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Teacher

Affiliation: Standing together



BCTF delegates at the 2003 BC Federation of Labour convention. It marked the first time in 47 years that teachers participated as members of the BC Federation of Labour. The three-year trial period is over and teachers will decide this spring whether or not to stay.

by Jinny Sims

After the AGM, likely in late April, members will be asked to vote on the BCTF continuing its affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour and with the national labour body, the Canadian Labour Congress. We have been members for the three-year trial period and now must make our decision whether or not to stay in the labour movement. I wrote an article in the Jan./Feb. issue of *Teacher*, explaining why I think it is important that we remain in the BC Federation of Labour. I want to explain here what the Executive Committee is recommending to the AGM regarding that vote.

The 2005 AGM overwhelmingly passed a motion recommending to members that we continue our membership in the BC Federation of Labour. The motion reads:

"That the 2005 Annual General Meeting of the BC Teachers' Federation recommend to members that the BC Teachers' Federation affiliate with the Canadian Labour Congress effective July 1, 2006, and thereby continue an ongoing affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour."

The recent Winter Representative Assembly (Jan. 27-28, 2006) adopted a plan to inform members in preparation for a vote later this spring.

The Executive Committee is recommending to the AGM that the cost of affiliation be financed by an increase in the general operating membership fee of

0.03% or about \$18 (tax deductible) per year. This amount covers all the costs of affiliating with the CLC, the BCFed, and where locals choose to join local labour councils. It changes our existing procedures that had locals assuming half the cost of affiliation with the BCFed and all of the local labour

We not only share common experiences, we have common values and often share common goals about the type of society we collectively hope to achieve.

council costs. The Executive Committee felt the best way to deal with this issue was to let members know exactly what the direct costs of affiliation are and to urge them to support affiliation. For less than \$2 per member per month, we will be part of the ongoing work of the labour movement working in a broad coalition to improve the rights and welfare of teachers and other working people while being involved at the community, provincial, and federal levels to seek a better and more just society.

In addressing the role of the BCTF within the labour movement, the Executive Committee is recommending the following statement on the labour movement to the AGM:

The BCTF is a "union of professionals." We are a union because we collectively repre-

sent our members in bargaining and enforcing a collective agreement that determines the terms and conditions of our employment. As professionals we have broad latitude within which to exercise our expertise and autonomy in our working lives. As working people who work for a salary set through bargaining, we share a common experience with other trade unionists in both the public and the private sector. We not only share common experiences, we have common values and often share common goals about the type of society we collectively hope to achieve. It is only right that we should be part of the organized labour movement in this province and this country. That means affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress. Through these affiliations, we are also able to join and participate in local labour councils.

The labour movement has always had a credo, which the BCTF strongly endorses—what we desire for ourselves, we desire for all. The Federation's affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour/CLC is based in the belief that the labour movement must take a leadership role in building a just, equitable, and sustainable world. It is the collective strength of working people, working together through the labour movement under the leadership of the BCFed and the CLC that will move us closer toward realizing economic improvement and social progress in this country. Through

participation in the BC Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress, the BCTF is:

1. working toward economic improvement and social progress for all citizens of BC and Canada.
2. working to ensure that the labour movement always represents the collective best interests of all working people through its policies and public advocacy.
3. seeking ways and means for the labour movement to enhance its collective strength by acting collectively and in solidarity with the interests of all of its members.
4. advocating for changes within the structures and processes of the labour movement that will democratize decision making and enhance broader participation of trade unionists.
5. developing strategies within the BCTF that enhance greater awareness and participation of BCTF locals and members in the work of the labour movement.

...what we desire for ourselves, we desire for all.

6. seeking the support of working people to strengthen the public education system.

The BCTF has an important role in advocating for these positions with other unions within the BCFed and the CLC.

Jinny Sims is the BCTF president.

President's message



Jinny Sims

Once again we're coming into spring term without a collective agreement—at least not one that was freely negotiated.

After the momentous events of last fall, it's clear this round of negotiations must be fundamentally different. This time we need an agreement that is negotiated in a spirit of mutual respect, not one imposed through unilateral wielding of the legislative hammer.

Last fall we took a strong stand in defense of public education. We took great risks, but we stood up together and we made gains for our students and ourselves. When we voted to go back to our classrooms, we did not give up.

We are working as hard today as we did last October, to address the urgent needs of real children in our schools. We are speaking out at the Learning Round Table. We are actively engaging with Vince Ready's Industrial Inquiry Commission. We're lobbying our MLAs and writing letters to editors. We're hosting and attending conferences, and learning from other teachers, students, and parents across Canada and abroad.

Most importantly, though, here in our neighbourhood schools we're teaching almost 600,000 students every day, trying our best to meet their diverse needs. While the government drags its feet, teachers and students face working and learning conditions that need prompt action.

We're looking at the kind of solutions that have been found in other parts of the country. In Ontario, for example, elementary teachers have 200 minutes of preparation time per week, and secondary teachers have 25% prep time. By the end of their current collective agreement, those at 5-year maximum salary will be earning \$84,900. Quite a contrast.

Ready has been granted more time to undertake his review of teacher bargaining structures. His new deadline is March 31, 2006. In the meantime, we will continue to give voice to teachers' concerns, despite the current problematic framework.

We have put forward proposals we believe would improve teaching and learning, restore bargaining and professional rights, and enhance the joy of life-long learning for students and teachers alike. Read more on our web site, bctf.ca.

Jinny

BCTF files another complaint with the ILO

The BCTF has filed another formal complaint with the International Labour Organization, an agency of the United Nations, over the provincial government's introduction of Bill 12, legislation that provoked the shutdown of all public schools for two weeks.

The ILO ruled against the provincial government in 2003 stating that while education is important, it is not an essential service under international treaties Canada signed in 1948. An essential service is one that must be available 24/7 and is necessary to protect life and property.

The ILO called on the provincial government to honour the fundamental principles of free collective bargaining and freedom of association, repeal the essential service legislation, refrain from imposing conditions of employment, and open discussions with the union.

The provincial government submitted its case to the ILO in response to the BCTF complaint in 2002, but the premier stated that he felt no need to obey the ruling.

The introduction of Bill 12 in September 2005, and the attempt to impose conditions of employment once again, was a direct contravention of the previous ILO ruling. The provincial government refuses to follow international law at the same time it complains that the US ignores international rulings on the softwood lumber dispute. The provincial government was actually in contravention of international law when it called on teachers to end the strike.

To read the full 10-page document, go to bctf.ca/bargain/rights/ILO/complaint2006-01-17.pdf.

547 more teachers

Our job action has resulted in the hiring of 547 more teachers (full-time equivalents) to work with students. Locals worked out agreements with school boards to hire classroom teachers, special education teachers, and learning assistance teachers to help with oversized classes and problems of class composition.

This is only the beginning of the restoration of services for our students. We continue to press the issue of class size and composition at the Learning Round Table and will be taking the issue forward in bargaining when it opens in April. We hosted a conference on class size and composition on February 10-11, 2006.

Thanks to our job action, the government has finally acknowledged that our schools need more resources and that class size and composition are

key concerns. We need to keep the issue in front of the public and the government. Teachers need to continue to speak out on issues of concern for students and teachers. Polling consistently tells us that teachers are the most credible source of information about our schools.

Major win on class-size arbitration

The BCTF has won a significant arbitration on class-size limits. The BC Public School Employers' Association had taken a number of positions that were potentially harmful to students and to education. One of the most bizarre positions of BCPSEA was that the employer had to adhere to legislated class-size limits only on one day a year, September 30. At one point the arbitrator characterized the position of BCPSEA as "quite unconvincing." The decision of arbitrator Don Munroe represents a significant win for the Federation.

A preliminary review of the award shows that the arbitrator ruled in favour of the union on the following points:

1. The school district must be in compliance with the statutory maximums and averages by September 30. Thereafter, compliance is a continuing obligation throughout the school year.
2. Kindergarten/primary split and primary/intermediate split classes must adhere to the maximums for Kindergarten (22) and primary (24).
3. In determining the class-size aggregates for Kindergarten and 13 classes "rounding down" in order to achieve compliance is not permitted.
4. The union is not required to identify an express provision in the collective agreement in order to show a breach of the maximums and/or averages.

This arbitration once again confirms that class-size limits in legislation are enforceable by teachers. It also illustrates why it is nearly impossible to negotiate an agreement with BCPSEA.

— Peter Owens

New teachers' conference

The New Teachers' conference (March 24-25, 2006) program and registration form are available on our web site bctf.ca/NewTeachers/Conference. The conference is open to all new teachers (five years or less experience and TOCs).

