writing and Editing category for the series of articles on teaching primary. Glen Gough (Fort Nelson), Lori Robinson (Merritt), Sheila Stokes (Kamloops), and Julie Zoney (Maple Ridge) wrote the primary series which ran in the March 2005 issue of *Teacher*.

*Teacher* newsmagazine and Pat Clarke, the director of the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division also received a Certificate of Excellence, Writing

## Teachers' congress

During the election campaign last spring the B.C. Liberals promised to seek input from teachers through a teachers' congress. Shirley Bond, education minister, was asked about the congress on August 31, 2005, when BCTF representatives met with her for the first time. Bond claimed that the government had not yet decided how teachers would be invited.

Jinny Sims, BCTF president, expressed the need for those teachers to be elected by their peers.

The Special Representative Assembly held during Summer Conference 2005 at UBC, decided that:

1. All teachers participating in the proposed teachers' congress should be elected through their locals, and costs related to participation in the congress should be covered by the government.
2. That if the above conditions are not met, BCTF members will not participate in the congress.

and Editing, for the Supervision of Learning series including "The new panopticon" (*Teacher*, Nov./Dec. 2004) and "Web of control" (*Teacher*, Jan./Feb. 2005).

In the category Original Graphics, Karen Steele, BCTF Graphics Department supervisor was awarded a Certificate of Excellence for her "World Teachers' Day poster."

The CEPA also presented *Teacher* newsmagazine, the BCTF Communications and Campaigns Division, and NOW Communications with a Certificate of Excellence in the Media Campaign category for "Campaign to make public education an issue in the May 17, 2005 provincial election."

Congratulations to everyone for your superb work. It is an honour to be recognized by your peers.



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100 - 550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2  
871-2283, toll free 1-800-663-9163, F: 871-2289  
newsmag@bctf.ca bctf.ca/newsmag

### Editor

Peter Owens

### Assistant editor

Kathleen Smith

### Design consultant

Betty Sommerville

### Proofreader

Bev Humphries

### 2005-06 Teacher Advisory Board:

Brent Hocking

Susan Fonseca

Pamela Hachey

Julia Johnson

Debra Swain

### Staff writers

Colleen Hawkey

Larry Kuehn

Mike Lombardi

Peter Owens

Kathleen Smith

### 2005-06 BCTF Executive Committee:

John Chisamore

Jim Iker

Susan Lambert

Irene Lanzinger

Jill McCaffrey

George Popp

Fran Robinson

Jinny Sims

Kathleen Thomson

Linda Toews

Val Windsor

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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.

## How to be a BCTF-endorsed candidate for the College of Teachers' Council

The next round of elections for the BC College of Teachers' Council under the provisions of the *Teaching Profession Act* will take place in April/May 2006.

The BC College of Teachers is the regulatory body of the teaching profession in B.C. The college has a focused mandate: teacher education, teacher certification, and member discipline.

Responsibility for governing the college rests with the 20-person council. Twelve of 20 council members are elected by the membership. Eight council members are appointed by the minister of education.

The role of a council member is to make policy decisions, to make quasi-judicial decisions concerning individuals and institutions, to represent the college on various external committees, and to communicate with members.

Elections are held in four of the 12 geographic zones each year. This year, elections will be held in the following college election zones, North Central (Zone 2), Lower Fraser Valley (Zone 7), Lower Mainland South (Zone 9), and Vancouver Island (Zone 12). The term of office is a three-year term beginning August 1 and ending on July 31.

The BCTF has established a policy that provides for the zonal selection of a BCTF-endorsed candidate in each zone where an election is being held. Only active BCTF members are eligible for BCTF endorsement as candidates in BC College of Teachers' elections.

Each local has the right to select one nominee. This nominee must be endorsed by a local executive, a delegate assembly, or a local general meeting. Each local nominee must undertake to abide by the endorsement process. Once a local has nominated a candidate, the name of the candidate will be forwarded to the BCTF staff co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that each local in the zone conducts a vote to determine the zone's BCTF-endorsed candidate by secret ballot in accordance with BCTF procedures.

The BCTF will publicize, among members, the names of all BCTF-endorsed candidates. The BCTF provides funding to assist local nominees in seeking to become the BCTF-endorsed candidate in a college zone. The BCTF also provides funding to assist endorsed candidates in the college elections.

If you want to be considered as your local nominee for the BCTF-endorsed candidate in one of the college zones where an election is being held, please contact your local president as soon as possible and not later than January 15, 2006.

If you have any questions about BCTF procedures for endorsing candidates, please contact Mike Lombardi, BCTF staff, 604-871-1849, toll free-1-800-663-9163, local 1849, [mlombardi@bctf.ca](mailto:mlombardi@bctf.ca).

—Mike Lombardi

# Classroom study results:

## Special-needs support inadequate

Evidence from a study involving over 14,500 B.C. teachers shows that prolonged under-funding and the loss of hundreds of specialist teachers is taking its toll in the classroom.

In January 2005, the BCTF sent a questionnaire to all teachers in the province asking them to reflect on their teaching experiences today and in the past. A series of questions from the study focusing on teaching students with special needs are highlighted in this report.

**When asked if there were more students with special needs in their classes now than in the past, over 77% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that this was so.**

As many teachers know first hand, there has been an increase in the number of students with special needs in their classrooms at the same time that adequate resources for all students have decreased.

Lack of financial support<sup>1</sup>—funding of the K-12 education system in real per-pupil dollar amounts has declined steadily over the last four years and a substantial decrease in support teachers<sup>2</sup> are just two of the ways resources have been eroded.

The impact of these changes are reflected in the teaching and learning conditions study results, both in the quantitative data and in extensive written comments.

When asked if there were more students with special needs in their classes now than in the past, over 77% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that this was so. Just under 87% of teachers also indicated that students in their classes had a wider range of needs than in past years. The following are representative of many of the comments teachers provided.

"Far too many cutbacks in my area, overwhelming numbers, increase in complexity of

students. The service I provide is completely inadequate to meet the needs of speech-language impaired students."

"I currently enrol a class of 24. Within that I have two students with autism, a student who is severely hearing impaired, and a student with moderate behaviour, three students who receive ongoing counselling for emotional support, four students who receive speech therapy, and seven students who receive student support. I'm spending nights and weekends just trying to stay ahead!"

"The growing number of students that require extra support and assistance is placing a lot of pressure and stress on classroom teachers and those that are trying to provide support."

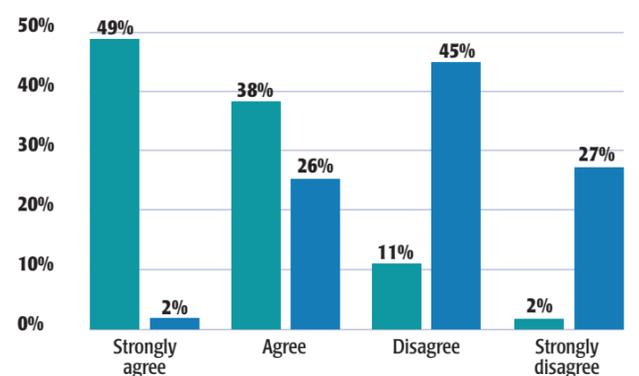
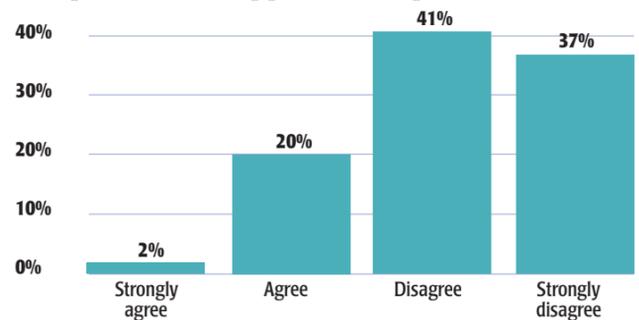
Unfortunately, increased need has not meant increased support or resources. Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement that "Adequate special education assistant time is available to each student who needs it." An overwhelming 82% of teachers disagreed with this statement. Indeed, over 43% disagreed and an additional 39% strongly disagreed with the statement.

**However, a full 72% of teachers disagreed that, given the composition of their classes, they receive the help they need to teach all of their students.**

Similar results were found when teachers were asked if students with special needs received adequate direct support from specialists such as speech/language pathologists. Over 41% disagreed and 37% strongly disagreed that this was so.

The adequate provision of specialist support for students with special needs is important for all students in a class. Those

### Students with special needs receive adequate direct support from specialists



■ Students have a wider range of needs  
■ I receive help I need to teach all my students

with special needs require extra support and other students need the attention of their teacher. However, a full 72% of teachers disagreed that, given the composition of their classes, they receive the help they need to teach all of their students.

For more information on this study go to the Working and Learning Conditions web site at [bctf.ca/bargain/wlc](http://bctf.ca/bargain/wlc).

Visit the Teaching To Diversity web site, [bctf.ca/TeachingToDiversity](http://bctf.ca/TeachingToDiversity), for information, resources, and contracts relevant to meeting the needs of students who receive special education, learning assistance, or ESL services.

<sup>1</sup> In 2001-02, the real per-pupil funding amount was \$6,700. In 2004-05 it had dropped to \$6,540, a decline of \$230 per pupil. The \$150 million increase for 2005-06

gives a much needed boost to the system, but the result is still \$108 per student less than the 2001-02 funding level.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to the introduction of Bill 28 early in 2002, learning assistance and special education resource teachers were "provided on a pro-rated basis" that ensured the teacher/student ratio did not fall below a certain point. Following the removal of support provisions from the collective agreement there was a loss of almost 230 full-time equivalent special education teachers.

—Colleen Hawkey  
BCTF Research Division

**For more information on this study go to the working and learning conditions web site at [bctf.ca/bargain/wlc](http://bctf.ca/bargain/wlc).**

## Looking back

### 70 years ago

On every hand today, throughout our school systems, there is evidence that Education is becoming scientific. Much is heard of scientific tests, scientific measurements, and scientific curriculum building. Maria Montessori has said that "Education is now passing from the philosophical into the scientific stage, as medicine did 1500 years ago." Scientific thinking, as such, is not new, but it has only recently been applied to education because only in comparatively recent years has the study of the human mind developed into a science, namely, psychology.

*The BC Teacher*, Sept. 1935

### 50 years ago

It would be a wonderful thing perhaps if you could really find the time and energy to see to the emotional adjustment of our children, along with the state of their fingernails, their respect for authority, the condition of their teeth, their ability to play basketball, their manners, their skill at finger-painting, wood-carving, and the slide trombone, and the weekday aspects of their search for God. But you can't and weren't intended to. You are grossly unfair to yourselves when you consent to be judged not merely as teachers but as foster parents, amateur psychiatrists, juvenile-court judges, athletic coaches, and lay preachers.

*The BC Teacher*, Sept./Oct. 1955

### 30 years ago

It is normally assumed that during primary school years children are motivated to achieve what teachers and the school system offer as proper goals, and one of these goals, of course, is the best grade. Our study suggests that typical grading as carried out in B.C. at present is not only failing as a motivator for a significant proportion of students, but acts as a deterrent to learning because it is providing them with a yardstick by which they may aspire to relatively low levels of achievement. And, perhaps least unexpected, but most depressing, it seems likely that already by age seven, social class has influenced students so much and in such ways that their attitude toward scholastic

achievement and the school system's rewards discourages their ability to be successful within the system.

*The BC Teacher*, Sept./Oct. 1975

### 10 years ago

Somewhere in Victoria there must be an "I" generator—a computer program, created for the Ministry of Education. A description of a major education program initiative is fed in, and the "I" generator spits out a name that starts with an I. That would explain the four "I"s of 1995—the IRP, the IP, the IEP, and the IT. These four significant ministry changes will affect teachers throughout the province.

*Teacher*, September 1995

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich

## New web site bctf.ca/TeachingtoDiversity

A joint project of:  
*BCTF Research, Special Education Association*  
*Learning Assistance Teachers' Association*  
*English as a Second Language Provincial Specialist Association*

It's September, and you have a brand new class of students. Whether elementary, middle, or secondary, the reality of your classes means a diversity of students and student needs. How do you address all their needs? In December 2004, BCTF launched the *Teaching to Diversity* web page to provide access to information, resources, and contacts for teachers and all those who support the needs of learners in the B.C. public school system.

At this stage, the web page focus is on information relevant to meeting the needs of students who receive special education, learning assistance, or ESL services but who are, for the most part, included in mainstream classrooms. Whether you are a regular classroom teacher or a specialist support teacher, this site provides links to information that will support your teaching. Find out about current resources for a variety of issues, download checklists, find easy-to-implement strategies, and many ways to include all students in learning.

The web page has been developed by the BCTF with three provincial specialist associations—English as a Second Language PSA (ESLPSA), Learning Assistance Teachers' Association (LATA), and Special Education Association (SEA). Through networking and sharing of information with a variety of people around the province, this web site continually changes and grows to support the work of all teachers.

### Web site features of interest

#### Resource inventory

The bulk of the web site's information is stored here and includes information regarding

profiles of learner needs, Ministry of Education designations, documentation (IEPs and school-based team), assessment of student learning, lesson plans, and a plethora of resources related to specific disabilities, adaptations and modification, strategies, collaboration and teamwork, and transitions.

#### Glossary

When teaching students with a diversity of needs, it is helpful for overall understanding to have a common language. This extensive glossary will help you become more familiar with the terms used.

#### Provincial policies/reports

B.C.-related policies from the Ministry of Education, BCTF/ CUPE, and the School Superintendent's Association.

#### Sample scenarios

Become familiar with the web site through some specific scenarios that you may encounter in your class. The primary classroom teacher whose class includes a student with autism, ESL students in an intermediate classroom, helping resource teachers advise classroom teachers on how to work with teacher assistants.

#### Pro D

Expanding your knowledge base and expertise takes a concerted effort. Listed in this section are a wide variety of choices including after-school or full-day workshops, special conferences or seminars, university courses, and online courses.

#### Links

Links on a variety of topics—parent support groups, school district student support services, colleges offering teacher assistant training or special education post-secondary courses, sports and leisure

activities for students.

#### Online journals

Access and links to free journals like the *Council for Exceptional Children*, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *International Journal of Special Education and International Reading Association*, *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *Learning Disabilities Online*, and *Pro-Ed Inc.*

#### Monthly highlights

New additions to the web site, or links and information you don't want to miss!

#### E-mail discussion group

The teaching-to-diversity mailing list is available for you to network with other educators and professionals willing to share their expertise or ask questions of each other. It's a quick way to connect with a variety of professionals with only a few keystrokes!

#### B.C. projects

Projects involving B.C. teachers' inclusive approaches. Initial reports are from teachers in Prince George, Nanaimo, and Coquitlam, and focus on mentoring/professional conversation support groups for resource teachers, IEPs, year-at-a-glance calendar for resource teachers, Universal Design for Learning, and the use of Boardmaker.