Posters and booklets were mailed to all schools January 31. For those of you who have French Immersion/francophone programs in your district, let those new teachers know there will be French workshops as well.

Pensions and income security web page

A new heading has been added to the Pensions and Income Security web page on the BCTF web site directly following the information on Pension Seminars.

The heading is entitled *Are you vulnerable to investment fraud?* Links are provided to advice from the BC Securities Commission. Please direct your members to this resource; there is good information to be found here.

- Thinking about investing www.bcsc.bc.ca/thinking.asp
- Investing now www.bcsc.bc.ca/now.asp
- After you've invested www.bcsc.bc.ca/after.asp
- Making a complaint www.bcsc.bc.ca/complaints.asp.

Girls' schooling threatened in Afghanistan

Education International (EI), which represents over 29 million teachers and education workers in the world, a thousand of whom are in Afghanistan, has asked Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the international community to redouble their efforts to guarantee girls' education in Afghanistan and the safety of teachers who educate girls.

In the last few weeks, reprisals have been taken against girls who attended classes, or teachers who teach girls in their classrooms, leading to terror in Afghanistan's schools. December 15, 2005, a teacher was beheaded at the school gate after he ignored Taliban guerrillas orders to stop teaching girls. On January 4, 2006, Malim Abdul Habib, headmaster of a school in Qalat, suffered the same fate. Malim had also received threatening letters but had continued teaching without any special protection.

According to the authorities of the province of Zabul, in Southern Afghanistan, 100 of 170 registered schools have been closed down in the past two years because of poor security. EI therefore urges the Afghan government, as well as the international community, to ensure the safety of teachers and education workers who firmly commit themselves to providing schooling and, especially to teaching girls.

At a time when the representatives of 60 countries are meeting, under the aegis of the United Nations, in London, on January 31 and February 1, to develop an assistance plan for Afghanistan (Afghanistan Compact), EI recalls that girls' education is a *sine qua non* for development. The promotion of gender equality is one of the Millennium Development Goals

(MDG) and is part of the Education For All action plan, which was adopted by 185 States in 2000.

EI asks the international community's leaders to consider girls' education as a priority of the Afghanistan Compact, which will serve as the co-operation framework with Afghanistan in the next five years.

For further information visit the EI web site www.ei-ie.org.

— Education International

Dramatic changes in guidelines simplify CPR

New emergency-care guidelines include dramatic changes to CPR with an emphasis on chest compressions, according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

The most significant change to CPR is to the ratio of chest compressions to rescue breathes—from 15 compressions for every two rescue breaths in the 2000 guidelines to 30 compressions for every two rescue breaths in the 2005 guidelines.

The change resulted from studies that showed that blood circulation decreased when compressions were interrupted, and time was being wasted after every interruption because it takes several compressions to build up enough pressure to begin circulating blood again. This is the most significant change since CPR's inception in the early 1960s.

The 2005 Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC) emphasize that high-quality CPR, particularly effective chest compressions, contributes significantly to the successful resuscitation of cardiac arrest victims. Studies show that effective chest compressions create more blood flow through the heart to the rest of the body, buying a few critical minutes until defibrillation can be attempted. The guidelines recommend that rescuers minimize interruptions to chest compressions and suggest that rescuers "push hard and push fast" when giving chest compressions.

"The 2005 guidelines take a back-to-basics approach to resuscitation," said Dr. Michael Shuster, one of the expert authors of the guidelines. "Since the 2000 guidelines, new research and information has strengthened the emphasis on effective CPR as a critically important step in helping save lives. CPR is easy to learn and easy to do, and the foundation believes the 2005 guidelines will help increase the number of people able to perform effective CPR."

Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada/CALM



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A wooden stake for the accountability Dracula?

by Pat Clarke

There is a too obvious analogy between the “life” style of the legendary Count and the current accountability madness besetting our schools. Both derive sustenance by sucking the life out of victims. But at least Dracula had an excuse, he really couldn’t help himself, poor guy. The testing and accountability mavens don’t deserve such pity. If they don’t know any better, they should. The evidence is becoming more irrefutable by the day, accountability schemes driven by standardized testing programs don’t improve schools or teaching or help students learn. What they in fact do is dumb down curriculum, stultify creative teaching, and make learning a pretty joyless experience. In terms of the life of schools they are the equivalent of vampires.

If only we could find a garlic potion to spread around our schools to keep the fiends away. Unfortunately there isn’t enough garlic in the world to stink them out. The grim fact is that the more teachers have worked to accommodate, teach around, or otherwise contend with standardized assessment and other accountability related busy work, the more entrenched and institutionalized it has all become. Sad to say but to a large extent standardized tests and the narrow focussed “goal setting” that goes along with it has become part of the furniture in BC schools.

Teachers have been front-row observers as the administrative brain trust leads a relentless and largely unchallenged zombie-like death march to emulate the notoriously unsuccessful “no child left behind” project in the United States—sometimes described as “no child left untested.” The sad reality in BC is that thanks to “accountability” and all its trappings we have a public school system that is evolving into a top-down, heavy-handed, corporate-style, overly standardized mess.

There are so many emerging features of this accountability quagmire that it is difficult to keep track of them. The FSAs, the new graduation program, and school and district goal-setting are the most evident. But there is much more. The massive data-gathering project known as BCeSIS (BC Electronic Student Information System) is another example of the drive for centralized management and

top-down control. The “Supervision of Learning” initiative, read supervision of teachers initiative, is micro-management gone wild as the system’s administrators search for models of corporate-style management as if schools were only about clients, products, and outputs.

The critical point now is how do teachers deal with this Dracula? Folklore has it that a stake through the heart is the only way. Our vampire doesn’t have one. We need a multi-faceted approach to what is more like a multiheaded monster than a mere vampire.

The BCTF and locals have been monitoring and critiquing the accountability program for some time. We are by now quite familiar with all of the elements and all of their consequences.

What was a good public education system will start to look like the shambles to the south of us, an over-managed, under-funded disaster.

But it seems that now, 10 years after the first accountability measures were introduced, we are reaching a critical stage. If teachers don’t start to take more direct action, this hodgepodge of management busy business will become even more institutionalized. What was a good public education system will start to look like the shambles to the south of us, an over-managed, under-funded disaster.

To focus teachers’ action and to alert the public to our concern, the 2006 Annual General Meeting will be considering recommendations from the Representative Assembly that call for an assertion of professional rights and teacher leadership. If the current leadership in BC schools is so hell bent on going down the wrong road, then it falls to teachers to help change direction. The idea is to build new relationships between teachers and other participants in the public education system to begin to facilitate that change. The BCTF will develop a plan to challenge excessive standardized testing and put forward a system based on a broad focus of learning, not just achievement. The strategy also calls for teachers to take control of professional development so that it is not simply staff

development for accountability programs.

Teacher supervision is as central to the accountability model as standardized testing, and the AGM will deal with this as well. The recommendation is that members actively oppose management-driven teacher supervision models. There is a further recommendation that calls for the development of bargaining objectives related to professional rights and professional autonomy. It is, after all, the gradual erosion of professional rights and teachers’ professional autonomy that allows the accountability juggernaut to rumble along.

It is indeed time for teachers to take a stand, to put forward alternatives and to take leadership on this complex and vexatious array of issues. A single action, the stake in the heart, won’t do it. We will, however, find ways of advancing and installing a more progressive, child-centred and broadly focussed learning environment for our students. Now more than ever we have to be assertive about that vision of what schools, learning, and teaching is really about.

Pat Clarke is director of the BCTF’s Professional and Social Issues Division.

Bogus school rankings

Every year the Fraser Institute uses the results of government exams and the Foundation Skills Assessment tests to rank schools in the province. The Fraser Institute’s agenda is to privatize education and ranking schools is one approach it takes to undermine confidence in public schools.

It is no accident that according to the Fraser Institute’s very own formula for ranking schools, private schools come out on top.

The Fraser Institute is helped in this effort by Canwest newspapers across the country. Every year they provide hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of coverage over a period of three or four days. It is also not a surprise that Canwest supports efforts to privatize education. For example, *The Sun, Province*, and *BCTV Global*, all owned by Canwest, were all sponsors of a private school fair in 2005.

Last year one of the members of the BCTF Graphics Department wrote a letter to the principal of her children’s school to have them exempted from writing the FSA tests for this very reason. Following is her letter requesting that her daughters in Grades 4 and 7 be exempted from the tests. Her request was honoured and her children were not subjected to the tests. As March approaches and the Fraser Institute and Canwest once again prepare their public relations effort, we thought it would be timely to run the letter to the principal.

– Peter Owens

Principal,

This Saturday, The Sun newspaper, in partnership with the Fraser Institute, once again published a list of bogus school rankings based on last year’s Foundation Skills Assessment results.

Like many others, we were disappointed to see the test results misused in this way. Here is why: Many of the parents in attendance at a PAC meeting earlier this year were deeply moved by a presentation on the school’s ongoing Nicaragua fundraising project. Under the teacher’s guidance

(and that of other teachers), our children have learned to work as a team, brainstorm ideas, assess feasibilities, make decisions, take on the role of spokesperson, be a group leader, and perhaps most importantly, to care about others less fortunate. These are lifetime lessons. In Grade 4, our younger daughter spent a wonderful day at the Art Gallery this year, where she learned about the tortured and talented existence of one of our country’s finest artists. Back home, excited and challenged by her day’s learning, our daughter painted four pages in the style of Emily Carr, explaining with solid understanding the theory and technique behind each stroke. Children do not flourish in darkness. It is critical that their musical and artistic sides are established and encouraged in these early years, along with other subjects.

At our school, our children have learned to accept and adapt to children with special needs. They have even received training in these areas, and have had opportunities to see the world through different eyes. Again, these are lessons to last a lifetime.

The Foundation Skills Assessments do not reflect these invaluable lessons learned. In fact, increasing importance placed on testing results such as these will pressure our teachers to take away time spent on broad learning experiences, and narrow the curriculum to achieve only quantifiable results. This should not be happening.

Although we are confident that our daughters would do well on these tests, we do not want them to be part of this process. We encourage other parents to rethink their support for the publication of these “school rankings.”

Please excuse our daughters from writing these tests.

Thank you.



Looking back

70 years ago

The purpose of this article is to show the effect of the Larger Unit of Administration on a superior rural school in the Peace River Block. Teachers have received better treatment in the matter of salaries. In the years preceding the Larger Unit of Administration they often had to wait till the grain was threshed so that enough taxes could be collected to pay the village’s share of their remuneration. Now they are certain that a cheque will be waiting for them at the end of every month.

– March 1936, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

I am constantly amazed by the number of people who claim competence to direct the teacher in ways of doing his job or who have the answers to all our problems. I met a man the

other day who gave me a long lecture on the way in which “Merit Rating” would solve the problem of teachers’ salaries. There is evidence that underlying the whole merit system proposal is a desire to give less money in total to the teaching staff. In fact, it is an attempt to subsidize education at the expense of the teaching profession as a whole.

– March 1956, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

A unique teacher-training program designed to teach native Indians how to teach is in its second year of operation in British Columbia. A move in this direction is long overdue. The late George Wilson, a West Coast Kwakiutl and former director of Indian education for the BC provincial government, stated shortly before his death that 94% of all Indians enrolling in

the province’s public school do not complete Grade 12, while less than 60% of all Indians complete Grade 8.

– March 1976, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

Do alternative secondary school timetables produce better student performance? Advocates for a quarter or semester system sometimes claim student results improve because of the introduction of the new timetable. “Not so,” says Kamloops science teacher Gordon Gore. Gore looked at the results of 1994-95 provincial exams, comparing exam scores with different types of timetables. The results, he says, show that the traditional full-year timetable produces the best student performance.

– March 1996, *Teacher*

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich

BCTF proposes solutions to bargaining structure

The BC Teachers' Federation has outlined its plan to address the dysfunctional bargaining structures in the K–12 sector. The 15-page submission sent to Industrial Inquiry Commissioner Vince Ready articulates the Federation's proposals on local versus provincial bargaining, the scope of issues, and means of dispute resolution. It also looks at funding and the role of government in the teacher bargaining process. "A good collective bargaining system produces a relationship where the parties are prepared to live with, and work under, the agreement that is reached," the report states.

"The right to strike is fundamental to the health of a collective bargaining structure. Without it, the [bargaining] table does not have two equal partners..."

The BCTF is urging a return to local bargaining, so that teachers represented by their local unions would bargain directly with their employers, the elected school trustees. The needs and conditions of Stikine, for example, are radically different from those of Surrey.

We are also calling for full scope bargaining. That is, the right to be able to bargain all the terms and conditions of employment, including class size, class composition, and staffing levels. During the last round, the government prohibited negotiation of these very issues, and as a consequence, teachers had no choice but to go on strike to achieve improvements for their students and themselves.

"Simply put, any collective bargaining system that does not allow teachers to address these issues will fail," the report states.

The BCTF is also calling for Ready to recommend that government bring British Columbia back into harmony with international labour law by repealing its essential service legislation and restoring teachers' legal right to strike.

"The right to strike is fundamental to the health of a collective bargaining structure. Without it, the [bargaining] table does not have two equal partners. Without it, there is no incentive on the employer's part to bargain seriously when the issues are contentious," the report states.

Further, it points out that the International Labour Organization, a UN agency, "has consistently ruled that the withdrawal of services by teachers...is protected under international law."

For the first time in its history, the BCTF is also prepared to agree to provincial negotiations on the level of government funding that would be allocated to the local bargaining process. "This would assure government that it has some control over the expenditure of resources, but at the same time would allow the local parties to agree on how, and on what, the expenditures would take place," the report states.

Finally, the BCTF is calling on government to stop intervening legislatively in the collective bargaining process. The submission to Ready quotes Mark Brown, vice-chair of the Labour Relations Board:

"While legislation may end a dispute, it cannot force co-operation, it cannot force creative and innovative thinking to find long-term solutions to problems, and it cannot force the necessary dialogue to create productive, flexible, and adaptable workplaces. Imposing terms of a collective agreement by legislative intervention has a chilling effect on the long-term collective bargaining relationship," Brown wrote.

On January 30, 2006, the government announced that it was extending the time for Vince Ready to make his submission on the bargaining structure to March 31, 2006. His report had been due on January 31, but he said that the issues were too complex for him to develop a recommendation in the time provided. He acknowledged our new proposal to bargain provincial resource levels with full-scope bargaining at the local level. Teachers would have the right to strike available at both the provincial and local level.

To read the BCTF's proposed solutions in full, go to: bctf.ca/bargain/negotiations2004/iic/BCTF-submission.html.

– Nancy Knickerbocker

What's next in bargaining?

by Irene Lanzinger

Full 2005, teachers took a courageous and dramatic stand in defense of our bargaining rights. We had three goals: restoring the striped language in our agreement, ensuring full, free collective bargaining rights for teachers, and securing a fair and reasonable salary increase. We have since incorporated our long-standing goal of gaining recognition of the professional rights of teachers.

Our strong and united action garnered the support of other unions, parents, and the public. In spite of the success of our action we still have a long way to go to achieve our goals. The challenge facing us now is to build on the momentum and support we had during our job action and carry that forward into the next round of bargaining. Teachers have made it very clear that classroom conditions, fair compensation, and teachers' rights must be addressed.

We are determined to address the issues of class size, composition, and the support of specialist teachers before the next school year begins.

To that end, delegates to the Annual General Meeting in March will devote a significant amount of time shaping the next round of bargaining. The AGM involves about 700 teachers from around the province. It is the largest group of teachers that gathers to make decisions for the BCTF. After the wonderful, spirited engagement of our members on the picket lines and at rallies throughout October, it is appropriate that we involve as many teachers as possible in the discussion of the goals, objectives, and strategy for carrying

on the struggle to regain our rights and improve conditions in classrooms.

How does the Vince Ready Industrial Inquiry Commission of teacher bargaining structures fit in? Ready was appointed to come up with recommendations regarding changes to the bargaining structure. All the parties agree that the current model has not been a successful one. Ready's deadline was January 31, 2006. The report he issued at that time concluded that because of the complexity of the task, it will take more time and resources than he had first anticipated. See our submission at bctf.ca/bargain/negotiations2004/iic/BCTF-submission.html.

Secondary teachers in Ontario have double the preparation time of BC teachers.

Once Ready makes recommendations, the government may take some time to decide on its response to those recommendations. Teachers cannot wait for the outcome of the Ready recommendations on bargaining structure. We are determined to address the issues of class size, composition, and the support of specialist teachers before the next school year begins. Also, an alarming wage gap is developing between BC and other provinces. BC teachers have gone long enough without a wage increase that allows them to keep pace with the cost of living and with the wages of our colleagues in Alberta and Ontario.