#### Parent support

This section, as well as others in the web page, may be useful for parents. Listed are many parent-focused resource materials, books, videos, and support groups.

We welcome your input. To suggest content, contact Karen Horner at [khorne@dccnet.com](mailto:khorne@dccnet.com). For other inquiries about the web page, contact Charlie Naylor, BCTF Research at [cnaylor@bctf.ca](mailto:cnaylor@bctf.ca).

## Ashes in the wind, sand in the riverbed

by Kathi Hughes

Remember when a *liberal* education incited choice, excitement, discovery, opportunity, creativity, and enthusiasm? Remember when a *liberal* education ignited passion and fueled the fires of teaching and learning?

Alas, over the past four years, a *liberal* education has extinguished the passion of both teaching and learning. We finger the sombre ashes of the funeral pyres and yearn for the pre-Liberal flamboyant flames. An oppressive torrent muffles and suffocates. This is how our area of alternative education has been smothered by the Liberal torrents of drowning waters, which gush accountability, increased class size, decreased resources, and curriculum change (with not even a life jacket to help rescue the drowning victims expected to implement the change).

We are the chosen. We are the privileged. We are trained and inspired to teach, accept, mentor, motivate, validate, encourage, and advocate for those youth deemed at-risk and/or beyond-at-risk.

Previously, this definition included those youth who required extra services and resources in order to develop and maximize their potential. Now, this definition refers to almost all youth in the school system.

The current Liberal attitude toward education leaves this legacy for alternative education students and teachers:

- Increased class size and decreased resources within schools for these students with special needs so that teachers are burned out and learners are enraged and frustrated and, hence, drop-out or fade-away from the system—true graduates of the Liberal system.

- Teaching self-paced, visual curriculum to a variety of 17 kinesthetic, behaviourally, and emotionally needy learners—many of whom are reading at the Grade 3–4 level—with no classroom support.

- Inexperienced staff working with the neediest of youth—those of us with experience just can't do it; our integrity is too great and to save our sanity, we must leave, or hide, or withdraw.

- Fewer counselors to help the increasingly needy and disenfranchised youth.

- Fewer appropriate mainstream classes available for including our students.

- Fewer support staff, such as learning assistance teachers, to help assess youth and provide resource materials.

- Fewer support staff, such as psychologists and speech-language

pathologists, to provide assessment, adjudication, and direct service.

- Diminished supports such as youth-care workers and teacher assistants so that students no longer receive the help they need within the classroom, the school, and the community.

- Decreased teacher-librarians, so that services for students who require extra assistance with library skills do not get the help they deserve.

- Decimation of district supports and resources for these students and teachers.

- Diminished pride in environment—classrooms can't be cleaned as custodial services are cut, computers crash, and tech support just doesn't seem to be a priority.

- Major changes in curricula demands.

- New courses without new monies to administer the changes and the courses.

- Increased need for resources with no money to purchase the resources.

- A linear system of provincial exams for non-linear students who learn at their own pace, thus penalizing our learners and totally frustrating their already fragile selves.

- A change in funding and eligibility for our 1701 students.

- We get to label students "moderate behaviour" and "serious mental illness" but we get no additional funding to provide services.

- Schizophrenia and Aspergers are no longer considered chronic health issues in the world of the Liberal.

- A growing reliance on corporate sponsorship for essential items.

- Increasing competition between schools for meagre resources and a corresponding growth of individual school egocentrism as we struggle to close our doors to protect our own and a decimation of collaboration with other agencies as we all adopt our Liberal attitude of "it's your problem, not mine."

- Quality time for teaching and interacting with students—alas, not if we must dutifully complete our accountability forms on crashing computers and dysfunctional printers.

Are our students drowning? Are we drowning? Will there be any ashes for the next non-Liberal government to sift through their fingers? Are we just as blown away and burnt out as "ashes in the wind"? Or are we simply crushed pebbles as sand in the riverbed?

Kathi Hughes teaches at Prince George Secondary School and is a former executive member of the B.C. Alternate Education Association.

## B.C. school administrators are the highest paid in Canada

School administrators in B.C. are the highest paid in Canada, according to a cross-Canada survey carried out by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Not only do B.C. administrators make more money than administrators in other provinces, but the gap between teacher and administrator salaries in B.C. is the highest in the country as well.

The CTF survey is based on selecting sample districts from each province, since most salary grids in the country are based on local agreements. The Vancouver School District was chosen for the B.C. comparison. Although figures vary from district to district, they are generally in the same range within provinces.

In both categories of amount paid and comparison with teacher salaries, the B.C. examples were the highest. The report says:

Maximum principals' salaries range from \$79,110 in Prince Edward Island to \$114,776 in Vancouver Secondary in B.C. As a percentage of the maximum teacher's salary, rates ranged from 116% in the Yellowknife Catholic School District, Northwest Territories to 163% in Vancouver Secondary.

The range in most of the country has administrators making about 30% more than the highest paid teachers in the same jurisdiction, about half the administrator bonus in B.C. You can easily make similar comparisons in your district by finding the highest salary a teacher can earn and compare it to the highest amount that an administrator can earn.

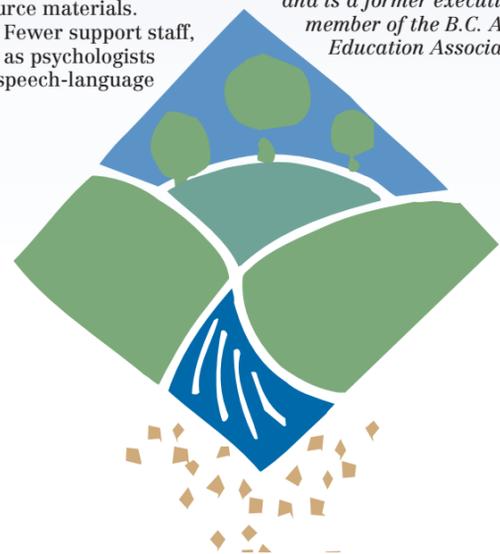
The hiring of additional administrators with the increased funding to school boards is a very inefficient use of resources. Since administrator salaries are so much higher than teacher salaries, hiring an

additional administrator costs much more than a teacher. If the administrator is teaching part-time, that is by far the most expensive teaching in the system.

The BCTF Research Department has also developed a new research report that shows the teacher/administrator ratio by school district in 2001–02 and 2004–05, as well as the change in the ratio over that time. Most districts reduced the number of administrators, although not by as much as the number of teachers.

This research report provides locals with baseline data to make comparisons and to track the change in teacher/administrator ratios if districts hire administrators rather than teachers. It can be found on the BCTF web site at [bctf.ca/Publications/researchreports/2005td02/report.html](http://bctf.ca/Publications/researchreports/2005td02/report.html).

—Larry Kuehn



## Telus—TWU labour dispute pivotal

**O**n July 21, 2005, TWU members took a stand against Telus. When Telus decided to impose a contract, they set up picket lines across B.C. and Alberta. The offer was never even negotiated with the union.

"This dispute is about workers' right to job security and a decent standard of living versus corporate greed," said Telecommunications Workers' Union President, Bruce Bell. "We've tried every imaginable way to work out some kind of accommodation with the company, but the people who are running their show want to break our union."

Telus locked out 13,700 TWU members on April 25, 2005. On May 12, Telus stopped collecting union dues. The company sent its contract offer directly to the members instead of negotiating with the elected bargaining committee. Then Telus demanded that the TWU vote on the offer.

TWU members have gone nearly five years without a revised agreement. In 1999, Telus merged with BC Tel. The members of four unions became a single unit under the TWU, but the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) ruled that the TWU contract would not apply to everyone—a revised agreement would have to be negotiated. Negotiations began on November 1, 2000.

Since then Telus has refused to negotiate in a meaningful way. The Canada Industrial Relations Board has found that Telus committed unfair labour practices and poisoned the collective bargaining process, interfered in the administration of a trade union, and communicated with union members in an "insidious" way to create a loss of face from the union.

In January 2004, the board ordered Telus to offer binding arbitration to the TWU. In February 2005, the board quashed its own order for binding arbitration, but upheld that Telus had committed unfair labour practices.

Telus wants to take job security out of the contract, which will give the company the freedom to move jobs out of Canada.

In July 2005, the federal minister of labour offered to appoint a special mediator. The TWU welcomed the offer, but Telus turned it down and instead announced plans to force its offer on TWU members.

Telus has a history of customer service problems. Just two years ago, Telus' decision to cut thousands of jobs led to the company being cited by the CRTC for poor customer service.

"Telus complains that our contracting-out language restricts their ability to compete," said Bruce Bell. "But the company's share price was up 40% last year and they were the global telecom leader in terms of revenue, earnings, and cash-flow growth rates."

For details on supporting the TWU, go to [www.anotherwrongnumber.com](http://www.anotherwrongnumber.com).



# Spin on class size

by Charlie Naylor

*The Vancouver Sun* editorial, May 9, 2005, alarmingly misrepresents the available information on class-size research. Consider the following:

*The Sun* provides a single source to support its claim that researchers have been unable to link class size to student performance. The source is Eric Hanushek. No other research is referenced. Hanushek's work has been widely challenged by, for instance, Alan Krueger (Economic Policy Institute, 2000), who found exactly the opposite results using Hanushek's own data: lower class size is linked to higher student achievement. He also found that some of Hanushek's samples were misinterpreted and miscoded. Hanushek has also been criticized for the methodologically inappropriate

***The benefits of small class sizes are not myths, as claimed, but well-researched facts.***

use of teacher-pupil ratios by Finn (2002), who argues that such data do not reflect class size. While Hanushek appears 'persuasive' to *The Sun's* editorial writer, his many challengers do not rate any mention at all.

As Dr. Wayne Ross of UBC pointed out in his letter to *The Sun*, Hanushek ignores studies

that show the opposite of what he claims to be true. These include not only the most thorough research anywhere in the world on class size, Project STAR, but also studies conducted or reviewed by Glass and Smith (1978), Mueller *et al* (1988), Robinson (1990) and Ehrenberg *et al* (2001). He does not reference the Indiana Prime Time or the Wisconsin SAGE project. All of these studies, over four decades, concluded that smaller class size increased student achievement. *The Sun* did not shine any light on these studies. It does not mention them at all.

Project STAR, widely renowned for its academic rigour and scale, has been reported in hundreds of research articles and presented widely at international conferences. This study found that in every grade level students in small classes outperformed students in larger classes in every achievement test administered. This study was not referenced by *The Sun*.

Even *The Vancouver Sun's* own education reporter has stated that small classes benefit student learning. In an article of April 5, 2005, Education reporter Janet Steffenhagen, reported findings from B.C. School District 23's small-class pilot project, stating that:



"The performance of children involved in the study in eight Kelowna schools has improved, which wasn't unexpected given that similar trials in the U.S.

***The most worrying aspect of the editorial is in considering whether the writing of it reflects incompetence or malice.***

have made the same discovery." She also stated: "The schools noticed an immediate improvement among students in the smaller classes."

*The Sun* is therefore totally wrong in stating, "researchers have been unable to consistently demonstrate that reductions in class size yields an increase in student performance." Researchers have done so over four decades, and in the largest and most comprehensive class size study in the world (STAR). The benefits of small class sizes are not myths, as claimed, but

well-researched facts. Yes, there are many debates around the issue of class size, and it is not the cure-all for the whole education system, but the research is clear and definitive: smaller class sizes result in improved student achievement.

The most worrying aspect of the editorial is in considering whether the writing of it reflects incompetence or malice. If one believes that *The Vancouver Sun* is incapable of accessing the hundreds of articles, major studies, and conference presentations, that provide the evidence (or even unable to read its own education reporter's article written barely a month earlier), then the newspaper is clearly incompetent. If one believes that the article reflects a desire to condemn a political party whatever the evidence, then *The Vancouver Sun* is malicious because it ignores all the evidence simply to make the case it wants to make.

Charlie Naylor is a researcher in the BCTF's Research and Technology Division.

## The importance of local reps



PETER OWENS PHOTO

by Cheryl Sosnowski

**I** have taught for 24 years and have worked for the Nanaimo Teacher's Association for 20 of those years. When I started teaching there was no BCTF union of professionals. We had no protection against unscrupulous administrators or school boards. Teachers had no union protection or seniority to help gain or regain jobs. After losing my teaching position in 1982 due to the political whims of the Social Credit government, I decided that I would do everything in my power to gain some rights, so

that this type of draconian legislation would not affect other teachers the way it affected me.

In 1982, after losing my position through no fault of my own, I decided to work for the Nanaimo Teachers' Association in anyway I could. I became the vice president of the Nanaimo substitute organization, where we attempted to gain some rights for substitutes. Of course as substitutes we had no legal rights and could not get any seniority in order to get a job. I then realized that I had to further my fight. So I applied to become the local association representative (LAR) for Nanaimo.

My first representative assembly made me aware of how hard teachers work for the profession they believe in, and how democratic they are. How anyone can say that the BCTF is undemocratic is totally ridiculous to me. Go to an RA and watch how passionately teachers believe in furthering public education and teacher's rights. Teachers made motions, debated motions, passed, and defeated motions for two days. As a new teacher and a new rep I was totally awed by the whole process. Needless to say it took me a couple of RAs to actually get up the courage to stand in front of a mike and voice my opinion.

I would definitely encourage all teachers to experience a rep assembly. I believe that the LAR's job is the most important job in the BCTF. It is the LAR who reports back to the local

and then takes the local's concerns back to the BCTF Executive. The BCTF is a strong union because teachers believe that all children have the right to a good education system, and that teachers deserve to be treated as professionals. So I would encourage all teachers to make their own commitment to the BCTF and take your turn at one of the most rewarding jobs there are, by becoming a LAR for your association.

Cheryl Sosnowski teaches at Fairview Elementary School, Nanaimo.

## A win for teachers

**O**nce again teachers' right to speak out has been affirmed. In August, the B.C. Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal brought forward by BCPSEA. The employers' association was trying to overturn a previous arbitrator's ruling affirming teachers' rights to share information with parents. The court declared:

In the words of Madam Justice Huddart (Mr. Justice Donald concurring) in *BCPSEA v. BCTF*, 2005 BCCA 393:

"Through the various materials the BCTF asked its members to distribute, teachers voiced their concerns about government policies on issues of particular importance to them. This is, of course, political expression of a kind deserving of a high level of constitutional protection."

"The School Boards cannot prevent teachers from expressing opinions just because they step

onto school grounds. School grounds are public property where political expression must be valued and given its place."

"...it is difficult to see how discussion about class size and composition in relation to the needs of a particular child by an informed and articulate teacher could do anything but enhance confidence in the school system."

## Maxwell A. Cameron Awards

**T**he 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 2004-05:

**Jessa Hunter**  
Okanagan University College  
**Vicki Gilbert**  
**Teresa Wigboldus**  
Simon Fraser University  
**Joel Olson**  
Trinity Western University  
**Katherine Jay Banno**  
University of British Columbia  
**Earl Berten Dodds**  
**Melinda Dawn MacKinnon**  
University of Northern B.C.  
**Megan Huckabay**  
**Nishat Thaver**  
University of Victoria

# Over the top accountability

by Noel Herron

The spring provincial election was barely over when B.C.'s Ministry of Education issued its second and more stringent draft of its accountability contract for school boards over the next two years.

For the past three years, parents, teachers, support staff, principals, consultants, and senior school board administrators, have devoted an inordinate amount of time and energy to the mandatory annual MOE accountability contract exercise.

This is an exercise rooted in provincial politics, allowing successive Liberal ministers of education to boast that the province is holding schools and school boards to account. Note the misuse of the word *contract*.

Here is a brief review of the change in direction that B.C. education has taken over the past few years.

With the election of a Liberal government in 2001, a radical

restructuring of the ministry was initiated, eliminating almost any reference to the word curriculum.

A glance at the ministry's current organization chart shows how entrenched this shift has become with words like evaluation, assessment, and measurement in prominent positions.

The test-driven agenda of the ministry is clearly evident in the officially designated titles of departments such as data management unit, accountability department, systems performance branch, achievement and assessment department, exams and assessment policy, marking and reports, FSA (Foundation Skills Assessment), and exams development.

Educational accountability for school boards, with the new revisions in the ministry's contracts, are now standard practice for B.C. schools, with boards scrambling to make meaningful adjustments to the ministry's rigid 10 points of

inquiry criteria that govern the process.

Considering the fact that, on average, 35 pages of documentation (some even longer) are submitted annually to the ministry, few have questioned the direction and validity of this process.

As curriculum components form the very heart of our instructional programs, how can a so-called provincial accountability process, that claims to lead to improved student performance, studiously avoid any specific reference to key subject matters?

A case in point is the recent accountability overview of the Vancouver School Board. Officially termed District Review by the Ministry of Education, it involved 15 external supervisors (school superintendents, board consultants, teachers, principals and diverse staff, appointed by the ministry) who spent four days visiting 47 schools. The final report, despite a very thorough review, was restricted

by the famous ministry 10 points of inquiry. There was not a single reference in this review to the board's largest instructional program—English as a Second Language. There was no mention of the huge number of vulnerable children in special education and special-needs areas who are not receiving the instructional support they need, and, no reference to the pressing curricular needs in many key subject areas in the province's most complex urban school system. The report truly had an *Alice in Wonderland* air about it when it came to curriculum matters.

And then we come to the latest addition to the ministry's accountability list—the controversial Grade 10 exams and their accompanying mandatory portfolio documents that involve a detailed accumulation of documents by all Grade 10 students.

These exams were strongly opposed by student representatives, parents, teachers, and trustees in Vancouver. Arguments about the narrowing of the curriculum, the forcing of teachers to teach to the test, the fact that many parents (as

indicated in at least one national survey) favour teacher-made tests over standardized tests, and a potential increase in the drop-out rate, were summarily dismissed.

Colin McCabe, one of Britain's leading academics commenting on how excessive testing undermines British education noted, "There is no need for students to spend two such determining years (leading up to graduation) in a frenzy of assessment. No other European country examines its children every year from 16 to 18, allowing them no time whatsoever to learn to enjoy intellectual inquiry or to develop genuine interests independent of exams."

But we in B.C. go one better than Britain, as the only Canadian province that begins the structured examination march to graduation with 15-year-olds in Grade 10.

Unquestionably, ideological excesses in examinations and assessments are continuing in British Columbia under the mantra of accountability.

Noel Herron is a Vancouver School Board trustee.

# Achievement focus counter-productive

by Nancy Knickerbocker

"I want to impress upon you the urgency of what we face. B.C., like other provinces and states, is facing an educational emergency. It is created and exacerbated by strategies and policies used allegedly to improve education. We need to help parents understand that it is an emergency."

This was the call to action from Boston academic and author Alfie Kohn, in his keynote speech to the more than 600 delegates at the BCTF summer conference, held in August at UBC. Author of 10 books on education, parenting, and human behavior, Kohn's work has been translated into 10 languages. Among his titles are *The Schools Our Children Deserve* (1999) and *The Case Against Standardized Testing* (2000). *Unconditional Parenting* is his latest. (Read more about his work at [www.alfiekohn.org](http://www.alfiekohn.org).)

**"Accountability...has the same effect on learning as the noose has on breathing."**

Kohn quipped that U.S. President George Bush's infamous "No Child Left Behind" legislation ought to be called the "Many Children Left Behind Act." Unfortunately though, Canadians are importing destructive policies from south of the border.

"If my goal were to undermine democratic public education, I'd do exactly what this provincial government is doing," he said, pointing to the B.C. Liberals, mantra of "It's all about achievement."

Kohn said there are five *fatal flaws* to the "tougher standards movement," also known as the "accountability agenda."

1. It gets motivation wrong.
2. It gets teaching and learning wrong.
3. It gets evaluation wrong.
4. It gets school reform wrong.
5. It gets improvement wrong.

Kohn said that the idea that achievement is all that matters might sound good, but it flies in the face of growing evidence in

educational psychology that reveals a big difference between real learning and test performance.

"I believe excellence is important, and I want to see kids learning well," he said, "but when kids are too focused on *how* they're doing rather than *what* they're learning, bad things happen."

Kohn said that overemphasizing achievement ignores the factors that motivate students to authentic learning. There are negative consequences for kids:

- They become less interested in learning for its own sake.
- They become preoccupied with their abilities.
- They prefer easy tasks and quick completion.
- They are devastated by failure.
- Their quality of learning suffers.

"Research shows that when kids get too focused on achievement, paradoxically achievement declines when measured by deep understanding," Kohn said.

The second fatal flaw of the tougher standards movement is that it gets teaching and learning wrong, Kohn said. It reduces teaching to mere transmission of a "bunch o' facts" to students who are reduced to "passive receptacles."

He noted that B.C.'s highly prescriptive curriculum is "based on a coverage model" that requires teachers to *cover* everything, rather than allowing students to *discover* what they want to learn.

"Thinking is messy, and deep thinking is really messy," Kohn said. "Your curriculum is nothing if not orderly."

The third fatal flaw of the accountability agenda is that it gets evaluation wrong. Raising test scores can mean ruining our schools, in Kohn's view. He questioned why the B.C. Ministry of Education is uncritically using standardized test scores as its measure of success.

"Don't let anyone tell you that standardized tests don't provide accurate measures," he said. "In fact, they are exquisitely accurate measures of the size of the houses near a school."

Kohn asked the assembled teachers: "How many of you

know students who are gifted deep thinkers, yet they don't do well on standardized tests?" Many hands went up. "And how many of you know students who are relatively shallow thinkers who excel on standardized tests?" Again, many hands went up. Indeed, he said, research shows that high test scores correlate to shallow thinking at elementary, middle, and secondary school levels.

The fourth fatal flaw is that the accountability agenda promotes a wrong-headed direction for school reform, Kohn said. "Accountability is just a code word for more control over the classrooms by people who are not in the classrooms. It has the same effect on learning as the noose has on breathing."

Kohn observed that, "the B.C. government's [education] policy is predicated on intolerance for disagreement." The question is whether governments choose to work *with* those in schools, or try to compel them to work a certain way. Teachers generally want to improve education and do not oppose the impetus for change in schools. "People don't resist change. They resist *being* changed," he said.

Reporting out of test results to rank schools, as the Fraser Institute does in several

provinces including B.C., is unethical because it "invites misleading comparisons," Kohn said. He invited audience members to rally together under the banner of "Fighting Reactionary and Stupid Educational Ranking, or FRASER."

**"How many of you know students who are gifted deep thinkers, yet they don't do well on standardized tests?"**

The fifth fatal flaw, of the accountability agenda, is that it gets improvement wrong. "Harder isn't always better," Kohn said, declaring that notion "a simplistic conflation of quality and difficulty."

He decried the "sorting machine" model, in which school systems are designed to separate winners from losers. "It's all about competition, not co-operation. It's about rivalry in the marketplace, and making sure that some people always fail."

So, what do we do about all of this? "We fight," Kohn said. "That's what we do."

He urged teachers to assert policies that deal with quality of their working lives and the

quality of education children receive. He encouraged them to inform parents that they and their kids have the right to opt out of standardized tests. And he suggested they try to make every education minister's worst fear come true—"What if we gave a test and nobody came?"

Kohn pointed out several hopeful signs that Canadians do not support the accountability agenda.

- Canadians (83%) believe testing should be used to evaluate and improve learning, not rank children.
- By a two to one margin, Canadians favour teachers' evaluations of their children's learning to standardized tests.
- Parent advisory committees are starting to resist testing.
- Five Vancouver schools rejected Fraser Institute awards last year.

Kohn challenged teachers to act on their professional concerns about standardized testing and other impediments to quality teaching. "What are you doing to show you are serious in your opposition? How are you trying to minimize the damage? How will you make long-term change?"

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.



PETER OWENS PHOTO

# Put a teacher-librarian on your team

by Karen Lindsay

All over the world, companies are reaping the benefits of collaborative effort. Automobiles are created by teams and job interviews are done in collaborative group settings. Can't make it as a team player? You won't get into McMaster's School of Medicine. It's not just a fad; it's a recognition that results improve where many minds, skills, and perspectives are brought to bear. Shared responsibility improves performance, unleashes creativity, and broadens skills while reducing stress and building relationships.

Teaching, especially at the secondary school level, has not embraced this concept. Teachers spend much of their day planning, delivering, and assessing lessons in isolation. It is not unusual for a beginning secondary teacher to enter the profession facing four different lesson preparations per day,

**Research undertaken and replicated over the past 60 years indicates that students whose teacher-librarians take active planning and teaching roles tend to achieve significantly higher test scores.**

difficult classes, and five months of teaching without a preparation block! There is no opportunity to observe more experienced teachers, and no time to work collaboratively with anyone. Over time, we become inured to, proud of, and perhaps even happy with our isolation. However, it is not the healthiest, most productive approach to teaching students.

Enter the teacher-librarian. Here is the one person on staff whose prime function is to support teachers in unit planning and lesson delivery. Teacher-librarians are committed to collaboration. We work best when we work closely with individual teachers in the critical areas of designing authentic learning tasks and integrating the research and technological pieces required by various IRPs. Did you know that next to socio-economic issues, the single greatest factor affecting student achievement is the school library? Research undertaken and replicated over

the past 60 years indicates that students whose teacher-librarians take active planning and teaching roles tend to achieve significantly higher test scores. In schools where teachers and teacher-librarians work together to plan, implement, and evaluate lessons and units of study, student results improve by between 5 and 20%. No teacher would wittingly deprive their students this

**Teaching in today's school demands a team approach. Lean on your teacher-librarian.**

opportunity for improvement, but for it to occur, classroom teachers need to make teacher-librarians a part of their planning, teaching, and evaluation routine.

No one needs to tell you that the demands of teaching are constantly increasing. Our students have so many more needs, and need so many more skills than they once did to be successful. Curricular change seems like the only constant along with increasing class sizes. Nevertheless, it is important that students receive research assignments that teach them how to locate, evaluate, and use today's information, both in school and beyond. No one person can be expected to have the experience, knowledge, and time to teach information literacy and technology skills, while continuing to teach the child, and the curriculum. Teaching in today's school demands a team approach. Lean on your teacher-librarian.

During the planning of a unit, your teacher-librarian will focus on incorporating challenges that will call upon students to access, evaluate, and use information from multiple sources in order to learn to think, and to create and apply new knowledge. Intelligent decision-making relies on accurate and complete information. Through their collaboration, teachers and teacher-librarians, can provide students with specific opportunities to develop skills in information literacy and information technology, skills that they will need more and more both in school and outside its walls.

Co-planned lessons generally do not rely on textbooks, preferring to teach students how to locate and use resources that will meet the needs of the task. Frequently the products of a co-planned lesson might be Power-Point presentations, mock trials, virtual seminars, or poster sessions, rather than pen and paper activities. Teacher-librarians often take responsi-

bility for assessing the students' process through the unit, as well as marking their reference list/bibliography.

**What to bring to a collaborative planning session:**

- A unit you've already taught or an idea for a new unit.
- Your expert knowledge of the curriculum and your students.
- An open mind.

**What the teacher-librarian might teach, using a task that requires critical thinking and problem solving:**

- How to formulate critical questions to guide the research process.
- How to select the most appropriate resources to accomplish a given task.
- How to search the library's catalogue and locate resources in the library.
- What a database is and how to use it.
- How to search the Internet effectively.
- How to check web sites for reliability.
- How to use information ethically.
- How to take notes and track sources effectively.
- How to use process management tools for assigning responsibilities, tracking tasks, and setting deadlines.
- How to organize, integrate, and present findings in effective ways.

If your school does not have a fully trained teacher-librarian, ask your principal why. If your teacher-librarian's time is largely taken up providing preparation time and supervising book exchanges so that collaborative planning and teaching become impossible, ask your principal why. If information literacy skills are not fully integrated into your curriculum, if you and your teacher-librarian are not equal partners who plan, deliver, and assess work together, figure out why and do what you can to change that. Every school deserves an effective library program.

**Every school deserves an effective library program.**

For most of the Western world, January heralds the New Year. Not so for teachers. September is our time for new beginnings and resolutions. This year, why not make one of them to plan at least one unit with your teacher-librarian?