In the area of preparation time, BC teachers are also falling behind. Secondary teachers in Ontario have double the preparation time of BC teachers. By 2008, elementary teachers in Ontario will have 200 minutes of preparation time a week. The average amount of preparation time for elementary teachers in BC is currently about 90 minutes.

The direction from both the Executive Committee and the Representative Assembly is that we should press ahead. We will serve notice on March 1 of our intention to open bargaining. The BCTF is calling for applications for a bargaining team. That team will be appointed before the AGM and be introduced to the delegates there. Those delegates will debate and decide on our goals, objectives, and strategy for the next round. We will have the difficult discussion about what actions to take if we do not achieve our goals at the table or if we again face legislation that is detrimental to students, teachers, and public education.

Our students' needs are greater than ever and our ability to meet those needs must be addressed through improved conditions in our classrooms. We have clearly demonstrated our determination to attain those improvements and to achieve our goals. Whatever we face in terms of bargaining structure or responses at the bargaining table, no one can doubt the unity, strength, and determination of BC teachers. That unity of purpose and commitment to public education has always been the key to success in raising our issues and achieving our goals. The upcoming round of bargaining will be no different.

Irene Lanzinger is the BCTF's first vice-president.

Health & Safety

Is affiliation worth it?

by Mark Keelan

The BCTF's three-year trial period as an affiliate of the BC Federation of Labour is coming to a close. Members will soon be asked to vote on whether or not to stay in the BC Fed and to join the Canadian Labour Congress.

It costs money to be part of the BC Fed and the CLC. A question often asked by members is, "What do we get in return for the amount of money we spend on affiliation?" In other words, is being affiliated with the house of labour worth it?

Support provided to teachers by organized labour during the fall of 2005 is analogous to a Mastercard commercial. One picket sign—\$2. Rent for a portable sound system for a rally—\$850. Support from union sisters and brothers, organized by the BC Fed through local labour councils in every community across the province—priceless.

At this point readers may be glancing at the heading at the top of this column. It reads, "Health and Safety." Some may wonder what affiliation with the BC Fed and the CLC has to do with health and safety. Is there a connection?

The history of the labour movement in Canada, as well as in every other country, is inextricably linked to the fight for occupational health and safety protections. As long ago as 1849, workers in Vancouver Island coal mines formed and reformed unions with the principal goal of improving mine

A brief look at labour history shows that workers have gained important workplace protections because they joined together.

safety. In 1962 the provincial labour minister appointed a Royal Commission to look into the (then) Workmen's Compensation Board stating that "virtually every trade union in the province has asked for the probe." In the 1990s, representatives of organized labour were instrumental in the development of occupational health and safety regulations designed to protect workers from risks associated with chemicals and biological substances. At the same time, labour representatives worked with employers and the WCB to put ergonomics provisions into regulation. BC continues to be one of very few jurisdictions in North America to have ergonomics regulations.

The BCTF has two seats on the BC Federation of Labour's Occupational Health and Safety Committee. The committee meets monthly to discuss health and safety issues that are important to workers, to organize lobbying of the WCB and government around health and safety issues, and to develop plans to assist affiliates in their efforts to protect their members from occupational hazards. If the BCTF were not at this table, labour would not hear about teachers' concerns and teachers' issues would be far less likely to be acknowledged by the WCB and government.

The Education Project Steering Committee is a sub-committee of the BCFed's Occupational Health and Safety Committee. The BCTF also has two seats on this committee. All of the BCFed's health and safety training is planned and overseen by this group. Our connection with the BCFed training has helped to strengthen the BCTF health and safety training program. In addition, the steering committee is responsible for the phenomenally successful Young Workers' Project, now named *Alive After Five*, a program where young workers travel to high schools across the province to teach students about their basic health and safety rights. Both teachers and students benefit from the BCTF involvement with the BC Fed Education Project.

Assisting members with their WCB claims and advocating for members in claims appeals can be extremely complicated. The BCTF has staff dedicated to this work. The Workers' Compensation Advocacy Group (WCAG) is a group of WCB advocates who work on behalf of members of many unions across the province. Because BCTF staff is part of WCAG, BCTF members receive the benefit of the vast experience of this group of union advocates.

The Canadian Labour Congress has a number of initiatives designed to improve health and safety in Canadian workplaces. The CLC's "Prevent Cancer Campaign" is attempting to reverse a distressing trend. In the 1930s, 1 in 10 Canadians contracted cancer. In the 1970s it was 1 in 5. Today, 1 in 3 Canadians will contract cancer. Other CLC health and safety projects include a "Healthy Food Campaign" and the promotion of the right of workers to know about pesticides in their workplaces. Many teachers have expertise in these areas. Labour needs to have access to that expertise just as teachers and their students need to be the beneficiaries of the campaigns.

Is it worth it for the BCTF to be affiliated with labour? A brief look at labour history shows that workers have gained important workplace protections because they joined together. As workers around the world brace themselves against globalization, which brings efforts by employers to reduce or eliminate workers' rights, including hard-won health and safety rights, the lessons of the past must not be forgotten. Teachers will be safer by staying inside the house of labour.

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



Michelle Davies
Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlottes

During picket duty we had CUPE members actually bring in hot plates, make mocha lattes for everyone, and just gather strength through sharing food.

That's one of the biggest things on the Charlottes that gathers everybody together and makes everybody happy. Another thing is the severe weather we experience in the Charlottes and most of our sites were fairly open to the elements. At our school, the parents came on the first day and seeing the teachers huddled together and freezing because of the driving rain, they came without hesitation and built us this really skookum shelter that the wind wasn't going to penetrate and neither was the rain. It was really nice to see that, especially in an area where we don't get a lot of traffic going by. Our school is built on a hill and out of the way, so to see the parents come and support us that way, to bring us food, CUPE being there for us 100%, really brought our staff together, really brought our district together.

Being out for the children for two weeks, especially with what we face in the Charlottes, was really tremendous. We organized a rally at the district office and we had parents come out and speak about their children and how their children have been affected by the cuts, and it was really emotional. Teachers were speaking out about class sizes of 40 students in a senior level science course.

I think it's very important that teachers continue to maintain affiliation with the BCFed. Being a fifth generation union activist in my own family, you go back to the old saying, "you break one pencil and it's going to break easily, you try to break 20 and it's not as easy." So we need to stick together to fight the common cause.



PETER OWENS PHOTO

Wendy Turner
Southeast Kootenay

We experienced tremendous support from all of our affiliate unions within the East Kootenays during our strike. On October 19, the East Kootenay teachers had a special day of protest and we were joined by other union members and were successful in shutting down a number of work sites within the East Kootenays. They walked the line with us during the entire two weeks and lent their support.

I think it's important for us to be a part of the BC Federation of Labour because it gives us a much broader base of communication, organization, and support in making public education issues a public message. It helps us educate the public about how those issues influence their children within schools.

The BCTF contributes our ideas, our enthusiasm and our organization to the BC Federation of Labour and when we work together as a united group we are invincible, as we have seen this past fall with our political protest.

Why we need to teach financial and consumer education in our schools

by Patricia Douglas

For many teachers, the monetary consequences of our 10-day strike in October are still being resolved, which raises the issue of how little most of us know about budgeting, saving for emergencies, and dealing with creditors and other financial institutions. How does it happen that such a well-educated group of citizens can so easily find themselves in such a predicament? Perhaps the absence of consumer and financial education within our educational system is at least partly to blame.

Since 1995, when Consumer Education 12 was removed as a graduation prerequisite, there has been no requirement for students to learn about financial and consumer issues within the curriculum. Planning 10 has added a few hours of financial planning but it is the smallest segment of the Planning 10 course and some teachers are ignoring this section since they lack the knowledge or expertise to teach the material adequately.

According to experts in the field, such as the Credit Grantors' Association of Vancouver, the Credit Counselling Society of BC, and representatives of bankruptcy trustees, *more detailed and in-depth financial education must be taught at a senior level* when students are more mature, are preparing to leave high school, and at a time when they will require the information.

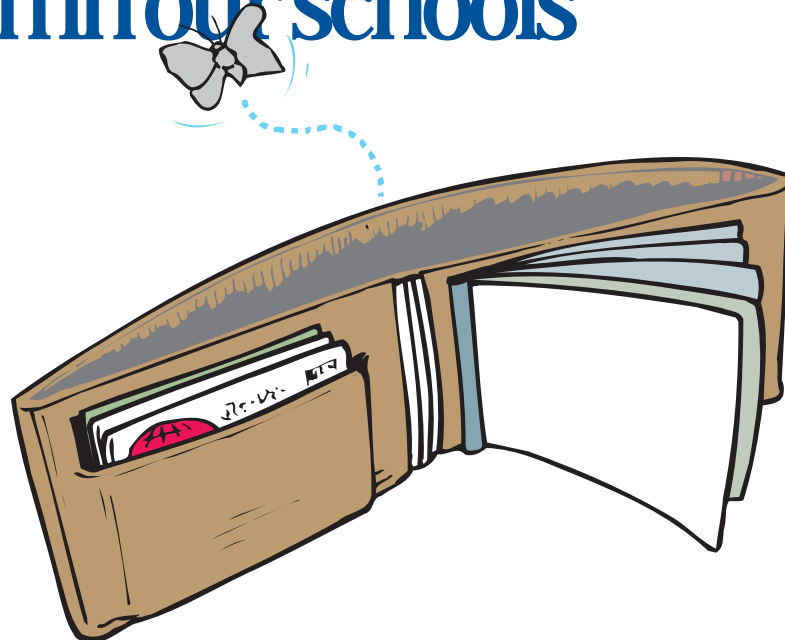
To quote some statistics that give insight into this problem:

- In 2005, the average Canadian carried a debt load equivalent to 115% of their gross annual salary. This compares to a debt load equivalent to 50% of their salary in the early 1980s when interest rates were running up to 20%.
- The average BC consumer who approaches the Credit Counselling Society of BC for assistance has a consumer debt load of \$25,000, not including their mortgage or car payments.
- This same consumer has an average of 7.3 credit cards in their possession.
- Nationally, half of all Canadians pay off their credit card balances each month and half do not.
- There are 52 million active Visa and Mastercards in circulation in Canada at the present time.

Students who take the Essentials of Mathematics in Grades 10 through 12, do get some grounding in basic consumer and financial issues. However, our brightest students, who do not take Essentials of Mathematics, go on to college and university without any training in, or thought about how they will be paying for their post-secondary education and how they will manage their debt load after graduating.

Has anyone ever:

- suggested to students that they might delay the start of college or university for a year or two so that they will not need student loans and they can graduate without an enormous debt load?
- explained to students that putting money into an RRSP will decrease their personal tax payments so the extra money saved can pay for schooling and that \$10,000 per year can be pulled out of an RRSP tax free (for a period of 10 years) to pay for education costs?
- told students that they are not able to declare personal bankruptcy as a result of their inability to pay off a student loan for 10 years after graduation? If they do declare personal bankruptcy, they will not be able to get credit for another 6 years—a total of 16 years after graduation during which time they will not be able to buy a house, own a credit card, or purchase a car, or even groceries, on credit!
- taught students about the strategies and the compounding effects of starting to save for retirement as early as possible?
- discussed with students the problems of owning a house or condo, putting money into RESP's for their children's education, or saving for retirement when they are still paying off student loans in their 40s?
- explained to students that in a global, technology-based economy, there are very few, long-term, secure positions with good medical and retirement benefits available? Most young people will work for a number of different companies, with few, if any, benefits. Many will work on a contract basis or be self-employed and they will be responsible for their own medical and retirement benefits. They also will need to budget for a number of periods of unemployment during their working years as they look for new employment or upgrade their skills and training.



Teachers have learned some life lessons in financial management from this strike, especially new teachers, who had no savings and lots of credit-card debt and student-loan payments. Many of them had no reserves to even pay for food, let alone rent. Now is the time to think about how our students can also benefit from our experience.

Students need to learn about financial issues and unfortunately, this has always been an area that parents are reluctant to discuss with their children. That leaves it up to the educational system to offer students some support and training in these matters. We need to advocate for more financial education for all students as a requirement for graduation from secondary school and we need to do it now.

Some real-life stories of credit management

- A young couple in their late 20s, who bought a house within the past year, are carrying a total debt of just over \$95,000, as well as their mortgage. Their debts include \$36,000 in student loans for a post-secondary degree, \$16,000 for a car loan, \$43,000 in unsecured credit card loans and line of credit, mostly for furnishings for their new home.

This well-educated young couple, despite their desperate credit situation, borrowed more credit this past Christmas to buy themselves a new laptop.

- Another couple in their early 30s, who is carrying a total debt of \$131,000, is hoping to declare bankruptcy as of January 2006. They simply spent all the money that they made and more. Their debts consist of \$32,000 for a car lease, \$38,000 for student

loans, \$61,000 for home and living expenses purchased on credit.

This couple, who recently purchased a workout machine for \$3,400 on credit, have sought interest relief for the entire eight years since the husband, a school principal, graduated from a post-secondary institution.

- A very busy senior manager in the public-service sector accumulated over \$125,000 in debt using mostly credit cards and lines of credit. He lacked organization and did no monitoring of his spending. Since he did not know how to budget or control his spending, he just ignored the whole financial area. Luckily he recently found a partner and is well on track to clearing up his debts.

- A young couple, who married last year after they both graduated from university, were given the down-payment for a house as a wedding present from their families. A year later, both of them are working in well-paying professions but they are selling the house to help pay off their student loans and moving in with her parents. Their student loan debts total \$158,500.

Credit advice is available from Credit Counselling Society of BC, 1-888-527-8999, www.nomoredebts.org.

Speakers on credit for Grade 11 and 12 classes are available from Credit Grantors, 604-320-2333 (leave a message) or www.creditgrantors.org.

Patricia Douglas is a business education teacher, David Thompson Secondary School, Vancouver and editor for the BC Business Educators' Association PSA.

Workshops for parents

Last year, teacher volunteers gave 156 presentations to appreciative PACs all around the province. Over 2,000 interested parents heard topics such as Supporting Your Child's Learning, Anti-bullying, and the Socialization of Boys and Girls. Both presenters and participants provided positive feedback on the value of engaging parents in discussions important to their child's learning.

If you would like to be part of the parent presentations program by presenting to PACs in your school district or to schools' PACs where you live, contact sbishop@bctf.ca.



PETER OWENS PHOTO

Teachers (L-R) Cathy Fisher, Viva Moodley, Louisa Sanchez, and Trish Kelly preparing parent-presentation workshops to be provided at PAC meetings.



BC teachers participating in a training with facilitators from Costa Rica to develop the new BCTF/CIDA workshop "Global Education for Gender Equality".

Gender equality from a global perspective

by Marian Dodds and Jane Turner

Remember the old joke: What do you get when you put 19 women together in one room? There's a new answer: A lot of light bulbs flash on. For those of us who spent two days together developing a new workshop, Global Education and Gender Equity, the experience was enlightening, invigorating, and exciting. As one of the participants commented, "These last two days have inspired me more than any other workshop facilitation training I have ever attended."

This cadre of new facilitators met in January to prepare for the second workshop offered as part of the BCTF's third global classroom initiative grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The training was truly global with the participation of two teachers from Costa Rica and the help of simultaneous Spanish/English translation. BC teachers experienced popular education activities led by Maria Trejos, a facilitator with expertise in non-sexist pedagogy, who presents very popular workshops throughout Central America. The workshop was designed in partnership with Barbara Wood from CoDevelopment who provided her expertise in gender and development, using the Women's IDEA network in Latin America as a case study in effective development. Teachers are now invited to book the *Global Education for Gender Equality* workshop through the BCTF Training Department.

The other workshop, *Global Education: In and Beyond the Classroom*, continues for a second year and can be adapted to elementary, secondary, pre-service teacher groups, or subject specialists.

Teachers who attend either of these workshops will come away with a developing world map and links to numerous resources. Those who feel inspired to develop a lesson plan will be offered the opportunity to be published on the global education site.

To see what your colleagues have already done go to bctf.ca/social/GlobalEd/GlobalClassroom/. You will find 35 global education lesson plans/units and a downloadable guide to global education plus other resources. When we teach using a global educator's lens we bring the whole world into our

classroom. That's a wonderful gift to give to children.

For more information about the BCTF/CIDA Global Classroom Initiative, contact Marian Dodds, mdodds@bctf.ca, 604-871-1865.

Marian Dodds and Jane Turner are assistant directors in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division.

La justice sociale a-t-elle une place dans nos salles de classes ?

Par Nathalie Ladouceur-Thomas

Quelle que soit l'approche, on peut enseigner la justice sociale dans la salle de classe aux élèves en les aidant à s'évaluer, en valorisant les différences, en identifiant l'injustice, et en agissant contre l'injustice, et ce, au niveau local, régional, provincial ou international.