*Karen Lindsay is the teacher-librarian at L'École Secondaire Reynolds Secondary School, Victoria.*



## La protection de notre système d'éducation public

# L'Autonomie professionnelle et la mondialisation

par Ghislaine Varin

Que veut dire "autonomie professionnelle"? Quelle est l'importance de notre autonomie professionnelle? Depuis longtemps nous définissons l'autonomie professionnelle par plusieurs termes tels que : liberté, choix, contrôle cognitif, réflexion critique, transformation par dialogue, responsabilité, efficacité, prise de décisions, perfectionnement professionnel, recherche-action, négociation, consultation, choix de méthodes pédagogiques, évaluation, sélection de matériels, planification, créativité, gérance, etc. Quelle que soit la définition, nous savons tous que les enseignantes et les enseignants sont les experts en éducation et que nous avons tous reçu une formation universitaire de 4 à 6 ans, et parfois plus, dans le domaine de l'éducation. De plus, nous travaillons avec les enfants tous les jours et nous savons que ces jeunes ont tous des besoins différents, qu'ils apprennent de façons variées et à différents rythmes et nous prenons les décisions nécessaires pour répondre aux besoins individuels de nos élèves. Alors pourquoi vivons-nous de plus en plus d'attaques oppressives en éducation? Pourquoi nous sentons-nous épuisés, démoralisés? Pourquoi plus de 40 % des nouveaux enseignants quittent-ils la profession après à peine 5 ans dans l'enseignement? Nous subissons une invasion croissante d'impositions attaquant notre autonomie professionnelle et provenant de toutes les directions imaginables. Ces impositions incluent les modèles d'évaluation centrés sur les tests standardisés avec leurs corrections, les modèles de discipline imposés dans les écoles, les modèles de bulletin et leur contenu, la bureaucratie ridicule sous l'identité de « accountability », les décisions qui affectent le travail des enseignants mais qui sont prises sans consultation, les programmes ministériels prescrits, les nouveaux projets obligatoires dans les conseils scolaires et les écoles, les visiteurs non annoncés, l'intégration graduelle de BcISIS (système informatique) dans nos salles de classe, les législations gouvernementales nous enlevant nos droits fondamentaux, les attaques sur notre convention collective, les contrats venant de l'extérieur, la perte de contrôle de notre perfectionnement professionnel, les changements au calendrier scolaire, la commercialisation de nos écoles, les services privés recommandés par les administrateurs pour l'aide aux élèves, les conditions environnementales dans nos écoles qui affectent le bien-être des enseignants, le manque de ressources et d'appui des spécialistes, la perte de financement, l'interférence des parents dans les écoles et dans nos salles de classe, le Comité consultatif de parents, le Comité de planification scolaire, la supervision et l'évaluation des enseignants par les adminis-

trateurs, la négativité des médias, etc.

Quelle pourrait être la motivation de ces impositions? La réponse est claire : l'élimination de l'autonomie professionnelle des enseignants afin de faciliter le contrôle de notre système d'enseignement public.

Quelle pourrait être l'origine de cette motivation? La privatisation et la mondialisation. En éliminant l'autonomie professionnelle des enseignants, en les surchargeant, en les critiquant publiquement, en tentant de supprimer leur libre expression selon la Charte des droits, il devient facile d'exploiter un nouveau marché, celui de l'éducation. La destruction de notre profession faciliterait l'accès à un système de formation d'une main-d'oeuvre pouvant répondre aux besoins des multinationales, de la mondialisation. Selon cette approche, les intérêts du marché et de l'économie passent avant ceux de nos enfants.

Les faits et la recherche nous démontrent clairement que nous sommes en train de vivre un moment de l'histoire axée sur l'oppression, le début d'un état d'esclavage qui vise les pauvres, les femmes, les groupes minoritaires, l'environnement — tout ce que les enseignantes et les enseignants défendent depuis toujours. Lorsque les enseignants résistent ou s'objectent aux politiques d'un gouvernement, ils sont décrits comme étant « défiant », ou on réfère à leur syndicat comme étant trop puissant et « l'ennemi public ». La réalité est que l'autonomie professionnelle des enseignants protège l'éducation des générations à venir. Nous devons nous défendre et nous affirmer. C'est en nous ralliant, nous appuyant les uns et les autres et en joignant le mouvement de résistance et d'opposition à la mondialisation que nous sauvegarderons nos droits. Nous sommes les défenseurs de l'enseignement public. Nous devons tous nous demander : que puis-je faire pour protéger un système de haute qualité qui est centré sur l'enfant et qui a fait ses preuves? Nous sommes rendus à une croisée de chemins dans l'histoire de notre société où nous avons des choix importants à faire. Lorsque nous questionnons ce qui se passe dans nos écoles, dans nos communautés, dans le monde, nous défendons notre démocratie. C'est le temps de s'arrêter, de réfléchir et d'agir.

**Synopsis :** Teachers' professional autonomy is being challenged by our government and is increasingly under attack. What could be the motivation and the force behind this movement? Privatization and globalization. Teachers need to fight back to protect their professional autonomy, which in turn will help safeguard our public education system and our democracy.

*Ghislaine Varin, coordonnatrice des Programmes et services français.*



Vancouver students designed peace flags and banners to promote the World Peace Forum to be held in Vancouver June 23 to June 28, 2006. There will also be a World Peace Education Forum component of the conference taking place June 25 to June 27.

# The World Peace Education Forum

by Jacqui Birchall

June 2006 is going to be an exciting month. The World Peace Forum (WPF) will be held in Vancouver from June 23 to June 28. The WPF, a major international gathering on peace, will provide an umbrella for movements and organizations working on peace to come together, to network, and to demonstrate that there is a growing international commitment to peace, justice, and sustainability. Check the web site at [www.worldpeaceforum.ca](http://www.worldpeaceforum.ca). The World Peace Forum follows the World Urban Forum, another exciting event coming to B.C. This is a United Nations Settlements program that is also being held in Vancouver. The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, and policies. It is projected that in the next 50 years, two-thirds of humanity will be living in towns and cities. A major challenge is to minimize burgeoning poverty in cities, improve the urban poor's access to basic facilities such as shelter, clean water, and sanitation, and achieve environment-friendly, sustainable urban growth and development. Check their web site at [www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006/default.asp](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006/default.asp).

## World Education Peace Forum

Within the WPF, will be the World Peace Education Forum, taking place from June 25 to 27.

The education component of the WPF seeks to bring together teachers, students, elders, and citizens with interests from pre-school to post-secondary education: to discuss, produce, disperse curricula of peace, including teaching programs, activities, and methodologies; to discuss and model teaching and organizational strategies that can be replicated to sustain efforts of peace organizations

**Educators and students who are experienced in teaching and learning in times of active warfare will discuss the ramifications for education during conflict.**

beyond the time frame of the World Peace Forum; and to transform society by seeking answers to the question, how, through education, are we going to get the world we want?

The committee creating the World Peace Education Forum is made up of B.C. classroom teachers and BCTF staff. We invite you to share your knowledge with the 2,000 expected participants from around the world who are committed to building peace, contesting global militarism, and making aggressive solutions intolerable. The education conference strand of the WPF will begin on Sunday, June 25. The conference themes are: teaching for peace in times

of war, in times of oppression, and in times of reconciliation.

Educators and students who are experienced in teaching and learning in times of active warfare will discuss the ramifications for education during conflict. Aboriginal leaders and others who have experienced the post-colonial legacies of war and violence will address economic and discriminatory oppression in the form of poverty, sexism, and racism.

The participants will hear from educators living in countries trying to reconcile a violent past. The forum will encompass plenary sessions, workshops, and informal discussion groups devoted to activities of a broad and diverse nature from presenters gathered from around the world. All presentations, workshops, and activities will try to use co-operative, participatory, and interactive methodologies.

If you wish to be a presenter, or know someone who does, go to [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca) and scroll down to Peace Education Forum request for proposals. The deadline is November 15, 2005.

There is much to be done before the WPEC. Teacher and student activities in schools around B.C. that relate to peace are strongly encouraged. Remember that peace involves many aspects. The right of people to education, health, safety, a home, food, etc., all come under the auspices of peace.

## Grants available

The committee encourages teachers around B.C. to apply to

the Ed May Social Responsibility Fund, which provides teachers with funding to promote socially responsible teaching in inclusive and healthy schools, by providing money to assist teachers in developing and implementing violence prevention, antiracist, multicultural, gender equality, global, environmental, or peace resources. For more information on this fund, go to [www.bctf.ca/social/social.html#Ed](http://www.bctf.ca/social/social.html#Ed)

Contact your locals for information on social justice grants, which also provide funds for exciting and innovative initiatives.

We also hope that locals will fund speakers, particularly those from the southern hemisphere. Smaller locals could join together to financially support such speakers. Program information will make note of such sponsorships. Contact Jane Turner for more information on this aspect of the forum.

## World Urban Cafés

The Environmental Youth Alliance, a B.C. based organization that works with youth around the world is going to be offering World Urban Cafés to schools around B.C. These

**Imagine student-designed peace flags flying all around the world.**

urban cafés will bring youth activists from Africa, Asia, and Latin America together with hip hop messages of social commentary on what is happening worldwide. These cafés are

designed to include talent from each secondary school that hosts a World Urban Café. Matching funding will be required from each school. Please contact the EYA at [info@eya.com](mailto:info@eya.com), or telephone 604-689-4463.

## Peace and justice banners

Because Vancouver is hosting the WPF, the Vancouver School Board agreed to become involved, to finance and to encourage schools to create peace and justice banners that would then be reproduced and displayed throughout the city. Flag-making companies gave advice on size and composition and Vancouver students unveiled ten flag designs in Vancouver City Council Chambers, in June. Apparently there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Imagine student-designed peace flags flying all around the world. Could your community be one of those flying those flags? There are many, many ways to become involved in the WPEF.

Registration information will be available in the near future. Participants will be able to register for both the WPF and the WPEF, or just register for partial attendance. Many exciting mixes will be available.

For more information on the World Peace Education Forum, contact the committee chair, Jane Turner, at [jturner@bctf.ca](mailto:jturner@bctf.ca).

Jacqui Birchall is a teacher at Fraser Heights Secondary School, Surrey, and a member of WPEF organizing committee.

## October is Women's History Month Women and war

by Jane Turner

The national theme for Women's History Month this year is "Women and war: Contributions and consequences."

In the middle of the occupation of Palestinian territory, with rubble, bullets, suicide bombers, and curfew constant companions, women are growing flowers and herbs in tin cans and glass jars on their window ledges.

The women don't work their plots of land anymore; mostly because the fields don't exist or they are on the other side of the Israeli wall. But the desire to create a bit of beauty or to have flavour in the food they prepare still exists.

In Israel, women still go to the market, clean their homes, and send their children to school. Like their Palestinian sisters, they don't know if their children will come home safely to them, but they still send them off each day. Not because they don't care, but because life must be lived.

These daily acts of courage, hope, and defiance in the face of the chaos that surrounds them have been replicated by countless millions of women throughout history. But these acts, these things that define us as a civil society are not the foundations of written history. It is the opposite—war, death, and destruction that form the basis of the pages written to record our past and present and as

such, most likely defines our future.

Women's lives have been played out amidst the backdrop of peace and war, economic booms and busts. Bringing order to chaos created by men in power or by those few women who have gained power by acting like men, has been the lot of women everywhere. Perhaps if these acts of bravery, like gathering wood in the Sudan to keep cooking fires going, despite the risk of being raped or killed by raiding bands of men, formed the basis of our history texts we might be able to change our future to one of peace and civility.

In June 2006, Vancouver will play host to the first World Peace Forum. The vision that gives rise to the forum is a world where war and violence are things of the past. Just as we have changed our culture from one where smoking was cool

and doctors advertised the healthful benefits of tobacco, the World Peace Forum wants to build on the efforts of those who are working to make war obsolete.

In October, Women's History Month, we can contribute to that goal by focussing on the role women have played in promoting peace and creating a world that sustains life, instead of destroying it. Take your students to the library and have them google "women working for peace." There is a whole history out there waiting to be discovered.

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

## Resources:

- Status of Women Canada web site [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca).
- Ashton Garrison Military Museum, Saanich, has an extensive collection of the Canadian Women's Army Corps B.C., including the collection of CWAC founder, Joan Kennedy. For information, call 250-363-8340.



## On being well

# Now that summer is over

by Julia Johnson

The September school bell that proclaims the start of another school year also signals the end to the long, lazy days of summer. In June, most teachers envisage the summer months will provide them with time to rest, relax, and reflect while pursuing activities that bring them joy in the hope they will be able to re-enter classrooms rejuvenated and inspired. For many this vision of summer is often thwarted by the busyness of either planned or unexpected activities that squander precious time. A vision of summer renewal, not materialized, will nibble away at whatever energy reserves one has as soon as the ever-increasing demands, expectations, and never-ending jobs appear on the *to-do* list.

Maintaining a sense of peace, and calm in the eye of September's turmoil is a challenge if one wishes to approach the teaching year with more than survival in mind. The challenge of being well within the stressful environment of today's educational arena requires that we change our thoughts about what is important and what is not. Such a reflection can begin with a careful examination of "the list" that dictates how your time will be used. If your list does not address your needs for achieving a vision of personal wellness, then your list is making requirements that will ensure you have a year fraught with unrest and poor health. Taking precedent over all things, regardless if the demands are work-based or home-based, is the need to take care of oneself.

### Wellness is definitely more than being physically fit.

To most people, taking care of yourself means looking after your physical well being. This is important because poor physical health is a hindrance to achieving one's dreams. A regime that keeps our muscles and cells fine-tuned should be at the top of the list—exercise is the most effective way to reduce stress. When a regular routine of physical exertion such as walking, swimming, running, biking, or golfing fits into the natural rhythm of your day, a habit for optimal health takes root. A simple decision to make physical exercise a part of each day becomes a goal that reaps a healthy lifestyle.

For some people reconnecting with the spirit that nurtures the soul is a way of reducing stress, minimizing the aggravations of a day, and restoring peaceful energy. There are many ways to experience spirit and because this activity is very personal, no one method is better than another. However, engaging in an activity that enables you to hear the voice of your heart and soul, to hear the voice of truth and justice, to hear the harmonious beat of your life as it interacts with the surrounding life of plant and animal, will help you clarify issues that get clouded when debated by people



with vested interests. Finding a few minutes in a day to close your mind to the outside world nurtures your spirit and restores your energy.

Some people find solace and renewal connecting with family and friends. Life becomes simpler surrounded by the love and laughter of those who care about you. Frustration, anxiety, disappointment, and criticism seem less important when we remember that the people we care about will always be there. Each day provides opportunities to show by thought, word, and deed that we value, respect, and cherish those who are dear to us. Daily nurturing a dependable circle of friends fosters social well-being and provides a safety net.

Today's educational settings are often hotbeds of emotional unrest that breed ill health and disease. Some people, concerned for their emotional well-being, live by the words of the *Serenity Prayer*: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." Living by these words requires daily reflection that enables us to let go of things that we have no control over and allows us to focus attention on areas where we can make a difference. When moments of thoughtful reflection are paired with the regular emptying of emotional baggage, emotional health is nurtured.

Many people attend to their wellness needs by searching for and accepting new challenges. When the brain is stimulated with new learning, we become inspired and energized. Daily problems that once consumed our minds become less significant when our thoughts focus on perfecting a new skill. Stretching the brain muscle by learning something new addresses the intellectual well-being of our makeup.

Wellness is definitely more than being physically fit. As the school year unfolds with its many demands, remembering that being well is a many-faceted state will help you to prioritize the items on your to-do list. And may the pursuit of wellness in the intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical domains top your list of things to do. Let this be the year you succeed in achieving your goal to be well.

Julia Johnson, a learning resource teacher at Red Bluff School, in Quesnel, is a BCTF PD wellness associate. [johnsonj@abccom.bc.ca](mailto:johnsonj@abccom.bc.ca).