La justice sociale est un mot qui peut prendre plusieurs sens. Selon un article publié par Marian Dodds, de la FECB, ceci veut dire :

- la défense des droits de la personne et la durabilité écologique pour tous,
- des droits égaux et des possibilités égales pour toute personne, indépendamment du sexe, de la race, de l'âge, de la classe, de l'orientation sexuelle, des incapacités physiques ou mentales ou du statut socio-économique,
- liberté de choix,
- une planète viable,
- faire du monde un endroit meilleur,
- une société qui n'offre pas de barrière aux droits et besoins fondamentaux humains.

Il y quelques semaines, trois dames exceptionnelles (Marian Dodds, Nancy Hinds et Jane Turner) ont formé treize enseignantes sur le thème de l'éducation globale et l'égalité des sexes dans le but d'offrir des ateliers pour vous. Avec l'aide de l'Agence canadienne de développement international (ACDI) et CoDevelopment Canada, nous avons bénéficié de la présence de deux enseignantes du Costa Rica, qui ont partagé leurs expériences et leurs passions dans leur lutte pour le développement de la communauté, l'égalité des sexes et les droits de la personne. Ce fut une expérience incroyable et une qui vaut la peine de passer quelques heures ou même une journée à discuter pendant un atelier de perfectionnement professionnel.

Je vous lance donc un défi. Dans les prochaines semaines,

choisissez une journée où vous pouvez identifier et noter le nombre de fois que vos élèves ou même vos collègues de travail parlent d'une injustice présente, passée ou future. Par la suite, posez-vous la question suivante « Comment puis-je contribuer de façon constructive à une de ces situations ? » Sachez que la Fédération offre plusieurs avenues pour vous aider à répondre et à prendre action, telle la possibilité d'une bourse pour un projet de recherche action.

Voici quelques idées pour vous permettre d'appliquer ce concept en salle de classe :

- Utilisez la dynamique de votre salle de classe pour déterminer le thème et le point de mire, et ce, pour créer quelques activités de base.
- Utilisez quelques pièces de littérature concernant quelqu'un qui est ridiculisé ou omis, intimidé ou encore quelqu'un qui ne se fait pas respecter (soit par ses actions ou par ses paroles).
- Discutez directement du sujet en question. Par exemple, si vous traitez du sujet de l'intimidation, discutez des différences entre les termes suivants : se faire intimider, se faire taquiner, se faire harceler, etc. Demandez aux élèves des exemples ainsi que des explications entre ces distinctions.
- Engagez les élèves dans une discussion de qui est la victime et de qui tend à effectuer l'intimidation. Parlez de qui tend à être ciblé comme victime de l'intimidation et des caractéristiques spécifiques qu'utilisent les agresseurs pour trouver leur victime.
- Finalement, discutez des choix et des actions que les élèves, la communauté et les organismes sociaux peuvent prendre s'ils voient que quelqu'un est victime d'une injustice quelconque.

Envoyez vos idées à Nathalie à naththomas@shaw.ca

Vous pouvez aussi bénéficier d'autres programmes ou services de la Fédération tel le programme d'enseignement de qualité, en participant dans un des nombreux comités de la FECB ou même réserver un atelier de perfectionnement professionnel.

Synopsis: During a two-day training session on social justice at the BCTF, 13 BC teachers and 2 teachers from Costa Rica shared ideas and projects to be promoted in our classrooms. If we all take the time to include social justice in our teaching, we can make a difference.

Par Nathalie Ladouceur-Thomas, enseignante à Port Alberni.

Our fees pay for the services members want

by Jinny Sims

At the upcoming 2006 Annual General Meeting, delegates are being asked to vote on what the BCTF fee should be for 2006-07. For the first time in over 15 years, delegates will be considering a recommendation to increase the percentage of their salary that they pay to finance the general operations of the BCTF from 1.38% to 1.42%.

The fee increase of 0.04% will mean an increase of \$24.48 (tax deductible) per member per year on an average salary. The Executive Committee is also recommending to the AGM a reduction in the Salary Indemnity Plan fee from 2.0% to 1.7% because of an improvement in investment income. This will be a reduction in fee on an average salary of \$183.60 (after taxes) per year. Taken together, if both recommendations pass the AGM, a member with an average salary will have a reduction in overall fees she or he pays to the BCTF of approximately \$159.12.

The obvious question is why the increase in the operating fee? The purpose of my writing this article is to explain why and to provide members with some background information.

By way of a little history on the issue of the BCTF fee, it was in 1983 that an annual meeting changed the fee from a dollar amount to a percentage of salary. This procedure was implemented for two very important reasons. First, it meant that members paid a differentiated fee based upon their salary, and second, a percentage fee would result in increased revenues as teacher salaries increased and as the number of FTE teachers working in the province increased.

In 1990, the fee was increased from 1.25% of salary to 1.35%. There were significant reasons to do so, most notably the costs of local bargaining and contract enforcement and the establishment of a Collective Bargaining Defence Fund to support the locals that chose to take strike action to resolve their collective agreement disputes. In 1998, the fee was adjusted to 1.38% to compensate for the elimination of a \$15 per member charge that locals paid to the Federation for grievance arbitration costs.

There are three areas of service that the BCTF has increased significantly over the last decade.

We have expanded our rehabilitation services that are part of our Salary Indemnity Plan to include almost every school district. This requires significant resources to counsel and support members wishing to return to work from long-term disability leave. We have also built an excellent health and safety program that includes lay and legal support to members dealing with WCB appeals. We have also increased the legal services we provide to members as a result of investigations and complaints by the College of Teachers.

In 2002, the government stripped our collective agree-

ment and imposed terms and conditions of employment including salary levels that were far from adequate. The result was a major loss of teaching positions and a serious decline in Federation revenues. At the same time, fixed costs in the operation of the BCTF increased without reference to our reduced revenues. AGM decisions, such as adding local presidents to the Representative Assembly and expanding the number of members who participate in zone meetings, coupled with systemic increases to benefit costs beyond the control of the Federation, created a budgeting nightmare. The Executive Committee responded by reducing program budgets and cutting the staff working for the BCTF. Since 2002, we have reduced the number of staff by over 10%. This has made it more difficult to maintain the programs and services members have demanded through their decision-making bodies.

It is one of many important decisions that delegates will make that will affect the future of our organization and the future of our profession.

If we do not increase the percentage of our fee at this AGM, we will be faced with making serious reductions in services. We cannot cut our budgets any more without considering the elimination of entire programs. And while some members feel this program or that program is more important than something else, there are other members who feel the opposite. One of our strengths as an organization has been to serve all members well and we should continue to do that. The fee increase is necessary to maintain the *status quo* on the reduced basis that the last four years of budget cuts have created. I find it difficult to imagine the organizational consequences of having to cut programs further.

We are in the midst of a major struggle with government to achieve better classroom conditions and improved salaries. We cannot afford to turn inward and fight each other about what services we should eliminate from our union. We made a huge statement to government and the public last fall about our needs and our priorities. We have to remain united in our efforts to achieve those goals this spring. That is why I am urging you to support the fee increase recommendation at the AGM.

The Executive Committee and the Representative Assembly are both recommending a fee increase in the general operating fund to the Annual General Meeting. It is one of many important decisions that delegates will make that will affect the future of our organization and the future of our profession.

Jinny Sims is the BCTF president.

Teachers' tips

Teachers' assistants in your classroom

by Bob Wilson

Think about your classroom. When you walk in can you easily identify the students with special needs by their proximity to classroom assistants? While the individualized support teachers' assistants provide to students is crucial, there is research that suggests that the phenomenon of "too much of a good thing" may pertain here. In particular, the insular relationship that may develop between assistants and the students to whom they are assigned may have negative effects on those students' social and academic growth, which can result in stigmatization and poor peer interactions.

Here are three quick ways to involve your teachers' assistants in ways that can counter potential negative effects of their support, and take advantage of their presence when their attention to students with special needs is not immediately required.

First, think about using assistants as front board scribes during lessons. They can still wander between the front and their assigned students' desks, and you benefit from being freed from the front of the room to observe and motivate students. As well, it gives students with special needs the opportunity to try more on their own before receiving assistance, while still having the "safety net" of an assistant nearby. As this relationship evolves, you may wish to consider co-delivering lessons with your assistants. Varying the instructional mode by including another person could serve to make those lessons more engaging for students and more rewarding for both you and your assistant.

In some classrooms and schools, assistants work with students requiring support while the teacher works with students who require less support. Try turning this scenario around. Students with special needs benefit most from more instructional time with a teacher. If possible, have assistants work with the more independent learners and find a quiet space inside the classroom to give students with special

needs the learning support they require.

Finally, find topics about which assistants are passionate, and see if there are opportunities for them to share their passions with the class by co-planning a lesson or a series of lessons. This serves to connect assistants with the entire class, and thus potentially reduces the stigma students with special needs may feel for being the ones solely associated with them. You may also find that assistants have time at the end of their day when most classes are involved in non-academic studies, during which they are free to be in your class without sacrificing instructional support.

If you want to know more about the relationship between teachers and assistants, and explore the potential directions this relationship can take, the BCTF and CUPE produced a joint paper entitled "Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teachers' Assistants," which is available online at the BCTF web site.

Sometimes one-to-one support from teachers' assistants is the best method of helping students with special needs. When there is space for flexibility, though, consider the other ways assistants can be more meaningfully involved in the whole class learning environment.

Bob Wilson teaches at Lady Grey Elementary School, Golden, and is a member of the Professional Issues Advisory Committee.

Teaching exchanges in Canada

Have you ever thought of travelling to other parts of Canada? Is your spouse being offered a temporary position in another province? Would you like your children to see more of the world while they are growing up? Have your children gone to an out-of-province post-secondary school?

There are many reasons why a teaching exchange might work for you. Unfortunately, there are a number of myths surrounding exchanges that make people think exchanges are not an option for them.

Myth #1: Teacher exchanges are only with other countries.

While it is more common to have exchanges outside of Canada, exchanges within Canada can also be arranged.

Myth #2: It's very hard to arrange an exchange.

The Canadian Education Exchange Foundation (CEEFF) is an organization wholly focussed on arranging domestic and international exchanges for educators and students. They make the process surprisingly easy. The CEEFF will make every effort to match you with an exchange educator. You can even arrange matches yourself and let the CEEFF handle the administrative work of arranging the exchange.

Myth #3: Pay and benefits will be impacted while on exchange.

Absolutely not. While on exchange your pay and benefits are maintained by your home board as usual, just like you were still teaching at home. Also, you will not have any break in continuous service on your pension.

Myth #4: Seniority will be lost.

Absolutely not. You retain your seniority rights and progression just like you were teaching at home.

Myth #5: Some exchanges turn into nightmares.

There are many organizations arranging overseas teaching positions. Unfortunately some of these are less successful than others.

The CEEFF is the only not-for-profit organization arranging exchanges for Canadian educators and devolved directly from the Ontario Ministry of Education. Their sole purpose is to arrange teaching exchanges and they have been doing so successfully for over 13 years.

Myth #6: Schools or boards will never agree to it.

While you need to have formal approval from your principal and board, most boards have very supportive policies relating to exchanges. In almost every case it is just a matter of asking your Human Resources department and you will find that they are very open to an exchange.

Myth #7: I'd have to sell my house if I go on exchange.

Typically, exchange families trade homes for the duration of the exchange. The CEEFF has more information on how this arrangement works.

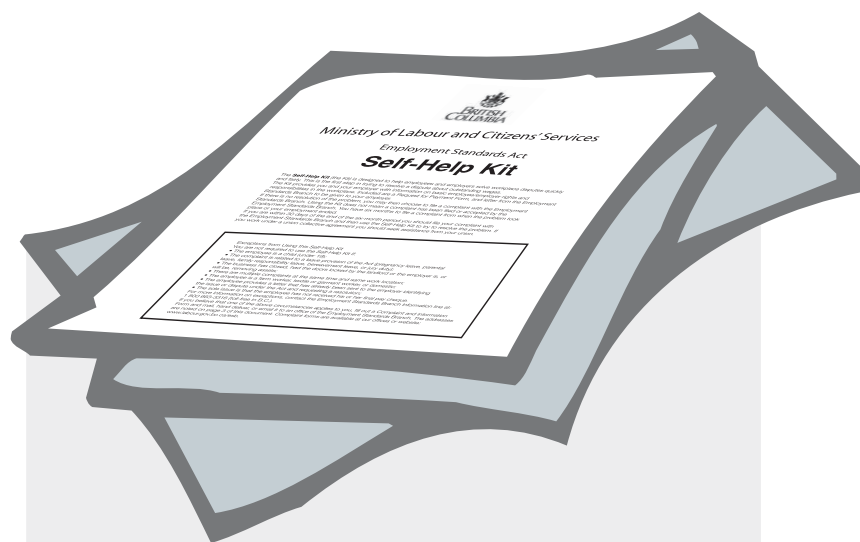
For more information on exchanges, domestic or international, check out the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation web site at www.ceeef.ca or call them in Barrie, Ontario at 705-739-7596.

room, or head's room, and a caretaker's house. The classrooms will have wooden desks and chairs, lights, and four ceiling fans. Each school will be equipped with six computers. The schools will have fencing and a bicycle shed.

In Sri Lanka progress has also begun. When the Sri Lanka Joint Teachers Unions' Tsunami Relief Committee receive the green light for the master plans from the Ministry of Education, construction will begin.

On September 12, the foundation stone of the SD Negeri 70 primary school was laid in Kampung Jawa, in the subdistrict of Kota Banda Aceh.

— Dominique Marlet, Education International



Turning a blind eye to employers who break the law

by David Fairey

Imagine if one day our police forces were cut in half, street patrols were eliminated, police stations closed, and people were told to send a lengthy form to police headquarters to report a crime.

Doesn't sound like such a great idea? Unfortunately, it's pretty much what the BC government has done when it comes to making sure employment standards laws are enforced.

Employment standards laws and their enforcement are supposed to ensure that all workers receive a basic level of pay and protection. They cover things like the minimum wage, minimum and maximum hours of work, overtime pay, and statutory holidays. They are important to all workers because they create a level below which employers cannot go, and provide a starting point for any negotiations for improved conditions. They also create an even playing field for employers.

Since 2001, enforcement staff at the Employment Standards Branch...have been cut by one-third.

In the past few years, the provincial government has lowered these basic rules significantly. It has also gutted the enforcement system. Since 2001, enforcement staff at the Employment Standards Branch, the people whose job it is to make sure the rules are followed, have been cut by one-third. Branch offices around the province have been closed. Instead of 17 offices there are now only 9, leaving vast regions with only 1 office.

The province also changed the way workers are able to report violations of the rules. It used to be that a worker could tell the Employment Standards Branch about a violation, (for example, an employer who refused to pay overtime rates) and the branch would investigate. Sometimes complaints were rejected, but the vast majority of the time they resulted in what's called a finding of violation, meaning the employer was found guilty of breaking the rules.

Now, an employee who wants to report an employment standards violation must first confront their employer on their own using a complicated 16-page self-help kit before they are even allowed to file a

complaint with the branch. The kit is only available in English, and only from the Ministry of Labour's web site or from one of the remaining nine branch offices.

Now, an employee who wants to report an employment standards violation must first confront their employer on their own using a complicated 16-page self-help kit...

It's possible that some people might feel comfortable confronting their employer about the law not being followed, but most probably don't, especially if they're already working in a marginal situation and can't afford the risk of being fired for making a fuss. Fear of job loss, or some other form of employer reprisal keeps most workers from filing legitimate complaints. Most of the time, people don't report a violation of the rules until after they've left the job.

Given how hard it now is to report violations, it's not too surprising that complaints to the Employment Standards Branch plummeted immediately after these changes were made. The year after the self-help kit was brought in, complaints dropped by 45% and they've gone down even more since then.

It would be great news if this dramatic change were the result of a sudden improvement in employer behaviour, but this is about as likely as finding that taking police off the streets

...thousands of British Columbians who depend on employment standards to earn a living under fair working conditions have been left to fend for themselves.

results in less crime being committed. Instead, thousands of British Columbians who depend on employment standards to earn a living under fair working conditions have been left to fend for themselves.

David Fairey is a labour economist and author of the recently published CCPA study "Eroding Worker Protections: BC's New Flexible Employment Standards." www.policyalternatives.ca

Education International rebuilds schools in tsunami area

People who were displaced by the December 2004 tsunami have a persistent hope to see schools reopen. Schools where children are safe, and cared for by dedicated professionals. Education International (EI) is working to make this happen.

Thanks to the contribution of EI's member organizations worldwide and the funds of Novib (Oxfam Netherlands), EI and the teachers' unions in Sri Lanka and Aceh/Indonesia will rebuild 40 primary public schools.

However, progress is slow. It is slow for everyone, but especially for the thousands of children who are still sheltered in refugee camps. Bureaucracy, communication hiccups, lack of raw material, and absence of skilled workers—among other

things—make the reconstruction process slow and difficult.