## Health & Safety

# A tragic epidemic

by Mark Keelan

In spring 2003, an outbreak of SARS in Toronto and Vancouver prompted massive media attention. Visitors to hospital emergency rooms were met by masked healthcare workers and told to put on masks and to apply antibacterial hand lotion. Such preventative measures were seen as reasonable and necessary. Anything less would have been seen as negligence. The feared epidemic was averted. SARS claimed no lives in British Columbia.

During the same period as the SARS outbreak, an epidemic of a different type was raging virtually unnoticed across BC. In 2003, 170 workers died on the job in B.C., including nine young workers (aged 15 to 24). Reasonable and necessary preventative measures to curb the spread of this terrible epidemic were seen by many as cumbersome and as a threat to the economic growth of the province. As a result, British

### We have the opportunity to promote preventative measures in our classrooms in a variety of ways.

Columbia workers continue to be killed and injured on the job.

WorkSafeBC (the fancy new moniker of the Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia) reports that from late May to early June 2005, more than 30 serious incidents occurred at workplaces. These incidents were responsible for three fatalities, six serious head injuries, the amputation of several fingers, and seven cases of single or multiple bone fractures. The amputation occurred on a young worker's second day on the job.

Fatalities on the job in the teaching profession are rare. So, what do these tragic statistics have to do with BCTF members? The answer to the question is two-fold.

#### Lead by example

It is no secret that students, parents, and the general public watch members closely. While we have our share of critics, the majority of people with whom

we come in contact look up to us for leadership and guidance.

Members have rights and should enforce them. We have the *right to know* the dangers in our workplaces. We have the *right to participate* in joint health and safety committees, inspections, and investigations. We have the *right to refuse unsafe work* when conditions

### ...the four basic occupational health and safety rights: the right to know, the right to participate, the right to refuse unsafe work, and the right to no discrimination.

are such that they may pose a risk to the health and safety of any person. And, we have the *right to no discrimination* when we insist that unsafe conditions be corrected immediately and when we refuse unsafe work.

Tools are available to assist members in asserting our rights. The BCTF provides excellent health and safety training for joint committee members and for school union reps. The *BCTF Occupational Health and Safety Manual* has recently been updated and copies are available in every local office and on the BCTF web site. The *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* can be found on the WorkSafeBC web site [www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/W/96492\\_00.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/W/96492_00.htm) and *regulation*. [healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Part1.asp](http://healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Part1.asp).

When we stand up for our rights, people will notice. Students will follow our example. Visitors to schools will soon come to realize that unsafe behaviour and conditions are not acceptable. Our workplaces will be healthier and safer for us, for our students, and for their parents, and, thus, a culture of safety will begin to develop around us. Unhealthy and unsafe conditions in schools will join corporal punishment and on-site smoking as socially unacceptable in British Columbia schools.



#### Promote prevention

The abysmal statistics above indicate that employers are not doing an adequate job of training workers in health and safety procedures. Many of our students are part of the workforce and others will be soon. Some of them make up the statistics for young workers.

We have the opportunity to promote preventative measures in our classrooms in a variety of ways. Classes on current events could include discussions about workplace injuries and how they could have been prevented. Students could debate the pros and cons of prescriptive-based vs. performance-based health and safety regulations. Safety rules for labs and shops and other classrooms could be linked to occupational safety rules. There are several curricular areas where students could be taught the four basic occupational health and safety rights: the right to know, the right to participate, the right to refuse unsafe work, and the right to no discrimination.

There is an excellent resource available for teaching students the four basic rights. The BCTF participated in the development of the B.C. Federation of Labour's, Young Worker Project. Teams of young workers take their dynamic presentations to secondary schools across the province. More than 13,000 students have been taught that they have rights in the workplace and have been given tips on how to use them. For more information, or to book a presentation, contact the BC Federation of Labour, 604-430-1421.

### Members have rights and should enforce them.

When members consistently assert the right to work in a healthy and safe environment and when students become workers who will not tolerate unsafe workplaces, the epidemic of worker death and injury will begin to be contained.

Mark Keelan is the BCTF's health and safety officer for prevention.

## WCB claims process

1. As soon as practicable after the injury occurs or occupational disease is contracted, report to the employer. The worker must complete a "Workers' Report of Injury or Occupational Disease to Employer" (Form 6A, online at [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)) and submit to the employer. In accordance with BCTF policy 13.D.08, forward a copy to the local teachers' association office.
2. Report the injury to the first-aid attendant, if applicable.
3. Attend an appointment with an appropriate healthcare professional as soon as possible and advise them the injury/disease is workplace related.
4. Although there is one year in which to file a claim, the WCB Regulation specifies that as soon as is practicable after an injury occurs or an occupational disease is contracted it *must* be reported to the employer. Unnecessary delays in reporting have often resulted in denial of claims.
5. As soon as a decision letter is received from WCB, contact Gail Montgomery, BCTF advocate, 604-871-1890 or 1-800-663-9163, [gmontgomery@bctf.ca](mailto:gmontgomery@bctf.ca).

# Election tool kit and beyond

*A foray into the history of public education and John Jessop*

by Paula Naylor

It's funny how one internet journey can launch a whole other research adventure. It all started with my decision to order *Election BC's Grade Five Election Tool Kit*. I planned to adapt it for inclusion in the social studies unit I was creating for my Grade 4s. While parts of the kit have been useful, I was quite disappointed by the sections dealing with the rights of Canadian citizens and B.C. election history.

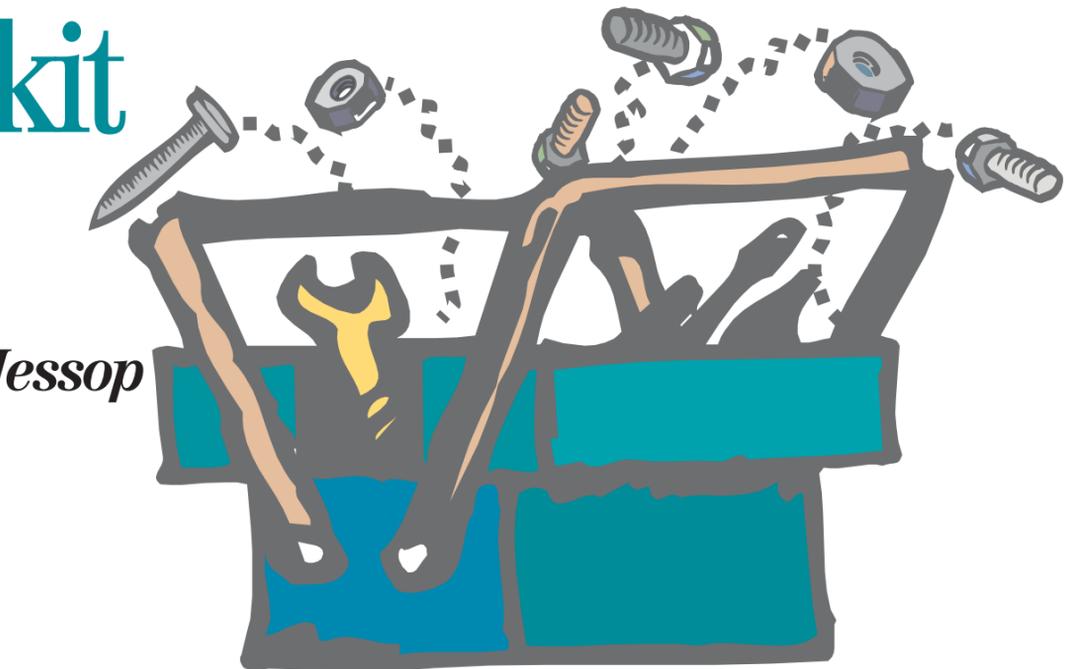
*...teachers in B.C. were prohibited from voting or campaigning from 1878 to 1883.*

The section that delineates our rights as provided through the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and Canada's *Human Rights Code* is prefaced with: "all Canadians are protected by certain rights based on Canada's tradition of democracy and respect for human dignity and freedom" (p. 24). This statement is misleading when we consider just how many of us have been excluded from voting in B.C. at different times. A comprehensive list is available on the Elections BC web site. Given that women, Aboriginals, Asians, South Asians, Mennonites, teachers (yes, teachers!), and civil servants (yes, them too!) among others have been prohibited from participating in elections in the past, it seems more appropriate that the preface recognize our efforts to create a democracy that truly respects human dignity and freedom by making us all equal

partners in the selection of our governing bodies.

While the tool kit features a section entitled "Important Dates in BC Election History" (p. 28), sadly, this abbreviated version of the list available on the Elections BC web site fails to mention our embarrassing history of exclusion, making reference only to when women achieved the right to vote. This is indeed unfortunate as it intimates that we should hide (or ignore) the fact that respect and tolerance were hard fought for, not inalienable rights. Our students benefit when we use history to inform the present. It enables them to better prepare for the future. Perhaps more young people would exercise the right to vote if they were aware of its fragile history. It's too bad the creators of the tool kit didn't take this into consideration. Luckily, we can access more complete information on their web site, which is where I learned that teachers in B.C. were prohibited from voting or campaigning from 1878 to 1883. That certainly piqued my curiosity.

During our class discussion of B.C. election history, my students provided the following theories: (1) teachers already had the privilege of teaching, (2) teachers have a job that's fun, (3) the government thought teachers weren't important, (4) the government wasn't sure teachers had enough experience to vote, (5) the government thought teachers had enough work to do already, and (6) the government thought they'd vote for the things that were best for teachers.



Nonplussed, I decided that it warranted further investigation. While intense Googling on my part failed to find any direct reference to what led to the exclusion, my guess is that it has to do with the fact that John Jessop (a teacher who became B.C.'s first provincial superintendent of education) supported the political faction that brought down Premier George Anthony Walkem's government in a non-confidence motion in 1876.

Walkem (whose government had previously passed a statute that denied the vote to Chinese and Aboriginal people in 1874) forced Jessop and the entire Board of Education to resign when he got back in power in 1878 (having regained popular support after defending the arrest of striking Nanaimo miners in 1877!). It appears that Jessop had further incurred Walkem's ire by forwarding a resolution from the provincial teachers' convention criticizing

proposed changes to the *School Act* of 1872, which Jessop had helped draft. The government then proceeded not only to amend *The School Act*, but to abolish the Board of Education as well.

Jessop, a proponent for free, non-sectarian education, was earlier involved in what is considered to be Canada's first teachers' strike. He and his Victoria teaching colleagues withdrew their services in 1870, after having worked both without pay as well as on reduced pay for previous years due to unremedied education funding shortfalls. Their intent was to press for local school tax bylaws. The tactic failed and Victoria District and Central Schools remained closed for the next two years.

In 1872, after numerous unsuccessful bids for the post, Jessop became superintendent of education. During his six-year tenure the public school system experienced expansion and improvements. More schools were built. More teachers were hired. Professional development initiatives were introduced. Structures were put in place to support rural schools. According to Jessop, children "will be just what education or the want of it

may make them. With it a majority may grow up respectable members of society,

*If anyone out there knows anything more about why teachers weren't allowed to vote, please let me know.*

without it many will become inmates of our jails and penitentiaries." That's certainly food for thought in light of the political climes in which public education has found itself over the past four years.

If anyone out there knows anything more about why teachers weren't allowed to vote, please let me know.

*Paula Naylor teaches at Queen Victoria Elementary School Annex, Vancouver.*

**Sources:** Elections BC, [www.elections.bc.ca](http://www.elections.bc.ca); Dictionary of Canadian Biographies Online, [www.biographi.ca](http://www.biographi.ca); The Homeroom: British Columbia's history of education web site, [www.mala.bc.ca/homeroom](http://www.mala.bc.ca/homeroom).

## Ten new BCTF lesson aids

**1 LA 2063—Challenging McWorld** produced by Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, ©2004, 206 p. This resource is designed to enable concerned youth to develop skills required for confronting McWorld in their daily lives on several fronts. This resource addresses: issues of globalization facing youth in high schools and university or college campuses; issues and challenges facing youth in their workplaces and communities; issues of corporate globalization affecting youth in both Canada and the world at large; and lesson plans and education supplements designed to make this second edition more accessible and applicable as a teaching and learning resource. Grades 8–12. \$17.95

**2 LA SR220—All Human Beings are Born Free and Equal in Dignity and Rights** produced by the Social Justice Committee, Burnaby Teachers' Association, 2004–05, 51 p. This resource contains social justice readings for teachers and intermediate and secondary students. The authors hope this resource facilitates more ease in raising social justice issues in the classroom. Some of the articles may not be appropriate for the intermediate level student. Article topics on social justice range from homosexuality, transgendered people, electoral reform, trade unions, globalization media, biodiversity, feminism, immigration, privatization, rich and poor, and aboriginal education. Grades 7+. \$5

**3 LA 9930—Student Success Equation** produced by The Learning Teachers' Association, ©Winter 2005, 90

p. This issue of LATA's *The Vital Link* journal, vol. 10, no. 1, features articles and viewpoints from learning assistance teachers. Includes a CD Rom, suitable for both Windows and Mac use, which highlights the important contributions that learning assistance teachers make to public education. Learning assistance teachers are the vital link between society's belief in inclusive education and the practical reality of making it happen. Grades K–12. \$12

**4 LA 9931—Your Magical Brain: How It Learns Best** by Gary Anaka, ©2005, 53 p. This book, written by a learning assistance teacher who is a study skills expert and a brain-based learning facilitator, offers assistance and supports a new framework for teaching and offers practical, useable tools to support student learning for all students. The author outlines how to work with the brain highlighting over 20 significant brain-friendly principles that work with a common-sense approach. The book is divided into six chapters: Five Teaching Approaches That Really Work Best; Ten Genuine Ways the Brain Learns Best; Three Things the Brain Needs Most; More Successful Brain Boosters; Brain Killers and The Biggest Challenge Ahead. For teachers. \$21.95

**5 LA 2044A—Art of Apology: Holocaust Memorials in Germany** produced by Dr. Hinda Avery and the Vancouver Multicultural Society, ©2005, 30-minute VHS videocassette. This video explores how a country attempts to

apologize for the atrocities it committed. After a lifetime wondering how and where family members were murdered by the Nazis, a Vancouver woman decides to go to Germany for answers. While on her quest she discovers Holocaust Memorials—museums, monuments and memorial centres—and becomes fascinated by their diverse forms. Are they an effective way to apologize for murder? For mass genocide? Is their apology recognized by Jewish communities? How effective are the memorials in alerting us to present day racism and antisemitism? This thought-provoking video takes the viewer to cities and former Nazi concentration camp sites. Grades 11–12. \$9.95. Also available in DVD format LA2044B—\$9.95.

**6 LA 2301—Dealing with Name-calling** produced by Gay and Lesbian Educators of B.C., ©2005, 44 p. This 44-page resource addresses name-calling (homophobic slurs in particular) in the school context, with an important legal update, and various strategies and tips for educators and administrators. It offers six lesson plans that can be adapted for any grade level from 2 to 10, and excellent lists of helpful books, videos and websites. There is also information about two BCTF workshops that address homophobia, and a sample of one of the free posters available online from GALE BC. Grades 2–10. \$5

**7 LA 7077—Foods and Nutrition 9** by Robynne Fraser, ©2005, 306 p. This lab demonstration/teacher book includes 57 recipes for student use under the headings

of proper measurement, breakfast unit, lunch unit, yeast breads, lunch/supper, supper unit and dessert unit including cookies, cakes, pastry and pies. The book is divided into three sections: lab demonstration for student use with the recipe quantities left blank, a teacher section with recipe quantities included, and an answer key for the lab demonstration section. The package is one-sided to be reproduced and three-hole punched to fit into a binder. \$22.95.

**8 LA 7078—Food and Nutrition 10** by Robynne Fraser, ©2005, 333 p. This lab demonstration/teacher book includes 51 recipes for student use, including international recipes. The book is divided into three sections: lab demonstration for student use with recipe quantities left blank, a teacher section with recipe quantities included, and an answer key for the lab demonstration section. The package is one-sided to be reproduced and three-hole punched to fit into a binder. \$23.95

**9 LA 7079—Food and Nutrition 11/12 International Foods** by Robynne Fraser, ©2005, 425 p. This lab demonstration/teacher book includes 78 recipes for student use, including recipes from Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East, Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, Central and South America and North America. Divided into three sections: lab demonstration for student use with recipe quantities left blank, a teacher section with recipe quantities included, and an answer key for the lab demonstration section. The package is one-

sided to be reproduced and three-hole punched to fit into a binder. \$25.95

**10 LA 2062 Beaver Tales** by the Overlanders, ©2004, 60-minute audio CD. This CD contains songs and printed lyrics on Canadian history suitable for Grades 9 and 10 social studies. Students can sing their way into becoming experts on Canadian history. The Overlanders use a wide variety of musical styles as they craft songs that are both educational and exciting. The Overlanders provide a web site ([mapleleafpro.net](http://mapleleafpro.net)) that offers line by line explanations of their song lyrics, interactive teaching resources like the Prime Ministers Personality Quiz and over 300 pages of lesson plans. The Overlanders also tour schools with their action-packed Canadian history musical theatre show. Suitable for Grades 4–5 and 9–10. \$19.95

More curriculum resources and information are available at [www.bcalmer.ca](http://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 1-800-663-9163, 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](http://bctf.ca/LessonAids)

## BCCPAC upset over court decision

The following letter was received in our office and printed in several local newspapers around the province. Two responses to the letter are also included here.

Recently considerable attention has been given to both the B.C. Court of Appeal decision to uphold an arbitrator's ruling that allowed teachers to discuss politics during parent-teacher interviews and the ensuing possibility of labour action on behalf of the B.C. Teachers' Federation. As such, many parents are not confident that when their child returns to school this fall, the focus of public education in British Columbia is going to be on the student.

For many parents this is of considerable concern and there is a sense of helplessness to ensure that our schools do not become an arena for political dispute and retribution. BCTF has stated that students are the priority and have made strong statements concerning parents including, "We've never had a single complaint from a parent, that teachers have been lecturing them at parent teacher interviews," (CKNW interview with Irene Lanzinger, first vice-president of BCTF, August 4, 2005).

These comments are unsettling for BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) as they do not accurately reflect the concerns that we as an organization are hearing from our members. We would not presume to speak on behalf of teachers, as this is not our position in the education system. In turn, we would expect that the BCTF would not speak on behalf of parents. As the provincial voice of parents, we look forward to being consulted by the BCTF on concerns/complaints that have been expressed by parents of British Columbia, thus ensuring that they are accurately aware of the sentiments of parents when they enter into any discussion that impacts public education in B.C.

**Kim Howland**  
BCCPAC President

## They don't speak for parents, either

Re "Parents' group, not teachers' union, will speak for parents" (Letters, *The Tri-City News*, Aug. 17, 2005)

The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) president's letter is a case of the pot calling the kettle black in claiming which group has the right to speak for B.C. parents.

The Ministry of Education-funded BCCPAC persists in its arrogant and false claim that it owns the parent voice in B.C. And while it may speak for a small fraction of parents in this province, it sure as heck doesn't speak for me. (Considering its main funding source, the rigours of critical thought bring to mind the expression, "He who pays the piper calls the tune.")

As for the hundreds of thousands of parents for whom BCCPAC doesn't speak, given the diversity of our pluralistic society, can any one organization really claim to be the collective voice of a group so

wildly varied as parents? Most don't even know BCCPAC exists and have no way to ensure their voice is included in the group's statements.

Stoking fears of a strike or job action serve to turn up the heat and parent anxiety, and do little to encourage both the employer and the B.C. Teachers' Federation to reach a speedy, negotiated resolution.

As for the potential of kids losing a few days of school, where was the BCCPAC parent voice when so many districts were forced to shorten school weeks and lengthen school breaks due to underfunding?

**Patti Bacchus**  
BC Society for Public Education, [www.bcspe.ca](http://www.bcspe.ca)

## Letter unfair to teachers

Re "Parents do have concerns," *Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Times*, Aug. 19, 2005.

Kim Howland states in her letter that the BCTF has assured her that students will be its priority this fall. But she also insists that they lack confidence in teachers making students their priority. Teachers do not deserve this lack of confidence. Fortunately, indications from parents, to whom I have spoken, do not show that most parents share that lack of confidence in their child's teacher.

I also wonder why the BCCPAC is so concerned about the court ruling giving teachers the right to discuss politics? Do they expect that teachers will not spend the time reporting about their child's progress? I think that teachers have proven that they will indeed focus on the student at interviews. All that the ruling does is ensure that teachers are not totally gagged when it comes to explaining why some students are not getting the services that were once available to them. If I go into an interview, I want to know why my child's services have been eliminated. Why is my child no longer receiving the learning assistance that was once available to her or him? Why is the library closed when my child needs access to it? Why does my child have to wait for 10 minutes with her/his hand up when she/he has a problem in math? I don't call this politics and I don't believe that most parents do either.

I am flabbergasted that the BCCPAC president accuses the BCTF of speaking on behalf of parents. Since when is it "speaking on behalf of parents" to state that the BCTF has not heard complaints about teachers talking politics? If the BCCPAC has heard a plethora of complaints (from other than diehard Liberal supporters) why haven't they consulted the BCTF and tried to work together to come up with something that both gives teachers their human right to speak up and to make parents comfortable? Perhaps it is because the vast majority of the over one million parents in the province are interested to hearing from their child's teacher about the problems with declining services in our schools. Perhaps the majority of over one million parents want to work with teachers, rather than to start the year off by being antagonistic toward the teachers who work with their children.

I feel sad for parents that the BCCPAC has chosen to start the year off in such a negative manner.

**Kathy Couch Nelson**

# The Holocaust

## Marking 60 years of liberation and 30 years of the symposium

by Frieda Miller

As the world marks the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, two friends, whose lives dramatically intersected 60 years ago in Buchenwald concentration camp, were reunited in Vancouver at the 30th Annual High School Symposium on the Holocaust. Sixty years ago, Leon Bass, a 19-year-old, Black American soldier walked into Buchenwald and witnessed atrocities that would affect him for the rest of his life. Despite his personal experiences with racism and segregation, he was unprepared for what he encountered. Reaching out to touch his liberator was Robbie Waisman, a 14-year old Jewish boy, who had been imprisoned in the camp and was now orphaned by the Holocaust.

*This new teaching CD ROM recognizes the 60th anniversary of the discovery of the concentration camps as a "teachable moment" and was developed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the end of the war.*

Today, Leon Bass is a retired school principal and an internationally active antiracism speaker. Robbie Waisman is a past president of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society and a survivor speaker who addresses hundreds of students annually. On May 10 and 11, 2005, they

addressed 1,200 high school students and their teachers at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's symposium, which is held every spring at UBC. This year, a third day was organized to accommodate the many schools hoping to register. As a result, an additional 600 students were able to attend and in total, over 40 schools participated over the three days.

The program included an address by Professor Chris Friedrichs, Department of History, UBC, on the topic "After 60 Years: Why the Holocaust Still Matters." Students also heard from survivors in small group sessions and posed questions to a panel of speakers. Teachers joined VHEC's Education Co-ordinator, Frieda Miller, at lunchtime roundtables. Many teachers who brought their students to this year's symposium, remember coming to the symposium when they themselves were in high school. Over the last 30 years, the VHEC has helped educate some 30,000 students about the Holocaust, an event, which calls into question our most basic assumptions about human nature and our role as global citizens.

Each participating school received a copy of the video *The Boys of Buchenwald* and a new teaching resource, a CD ROM, *Canada Responds to the Holocaust, 1944-1945* for their school's library.

This new teaching CD ROM recognizes the 60th anniversary of the discovery of the concentration camps as a "teachable moment" and was developed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the end of the war. It is a PowerPoint presentation designed for use in Canadian secondary schools and makes use of multimedia including film

footage, video interviews, and art reproductions. The resource explores the reactions of Canadians at the front and at home to the discovery of the extent of the Holocaust. This project brings new historical research and primary source materials to students, teachers, and the wider public. It features

*The project engages students and others in serious historical reflection on Canada's involvement in World War II and its confrontation with Nazi Germany.*

letters, paintings, photographs, newspaper articles, and first-hand accounts. These sources portray the reactions of Canadian soldiers, journalists, official war artists, and civilians at home, to Nazi Germany's genocidal policies.

The project engages students and others in serious historical reflection on Canada's involvement in World War II and its confrontation with Nazi Germany. In the future, the VHEC hopes to mount this resource on the web for greater public access.

Teachers wishing to order the resource, or bring classes to future high school symposia, should contact Frieda Miller at [fmiller@vhec.org](mailto:fmiller@vhec.org) or contact the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre at 604-264-0499, [www.vhec.org](http://www.vhec.org).

*Frieda Miller is education co-ordinator, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.*



**CANADA Responds**  
to the Holocaust 1944 to 1945

# Teachers' pension plan

## Two definitions for spouse

Two definitions of spouse are used to administer your benefits in retirement—one for pension benefits and one for post-retirement group benefits (i.e., health and dental). The 2004–05 retirement seminars may have caused some confusion around these definitions, so we would like to clarify what they are and how they are used.

The definition of "spouse" for pension benefit purposes comes from the *Pension Benefits Standards Act* (PBSA). In this case, spouse means:

- the person you are legally married to and who, for the two-year period immediately before the relevant time (e.g., retirement or death), you were not living separate from OR
- if the first bullet does not apply, the person, of the same or opposite sex, who has lived and cohabitated with you in a marriage-like relationship for the two-year period immediately before the relevant time.

This means that if you are legally married and have not been separated for two or more years, your legal spouse is your spouse for pension purposes. A common-law spouse is your spouse for pension purposes, if you have lived together for at least the last two years before your retirement or death.

The Teachers' Pension Plan uses this definition, in compliance with the PBSA, when determining a member's options at retirement and/or entitlements in the event of a member's death prior to retirement.

In contrast, post-retirement group benefits (such as health and dental) are not pension benefits and not subject to the

PBSA. The definition of "spouse" for post-retirement group benefit purposes comes from the contracts negotiated by the pension board of trustees with the health benefits carrier (i.e., Pacific Blue Cross). In this case, a spouse is:

...a person of the same or opposite sex to whom you are married or living with in a marriage-like relationship.

Note that the post-retirement group benefit contracts also provide that:

If you are in a common-law relationship:

- you must live together for 12 months before applying for [post-retirement] dental and/or extended health benefits coverage for your spouse (unless you are claiming your spouse's children as dependants on your income tax return).
- you may be required to provide proof that you have been living in a common-law relationship for 12 months or more.

If you leave one common-law relationship and enter another, you must wait 12 months after cancelling [post-retirement group benefit] coverage for your first spouse and dependants before you can enroll another spouse and other dependants.

Your spouse is not entitled to [post retirement group] benefits if they are separated from you for other than health reasons.

The post-retirement group benefits definition is used to determine a person's eligibility for post-retirement extended health or dental benefits coverage only. (Your extended health (EHB) and dental benefits are not pension benefits. You may choose to enrol or not enrol yourself, your spouse, and your dependants in these benefits, and they are not guaranteed to continue into the future.)

If you have any questions about these definitions, please contact the Teachers' Pension Plan at 1-800-356-8977.

## Changes to TPP enrolment rules

Effective July 1, 2005, the enrolment rules for the Teachers' Pension Plan changed.

- **New employees** hired on or after July 1, 2005—All employees, including those employed in a less-than-half-time capacity, must be immediately enrolled in the Teachers' Pension Plan, and will no longer be allowed to opt out of enrolling in the plan.
- **Existing employees** as of July 1, 2005—Employees who had previously waived enrolment in the plan must also be enrolled effective July 1, 2005. These employees cannot be retroactively enrolled to their employment start date, and they are not eligible to purchase their prior non-contributory periods of service. The new rule will simplify enrolment for employers and their employees, and will make pension benefits available to all teachers, no matter what their employment status.

## Age + Service = 88? Don't wait!

If you are age 64, or your age and contributory service total 88, you may voluntarily withdraw from the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan: Long Term.

If you are age 65, or your age and service total 90, you are no longer eligible for long-term benefits, and you should withdraw.

It is necessary to apply to withdraw—the forms are available from the Income Security Division (604-871-1920 or 1-800-663-9163), or online at [bctf.ca/pensions/salary/LT-WithdrawalForm.shtml](http://bctf.ca/pensions/salary/LT-WithdrawalForm.shtml).

## Pension seminars 2005–06

Saturdays (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., with a question period following). Seminars cover such topics as the Teachers' Pension Plan, purchase rules, pension options, online tools, and retirement issues. Pre-registration is NOT required.

Oct. 15, 2005	Abbotsford	Abbotsford DTA
Oct. 29, 2005	Prince Rupert	Coast Prince Rupert Hotel
Nov. 19, 2005	Campbell River	Anchor Inn
Nov. 19, 2005	Surrey	Sheraton Guildford
Jan. 7, 2006	Burnaby	Executive Hotel & Conf. Centre
Jan. 14, 2006	Victoria (Saanich)	Mary Winspear Cultural Centre
Jan. 21, 2006	North Vancouver	Centennial Theatre
Feb. 4, 2006	Richmond	Hilton Vancouver Airport
Feb. 11, 2006	Coquitlam	Executive Hotel & Resorts
Feb. 18, 2006	Vernon	Prestige Inn
March 4, 2006	Prince George	Coast Inn of the North
March 25, 2006	Kamloops	Campus Activity Centre, UCC
April 1, 2006	Delta	Delta Town & Country Inn
April 8, 2006	Nanaimo	Coast Bastion Inn
April 22, 2006	Vancouver	UBC Student Union Building
April 29, 2006	Williams Lake	Overlander Hotel
April 29, 2006	Penticton	Penticton Lakeside Resort
May 6, 2006	Nelson	BW Baker Street Inn

## 10+1 Reasons to attend a pension seminar

1. You can learn the basics about the Teachers' Pension Plan (TPP).
2. You can learn the advantage of purchasing your maternity/parental leave of absence.
3. You can find out how much your pension is worth.
4. You can find out how to increase your pension benefits.
5. You can find out what happens to your pension if you take a leave of absence, terminate employment as a teacher, or die before retirement.
6. You can find out how Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security benefits effect your TPP benefits.
7. You can find out what health benefits are available to you on retirement through the TPP.
8. You can learn how to access TPP information on the Internet.
9. You can find out how the TPP is governed and administered.
10. You can attend with your spouse and/or colleagues and follow up the seminar session with an outing to a good restaurant.
11. You can stop procrastinating—learn about your pension and think about your retirement years.

For more information about the TPP, attend a pension seminar this year.

The upcoming seminars are listed in each issue of *Teacher* or check the BCTF web site at [bctf.ca/pensions/PensionSeminars.html](http://bctf.ca/pensions/PensionSeminars.html).

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## Teachers are forced to live with political whims

Henry Armstrong, the former executive director of the B.C. School Trustees Association (1973 to 1990), responded to "Teachers, province brace for showdown," in The Vancouver Sun, August 24, 2005.

Thirty years of experiences in labour relations representing employers, employees, and government taught me to look for the all-important hidden agenda. What's the hidden agenda in the current dispute between the B.C. Teachers' Federation and the provincial government?

For many years, teachers negotiated with their employers, the school boards. They did not have the right to strike, but they had the right to free collective bargaining. When there was no agreement, the matter was submitted to binding arbitration. Then in 1987, the Social Credit provincial government gave teachers the right to negotiate under the Labour Code and the right to strike. This was consistent with the rights of other workers.

When the Liberal government took office, it legislated teaching as an essential service. This not only removed the teachers' right to strike, it also removed their right to free collective bargaining with rights to arbitration if negotiations broke down.

The hidden agenda in this dispute is one of basic human rights. Teachers are forced to accept the political whims of the government of the day, not their employers.

Is this justice or the settlement of an old partisan political agenda, with unsuspecting students, parents, teachers, and school trustees caught in the middle?

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## Wal-Mart woes

A coalition of union and community activists, small businesses, and elected leaders in Queens, New York, successfully mobilized to stop what could have been Wal-Mart's first New York City store.

Media reports revealed that Vornado Realty Trust had hoped to win approval for the shopping center before the public learned Wal-Mart was to be an anchor store. When that was revealed, opposition to the project soared.

City council member Helen Sears said to win approval to locate a store in the area, Wal-Mart would have to improve its wages, health benefits, and pensions, and end its vehement stance against unions.

The real estate developer dropped plans to build the city's first Wal-Mart.

Source: BCTGM Report/BCTGM/Calm



## B.C. Liberals have worst labour record in North America

The International Labour Organization, UN agency, has again condemned B.C. Liberals' poor record on protecting workers' human rights.

In a recent report, the ILO slammed the province for violating freedom of association principles. It also recommends the government take specific actions to repair the damage and demands the province to come into compliance with international standards.

This is the ninth time in two years the ILO has condemned Premier Gordon Campbell's government for trampling on the basic rights of workers, the worst record in North America.

Campbell now has the dubious honour of having had more ILO complaints filed against his government than any other Canadian province in the agency's 84-year history.

Source: CUPE/CALM

## Montessori Elementary Teacher Credential Program\*

*Now accepting applications.*

### Montessori Elementary Credential Program (Ages 6-12 yrs.)

This is a thorough & comprehensive program that offers an integrated and holistic approach to education. It is designed to meet the needs of teachers in both the public and private sectors. The training consists of 3 components: Summer Sessions, Distance Learning, and Field Study.

**Credit Opportunity:** Simon Fraser University (SFU) offers credit options for eligible students.

### Montessori Foundation Course

**Course Description:** This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the preschool years (ages 3-6). It includes lectures and seminars on Montessori educational theory, philosophy, and curriculum. This course is a pre-requisite to VTI's Montessori Elementary Credential Program offered in collaboration with Simon Fraser University (SFU), unless a Montessori Early Childhood Credential has already been attained.

*Attending this course does not certify an individual to teach in a Montessori classroom.*

\*Accredited by MACTE - www.macte.org    \*Affiliated with AMS - www.amshq.org

Call **604-713-4500** or email **cregistrat@vsb.bc.ca** for a complete information/application package or visit our website: **www.vti.vsb.bc.ca**



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## Book time now!

– October 18-21, 2005 –  
Spreading the Word schools program

33 great events for grades K-12 with writers from around the world (including events for teachers and La Joie de Lire events in French)

<p>Larissa Behrendt (Australia) Baba Brinkman (BC) Michael Crummey (Newfoundland) Sheree Fitch (Nova Scotia) William Gibson (BC) C.C. Humphreys (UK) Clem Martini (Alberta)</p>	<p>Susan Musgrave (BC) Nelofer Pazira (Afghanistan/Ontario) Spider Robinson (BC) Arthur Slade (Ontario) Tim Winton (Australia) Paul Yee (Ontario) And many more</p>
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Ticket sales to schools start September 13 at 10 am. For information on 2005 Spreading the Word events and programs and ticket ordering information, check our website: [www.writersfest.bc.ca/schools](http://www.writersfest.bc.ca/schools)

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THE VANCOUVER SUN



## Attention K-7 Teachers!

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- A free class field trip admission to the Science World facility in Vancouver;
- A complimentary Science World Outreach Program in your community.

Visit [www.scienceworld.ca](http://www.scienceworld.ca) to download a BC PALS field trip reservation form or call 604-443-7500 to speak to our bookings department.

Outside the lower mainland call 1-800-363-1611 to find out when Science World is coming to your area.




We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Education for BC PALS.

## Karen: Teaching in the U.S.A.

Home Country: Canada  
U.S.A. Placement: Georgia  
Professional Goal: To start an international pen-pal program  
Personal Goal: Learn how to surf  
**How She Got Started:** [www.vifprogram.com](http://www.vifprogram.com)



Hundreds of teachers like Karen have found opportunities for professional development by teaching in the U.S.A. You can, too. Visit [www.vifprogram.com](http://www.vifprogram.com). Math, Science, Special Education, French and Elementary teachers are encouraged to apply now for positions beginning in August 2005.



# CLASSIFIED

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**WHISTLER** Alta Lake, waterfront, 1 bd. condo, sleeps 4, 1 km to village, FP, TV/VCR/DVD. summer/winter rates, 604-298-2070.

**WHISTLER GETAWAY.** Pinecrest Estates, 5 bd., 1400 sq.ft. cabin, sauna, deck with BBQ, fully-equip. kitchen, DW, WD, wood stove (wood provided). Rates from \$175/nt. (seasonal) [glush@shaw.ca](mailto:glush@shaw.ca) or 604-936-3346.

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**WHISTLER** Village North, 2 bd. deluxe townhome. 604-531-6847. View at [www.whistlervacationhome.ca](http://www.whistlervacationhome.ca).

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**WHISTLER ON THE LAKE** 1 bd. newly renovated Tuscan style condo right on the lake. Swim in summer, skate in winter, 3 min. drive to village. Sleeps 4, fully stocked. Call Carol, cell: 604-209-7220.

**WHISTLER** Deluxe 1 bd., village, 2.5/bed, Creekside, rates \$69+, [salij@shaw.ca](mailto:salij@shaw.ca)

**WHISTLER** Townhouse, sleeps 8, fully equip. 604-985-7669 or Gary 604-669-7212.

**KIHEI, MAUI.** Large selection of fully equipped condos. Great beaches. Near shopping centre. Call Alf, 604-291-1751, F: 604-291-9773, [kihei@telus.net](mailto:kihei@telus.net).

**MAUI.** Privately owned, beautiful fully furn. 2 bd., 2 bath condo across from Kamaole beaches. Great complex, Great location. 250-598-6955, F: 250-598-6965.

**PALM SPRINGS.** Double-wide mobile in Palm Desert next to College park. Pool. \$1500/mo. (US) \$450/wk. 250-828-1984.

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**BUCERIAS MEXICO** Privately owned, beautiful fully furn. new 2 bd., 2 bath house. Two blks to fantastic beach. Rooftop palapa with panoramic view, weekly & monthly rates. 250-748-4883, email [cindyharvey@telus.net](mailto:cindyharvey@telus.net)

**PUERTO VALLARTA** Beautiful, large, 2 bd. furn. condo, downtown, 3 blks from the Malecon (beach). Reasonable wklly rates, N/S, [dbemc@hotmail.com](mailto:dbemc@hotmail.com), 604-608-4268.

**MEXICO** 2 bd. suite, sleeps 4. Ten minute walk to beach. [www.casaserena.net](http://www.casaserena.net)

**VACATION IN MEXICO** this Christmas. Combine this year's Christmas break with the adventure of a bicycle trip and relaxation of a beach holiday. Join us for "The Manzanillo Bicycle Tour." All abilities welcome. Options for non-riders. You'll visit areas where few other tourists travel as well as spend some time at the beach. For full information about this unique Mexico experience, call Les or Barb at 604-536-4089 or email [thelommels@shaw.ca](mailto:thelommels@shaw.ca)

**MEXICO.** Beautiful Sayulita, 35 min. north of Puerto Vallarta airport. 3 bd. house, 2 blks from beach, 1 blk. to town center. Ideal for families, small groups. Regular rate \$450 US/wk. <http://sayulitarent.freespaces.com> or email [bnapaloni@yahoo.ca](mailto:bnapaloni@yahoo.ca)

**FRANCE.** Ultimate vacations, privately owned, beautiful furn. 1 bd. central Paris. Provence lovely furn. house close to Avignon. Wkly/mthly. 604-738-1876, 604-298-3904, [i\\_roland@hotmail.com](mailto:i_roland@hotmail.com)

**SW FRANCE** Charente, chambre d'hotes, peaceful countryside, wonderful for hiking/cycling; located outside Aubeterre-sur-dronne, one of France's "prettiest villages." Contact [cotswold@couler.plus.com](mailto:cotswold@couler.plus.com)

**ENGLAND** Cotswold Cottage: [www.cotswoldholidaylets.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldholidaylets.co.uk)

## FOR RENT

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## MISCELLANEOUS

**MASTER OF EDUCATION** (Special Education) by coursework offered by Flinders University in S. Australia is recognized by the B.C. Teacher Qualification Service. The degree is available entirely in distance mode.

Applications are invited now for commencement of study in 2006. More information at: <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/northamerica> or from the program co-ordinator, [Bernice.Burnip@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Bernice.Burnip@flinders.edu.au)

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**TEACHER EXCHANGE.** Secondary media/photography teacher working in Perth, W. Australia, interested in a teaching exchange for 2007. Teachers in the BC area email me and I will forward details regarding my house and school, etc. [natalie.1.clews@det.sa.edu.au](mailto:natalie.1.clews@det.sa.edu.au)

**SPIRIT MEDITATION CLASSES** 604-461-5511, Port Moody, [www.veraciswellness.com](http://www.veraciswellness.com)

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# PD CALENDAR

## PSA Professional Development Day October 21, 2005

### OCTOBER 2005

**20-21** Vancouver. B.C. School Counsellors' Association (BCSCA) Conference, Working with Heart, SFU Harbourside. With Gordon Neufeld. Visit [bctf.bc.ca/psas/BCSCA](http://bctf.bc.ca/psas/BCSCA).

**20-22** Kelowna. British Columbia Teacher Librarians' Association (BCTLA) provincial conference, Bridging Libraries, Learning, and Life, experiences, opportunities, and strategies for self-renewal, hosted by Central Okanagan Teacher-Librarians' Association, Rutland Secondary School. Contact [sbede@sd23.bc.ca](mailto:sbede@sd23.bc.ca), [colta.sd23.bc.ca](mailto:colta.sd23.bc.ca).

**20-22** Kamloops. B.C. Technology Education Association (BCTEA) Conference, Skills Pay the Bills, with Ralph Finch, dean of Trades & Technology and Kathryn McNaughton, dean of Education, both from Thompson Rivers University, as keynote speakers, South Kamloops Secondary School. Join us where the Thompson Rivers meet for great workshops, tours, and commercial displays. Interested workshop presenters are encouraged to contact Martin Ilic, [martin\\_ilic@hotmail.com](mailto:martin_ilic@hotmail.com).

**20-22** Vancouver. English as a Second Language Provincial Specialist Association (ESL PSA), Educators Against Racism (EAR), B.C. Teachers for Peace and Global Education (PAGE), Centre for Education, Law, and Society (SFU), and the BC Peace Education Committee's first-ever joint venture to create a tapestry of learning for all-Weaving the Strands: Language, Culture, Social Justice, and Peace. Venues TBA. Sessions on teaching, learning, and living in a global community; academic sessions, practical workshops, and activities that are more community-focused. Contact Sylvia Helmer, [shelmer@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:shelmer@vsb.bc.ca), Roz Johns, [rjohns@richmond.sd38.bc.ca](mailto:rjohns@richmond.sd38.bc.ca), Donald Wilson, [dwilson@prp.sd41.bc.ca](mailto:dwilson@prp.sd41.bc.ca), [educ.sfu.ca/cels/index.html](mailto:educ.sfu.ca/cels/index.html), or [bc-peace-ed.org](http://bc-peace-ed.org).

**20-22** Whistler. B.C. Business Education Association (BCBEA) Conference, Let the Games Begin. For Business, IT, Planning, CAPP, Tourism, and Portfolio teachers, Telus Conference Centre. Contact Peter Noah [peter\\_noah@yahoo.com](mailto:peter_noah@yahoo.com), [bctea.ca](http://bctea.ca).

**20-22** Richmond. Conférence de l'Association provinciale des professeurs d'immersion et du programme francophone (APPIPC), De fil en aiguille... le français se tisse, conférencière-invitée, Annie Bourret, linguiste, Hûtel Executive Airport Plaza. Contact Sophie Bergeron, [sbergeron@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:sbergeron@sd43.bc.ca) ou [bctf.ca/psas/APPIPC](mailto:bctf.ca/psas/APPIPC).

**21** Vancouver. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association (LATA) conference, The Vital Link, Rethinking Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, with Dr. Rosemary Tannock, Plaza 500 Hotel. Contact Alan Peterson, 38-800 South Hill Street, Kamloops, BC V2B 5L8, f: 250-376-4579, [lataconference@hotmail.com](mailto:lataconference@hotmail.com), [bctf.ca/LATA](http://bctf.ca/LATA).

**21** Richmond. B.C. Association of Teachers of Modern Languages (BCATML) conference, Unpacking Your Parachute, Best Western Inn. Keynote address by Dr. Cynthia Lewis. Contact Ellen Bornowsky, [ebornowsky@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:ebornowsky@sd35.bc.ca), [bctf.ca/psas/bcatml](mailto:bctf.ca/psas/bcatml).

**21** Port Moody. B.C. Association of Mathematics Teachers (BCAMT) conference, Realizing the Vision: Mathematics for All, Heritage Woods Secondary School, 1300 David Avenue. Contact Rebecca Rowley, [rowley@sd45.bc.ca](mailto:rowley@sd45.bc.ca).

**21** Vancouver. British Columbia Teachers of English Language Arts (BCTELA) Conference, Removing Boundaries: Literacy without Borders, a national conference, Killarney Secondary School. Contact Carleen Liski, [cliski@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:cliski@sd43.bc.ca).

**21** Surrey. B.C. Dance Educators' Association (BCDEA) conference, Everybody Dance, Fleetwood Park Secondary School. \$100 (\$75 for students, retired BCTF, TOCs) before October 5. Contact Lucie Landriault, 604-597-2301, f: 604-597-6481, [landriault\\_l@sd36.bc.ca](mailto:landriault_l@sd36.bc.ca).

**21** Coquitlam. B.C. Social Studies Teachers' Association (BCSSTA) Conference, Canada's Role in the Global Community, Gleneagle Secondary School. Conference chair: Raquel Chin. Register online at [www.bcssta.ca](http://www.bcssta.ca).

**21** Vancouver. B.C. Science Teachers' Association (BCSCTA) and B.C. Association of Physics Teachers High-Energy Day for Secondary Science Teachers, TRIUMF research lab. Contact [mike.combes@kwantlen.ca](mailto:mike.combes@kwantlen.ca) or [bcscta.ca](http://bcscta.ca).

**21** New Westminster. Physical Education-British Columbia (PE-BC) provincial conference, Douglas College. Contact Michelle Kilborn, [michellekilborn@shaw.ca](mailto:michellekilborn@shaw.ca).

**21** Richmond. Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children in B.C. (AEGTCCBC) Gifted Ed '05 Conference, featuring Dr. Marcia Imbeau on differentiated instruction for gifted learners, Radisson President Hotel and Suites Vancouver Airport. Contact [llanstrom@hotmail.com](mailto:llanstrom@hotmail.com), [bctf.ca/psas/AEGTCCBC](mailto:bctf.ca/psas/AEGTCCBC).

**21-22** Vernon. Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association (PITA) fall conference, A Harvest of ProD, to be held at W.L. Seaton Secondary School. Call 1-877-SEE PITA, or for information, program, and registration forms, visit [pita.bc.ca](http://pita.bc.ca).

**21-22** Vernon. Association of B.C. Drama Educators (ABCDE) Conference, Unity 2005, focussing on the hottest new Canadian play, Unity 1918, by Kevin Kerr. Delegates will learn everything from pre-production research and development, through design and staging, to directing and acting styles. Walk away from conference with a play you are ready to produce! Main venue: W.L. Seaton Secondary School. Contact Lana O'Brien, [lana\\_obrien@sd22.bc.ca](mailto:lana_obrien@sd22.bc.ca) or [lana.obrien@telus.net](mailto:lana.obrien@telus.net).

**21-22** Lake Cowichan, Vancouver Island. Environmental Educators' Provincial Specialist Association (EEPSA) Fall Conference, Environmental Concepts: From Theory to Practice, Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education and Conference Centre. Contact Nichole Marples, 604-533-6149, [marplesn@yahoo.ca](mailto:marplesn@yahoo.ca).

**21-22** Burnaby. B.C. Music Educators' Association (BCMEA) provincial conference, Upbeat 2005, Burnaby Secondary School. Includes workshops, keynotes, industry displays, five provincial honours groups, and a stream for nonmusic teachers. Contact [sandraennis@shaw.ca](mailto:sandraennis@shaw.ca), [upbeat2005.ca](mailto:upbeat2005.ca).

**21-22** West Vancouver. Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association (THESA) conference, Coastal Connection-New directions in home economics, Rockridge Secondary School. Includes workshops, merchant mall, and keynoter Don Genova, from CBC's Pacific Palate, on new trends in the food industry in B.C. Contact Jenny Garrels, [jgarrels@dcnet.com](mailto:jgarrels@dcnet.com).

**21-22** Richmond. B.C. Primary Teachers' Association (BCPTA) Primary Leadership Conference, with speakers Dr. Marvin Marshall and Pamela Quigg, a miniconference for teachers new to primary, with Sharron Cooke and Cynthia Clarke presenting hands-on science activities for the recommended IRP units for Grades 1-3, presentation of the Early Learners Project, plus more workshop choices, Vancouver Airport Conference Resort. Contact ph/f: 604-540-8309, [bctf.bc.ca/bcptaBCPTA](mailto:bctf.bc.ca/bcptaBCPTA).

**21-22** Blue River. B.C. Rural and Small Schools Teachers' Association (BCRSSTA) Fall Conference/Retreat, at Mike Wiegels Heli-Skiing Resort. Contact [sholmes@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:sholmes@sd73.bc.ca) or [ivey@uniserve.com](mailto:ivey@uniserve.com).

**21-23** Las Vegas. B.C. Culinary Arts Specialist Association (BCCASA) culinary tour of the 28 kitchens at the Bellagio Hotel, tour and cooking demos at the Art Institute Culinary School, and tours of the banquet facilities of the Four Seasons Hotel, where a former student is the executive sous chef. Contact Al Irving at [ajirving@shaw.ca](mailto:ajirving@shaw.ca).

**25-29** Victoria. British Columbia Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy, for B.C. teachers to enhance their understanding of parliamentary democracy and our political system, Parliament Buildings. Up to 18 teachers will be selected to participate. The application deadline is August 1, 2005; call 250-387-8669 or visit [leg.bc.ca](http://leg.bc.ca), and click on Public Education to download an application.

## JANUARY 2006

**26-27** Vancouver. B.C. Alternate Education Association (BCAEA) conference, Challenge and Change 2006, Sheraton Wall Centre. Visit [bctf.bc.ca/psas/bcaea](http://bctf.bc.ca/psas/bcaea).

## FEBRUARY 2006

**1** B.C. Art Teachers' Association (BCATA) 50th anniversary celebration. Actual date and details TBA.

**1** Kelowna. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association (LATA) conference, Inclusive Education. Visit [bctf.ca/psas/lata](http://bctf.ca/psas/lata). Actual date and details TBA.

**2-4** Vancouver. The Early Years Conference 2006, Child Development Practices: A Decade of Change, sponsored by UBC Inter-professional Continuing Education, focussing on knowledge and progress over the past 10 years as it relates to early-childhood development. Abstracts accepted until May 31, 2005. Contact 604-822-2801, [ip-info@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:ip-info@interchange.ubc.ca), [interprofessional.ubc.ca](http://interprofessional.ubc.ca).

**16-18** Chilliwack. Linking Literacy Through Language, Culture, and Spirituality, Joint Aboriginal Education Conference (including First Nations Education Association [FNEA]), Sardis Secondary South Campus & Skowkale Smokehouse. Registration through [Irudland@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:Irudland@vsb.bc.ca); f: 604-713-5244; also at Travel Lodge on evening. Thursday evening event at Travel Lodge: Upon registering, you can participate in the make-n-take workshop.

**17** Vancouver. Adult Educators' Provincial Specialist Association (AEPESA) Conference, Adult Educators: A Prime Location in Education, in partnership with Continuing International Education Vancouver School District Adult Educators, VSB office building. Focus on adult learning styles, adult teaching strategies, and cultural diversity in the adult classroom. Contact AEPESA President Leo Hutchinson, [lhutch@shaw.ca](mailto:lhutch@shaw.ca).

**17** Kelowna. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Regional Conference, Inclusionary Practices: Building a Community of Learners in Our Classrooms, with Dr. Vianne Timmons. Contact Sandra Bava, 250-374-0116, f: 250-374-5554, [sbava@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:sbava@sd73.bc.ca).

## MARCH 2006

**9-10** Vancouver. Special Education Association (SEA) 31st Annual Crosscurrents Conference, Western Bayshore Conference Centre. Hear entertaining, inspiring, and compassionate Anita Archer speak on the art and heart of education. Choose from 30+ sessions on meeting the challenging needs of diverse learners. For more information, contact [pfortier@sd57.bc.ca](mailto:pfortier@sd57.bc.ca), or visit [bctf.bc.ca/psas/SEA](http://bctf.bc.ca/psas/SEA).

**PSA PD Day—October 20, 2006**  
**PD Calendar web site**  
<http://pdonline.bctf.ca/conferences/PD-Calendar.html>  
**Additions/changes?**  
**Contact Elizabeth Lambert,**  
[elambert@bctf.ca](mailto:elambert@bctf.ca)

## New Teachers' Conference February 17-18, 2006

This professional development opportunity is hosted by the B.C. Teachers' Federation and is designed specifically for new teachers—those in their first five years of teaching, and for student teachers. (English and French)

**Call for workshop proposals deadline is October 19, 2005**

For more information, contact:  
Ghislaine Varin, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division  
1-800-663-9163, local 1844  
604-871-1844 or [gvarin@bctf.ca](mailto:gvarin@bctf.ca)

# Fostering a sense of environment

by Stewart Wilson

The environment provides a rich source of learning experiences for students. Last year when I chose to teach a Grade 3 class for the first time, after working with intermediate students for most of my career, I was excited because I realized that the primary program offers more flexibility and freedom to incorporate many of the ideas I had developed over the years on the environment. I planned to

*Many schools have green spaces in their playing field, which are ideal for raising students' environmental awareness and sense of place.*

foster a sense of environmental awareness and stewardship among my students by engaging them in a variety of meaningful activities, including action projects in and around the school and in the community.

#### Developing environmental awareness and sense of place

Many schools have green spaces in their playing field, which are ideal for raising students' environmental awareness and sense of place. We are also fortunate to have a wetland within walking distance where students can learn about their environment. Our first field trip in September familiarized students with the wetland and heightened their sensory awareness through a variety of activities.

A visit in October highlighted changes in seasons as fall replaced summer. In December, the ice on the lake was thick enough to support our weight. It was a novel experience for some. In the spring, they

learned about the native plants of the area and how native people used them. One wet afternoon in June, we explored where the runoff from the storm drains empties into the lake.

#### Involving students in action projects

Students add to their sense of environmental awareness and become more involved in developing an environmental stewardship ethic when they are engaged in meaningful action projects. Last year, my students were involved in a variety of action projects, some lasting for a few days, and some all year.

#### Getting your hands dirty working with garbage

Teaching about the three Rs is one of the best ways to get young children involved in caring for the environment. We began with garbage, which I introduced with Stephen Cosgrove's, *Bangalee*. When I reached the climax of the story, students were totally involved, busy collecting the garbage I dumped because the garbage-eating Grunk was on its way. Van Allsberg's, *Just A Dream*, is full of thought-provoking drawings about how things might turn out if we do not care for our planet. In April, students thoroughly enjoyed reciting *We Are Plooters* by Jack Prelutsky. For a class who had been

*[They] become more involved in developing an environmental stewardship ethic when they are engaged in meaningful action projects.*

actively involved in cleaning up the environment, it gave them a chance to have fun, as they tossed garbage into the air at the school assembly.

When they examined the class

garbage, students pointed out items that could have been reused or recycled. This

*When they examined the class garbage, students pointed out items that could have been reused or recycled.*

prompted a visit to the recycling centre and the regional landfill. It proved to be one of the most powerful field trips, as we watched piles of garbage being covered in layers of soil and learned that it would remain like that forever. It made everyone realize why we should reduce, reuse, and recycle. Later students learned that garbage nearly doubles over the Christmas holidays. I helped the class compose and design a newsletter, which every student signed. Then we delivered over 600 newsletters, *Our Christmas Wish*, to every house in our school zone.

When students were invited to make a display of their environmental projects on Earth Day, April 22, students came up with ideas for "How To Make Every Day Earth Day," which they put into another newsletter and distributed at the mall. Once students became involved in the Yellow Fish Road Program in May/June, they learned that the yellow fish sign beside storm drains indicates that any runoff is untreated before it empties into our local wetland or the creek. They assisted in writing and delivering the *Yellow Fish News*.

#### Cleaning up Joseph Creek and making a presentation to city council

In October, the students cleaned up Joseph Creek near a local mall. Both students and volunteer parents were shocked

at the garbage. Students wrote letters to the local newspaper, which were published.

Following a second clean up in March, we read *Garbage Creek*, by W. D Valgardson, about children who cleaned up a creek, and renamed it Garbage Creek because of all the garbage. They put up "No Littering" signs to stop people littering. As my students wanted to do something similar, I wrote to city council detailing our proposal. When we were invited to make a presentation to council in April, 14 students volunteered to assist me. Council members were very enthusiastic about their idea and complimented them on their excellent presentation. At my request, council also agreed to

*During a busy year my Grade 3 students also helped to organize our school-wide Terry Fox Penny Drive for cancer research in September.*

assist with installing the signs. I secured funding to pay for 20 signs to be made with the words "Take Pride" and "Keep Clean" routed on opposite sides of 10' 4"x4" posts and yellow fish on the remaining two sides symbolizing a healthy creek. Students helped to paint the signs and were understandably proud of the work they had done. Students also participated in a third clean up of the creek in the last week of June.

#### Reflections

During a busy year my Grade 3 students also helped to organize our school-wide Terry Fox Penny Drive for cancer research in September. They spearheaded raising funds for UNICEF, and learned about the plight of children in Third World countries. They also promoted

Air Quality Awareness and their posters were displayed at a local mall. In January, they supported a school-wide appeal to raise funds for the tsunami relief.

They also assisted the RCMP with a Speedwatch to raise awareness about driving carefully in our school zone. They cleaned up more garbage with "Pitch In" on Earth Day. They planted pine trees in May and learned about the positive effects of forest fires in sustaining biodiversity. They also helped to prepare, plant, and maintain a native garden in our school grounds and learned the names of plants. In June, they mentored a Grade 4 class from a neighbouring school teaching them about our local creek and the importance of water through several engaging activities.

Teaching Grade 3 is an unforgettable experience and it also gave me an opportunity to make the environment a meaningful focus for a special group of students, who developed environmental awareness and an active stewardship ethic during the year and began to

*They spearheaded raising funds for UNICEF, and learned about the plight of children in Third World countries.*

realize that each individual can make a difference in the world.

Stewart Wilson teaches at Gordon Terrace Elementary School, Cranbrook.

[lswilson@shaw.ca](mailto:lswilson@shaw.ca)

To learn more about some of the students' environmental projects, log on to the CBEEN web site at [www.cbeen.org](http://www.cbeen.org) under Special Feature.