When EI and Novib attended the first brick-laying ceremony in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on September 12, government officials admitted that EI/Novib were actually the first to start any official public construction in Aceh.

The area of this first school, in Kampung Jawa, in the subdistrict of Kota Banda Aceh, is still desolate. However, the primary school will be located in the middle of a community area, which is to be rebuilt through other founding agencies.

All the schools will have six fully furnished classrooms. Each school will have a large library, a prayer house (musallah), separate toilets for female and male students, water and electricity, as well as a teachers'

Myth and reality: employment equity



1. *Myth:* Employment equity means treating everyone the same.
Reality: Employment equity means treating everyone with fairness, taking into account people's differences.

2. *Myth:* Employment equity results in “reverse discrimination.”
Reality: Employment equity means everyone has equal employment opportunities—not just a select group.
Employment equity is about eliminating barriers faced by certain groups in society.
Studies have shown that certain minority groups have been denied employment opportunities because of ethnicity, gender, or disability. Systemic barriers in employment practices may intentionally limit their opportunities. Employment equity is designed to eliminate barriers by identifying and adjusting employment systems to provide equal access and opportunity. Employment equity is a way of “catching up” on the effects of the past. It is remedial, not punitive.

3. *Myth:* Employment equity is all about quotas.
Reality: Quotas, which are part of the American approach, are explicitly prohibited by the *Canadian Employment Equity Act*.
An employment equity plan describes where you are today, where you want to be at a certain time, and how you intend to get there. Like an industrial production target, an employment equity plan reflects the organization's circumstances and goals.
The process of setting goals does not mean people will lose their jobs to make room for designated group members. Goals are based on predicted new workplace opportunities.

4. *Myth:* Employment equity means hiring unqualified people.
Reality: Employment equity means providing all qualified and qualifiable individuals with equal employment opportunities—not just a select few.
The purpose of employment equity is to hire qualified candidates; it is not to hire unqualified workers just to reach some numerical goals.
Employment equity is not about putting someone in a job solely because she or he is a member of a designated group. Employment equity encourages the selection, hiring, training, promotion, and retention of qualified and qualifiable individuals. Employment equity simply ensures that barriers against persons in designated groups resulting from the employer's systems, policies, and practices are identified and eliminated.

The *Employment Equity Act* specifically states that the obligation to implement employment equity does not require an employer to hire or promote unqualified individuals. The Act also ensures and emphasizes that hiring and promotion standards are not lowered in order to recruit employees from designated groups. Such practices would create a counterproductive work environment.

5. *Myth:* Employment equity threatens the seniority principle.
Reality: Employment equity and seniority share a common goal: to make sure that employment opportunities are fair, without favouritism or discrimination.
Seniority rights acquired as a result of provisions in a collective agreement, or acquired as a result of established practices of an employer, are protected under the *Employment Equity Act* passed in 1995. The Act specifically states that seniority provisions are deemed not to be employment barriers.
However, if it appears that the seniority provision in a collective agreement has an adverse impact on designated group members, the Act states that the employer and bargaining agent are required to consult on measures that may be taken to minimize the adverse impact.

6. *Myth:* Employment equity can only be implemented in a healthy economy.
Reality: Employment equity is a policy for both good and bad economic times.
Employment equity can be implemented in healthy economic times or during a downturn.
During tough economic times there certainly are fewer hiring and promotions, but employers still hire. Some turnover still occurs through retirement, death, maternity leave, voluntary and involuntary separations, and transfers. By using attrition, organizations can open up employment opportunities for members of the designated groups. It is even more important for employment equity to be developed and implemented during times of job scarcity, to ensure that available jobs are fairly and equitably distributed.
Besides hiring, promoting, and keeping designated group members in the workforce, employers have the challenge of accommodating the various needs of our population in a flexible manner. This, too, can be done during economic downturns while benefiting all employees in the organization.
— Christine Stewart

Source: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada web site, www.hrsdc.gc.ca. Adapted for the BCTF Employment Equity for Aboriginal Teachers' workshop.

Connections program in Skeena

by Sue Spalding

The Connections Program has been running at Skeena Junior Secondary School for about two years, and it is demonstrating success in getting at-risk students to work and learn. The program is modeled on Hazelton Secondary School's Connections Program but is developed specifically for Skeena. It took a team effort to plan and develop a program that could work within Skeena Junior Secondary School. Skeena also hired two Aboriginal support workers who work primarily within classrooms. Goals of the program are to change the attitudes of students toward their high school experience and support them in reaching their potential. The program adapts to meet the needs of each student and assists them to increase their chances of success.

The program is an individualized approach to correcting student behaviour and attitudes, and a means of focussing academic efforts. The Connections Program provides a classroom space for small groups of students to work with close supervision and one-on-one support. The goals are individually defined, and the room is staffed by a teacher and a connections co-ordinator.

It is important that students feel there is a space and place for them within the school culture.

Referrals come from teachers, administrators, counsellors, and students themselves. Classroom teachers may refer the students to the program for academic or behavioural support, for a class for a specified period of time,

and for specific goals. The principal, vice-principal, and counsellors may also refer students to this program. Students may self-refer when they feel it is in their best interest to be there, but these referrals must be approved by both the classroom teacher and the office. The key to success for the program has been the support of classroom teachers within Skeena.

Data is kept on the number of students referred and the time spent in the program, as well as changes in their academic progress. The effectiveness of our efforts and the student's success will guide us in future plans for the program. The team of supporters for the Connections Program, including the Aboriginal support workers, meet on a regular basis with the intent to continuously improve our program and services at Skeena.

The connections room also houses a number of programs outside of the allotted blocks of instructional time. These include:

- **Breakfast Club**—funded by Community Links, 131 funding, and school funds.
- Students enjoy a nutritious breakfast that includes muffins, bagels, fruit, and juice. Students prepare for first block, load up for a morning of learning, find out what's going on around the school and the community, and spend time with one another. If students miss breakfast, the connections room also provides a break-time snack.
- **Homework Club**—daily from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. with the Aboriginal support workers. Students have a snack, do homework, join friends, work toward improving their grades, and receive support with the tasks required. One success of the homework club is the peer tutors, Grade 10 student volunteers who are trained and receive credits for assisting

students with one-on-one support at homework club.

- **Lunch Bunch**—Tuesdays at lunchtime. Students sign up for a free hot lunch. Guest speakers from the community talk about teen issues, and students make the important connection between their education and successfully achieving their goals. It also helps them to discover the resources available for youth within the community.

We continually work at connecting students with their learning potential, their possibilities within the community, and with their sense of identity.

- **Culture Club**—Thursdays at lunchtime. Teacher volunteer, Shane Pauls, and I provide students with cultural hands-on activities. They learn about the language and culture of various Aboriginal people, including their own. The goal is to enhance their cultural knowledge in a traditional, activity-based manner. Role models or Elders are invited in to do storytelling and other activities with the students.

Skeena Junior Secondary has become an enjoyable place to work. It feels like a place where Aboriginal students feel a sense of belonging. It is important that students feel there is a space and place for them within the school culture. The Connections Program strives for that sense of belonging. We continually work at connecting students with their learning potential, their possibilities within the community, and with their sense of identity.

Sue Spalding teaches at Skeena Junior Secondary School, Terrace.

Aboriginal education survey

by Christine Stewart

BCTF members and staff are working to learn more about the needs and concerns of Aboriginal teachers. The BCTF Research department and the Aboriginal education program, with input from the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, developed a survey for Aboriginal teachers. The advisory committee members had many questions about Aboriginal teachers and what concerns they have related to their profession. They will take the results and use them as catalysts for change. In order for meaningful systemic revision, teachers will need to listen to the survey respondents' concerns and act for systemic improvement.

Why conduct a survey?
It is our belief that we have more Aboriginal teachers than what has been reported teaching in the system.
According to the latest information we have 280 self-identified Aboriginal teachers working in BC schools. This is a drop from our fall 2001 efforts to update the membership, which identified 325 self-identified Aboriginal teachers. In 2001, the 325 teachers identified made up less than 1% of the more than 36,000 full-time and part-time teachers who were members. The 280

self-identified Aboriginal teachers make up an even smaller percentage of the total teaching force.

We also want to:

- illuminate the challenges identified by these Aboriginal teachers.
- update the BCTF database.
- inform the members of the BCTF policy development.

Distribution of survey
In the fall of 2004, the Aboriginal education program, with the help of the advisory committee, released the survey at the First Nations Education joint UBC Native Indian Teacher Education Program and the BCTF Aboriginal Education Conference.

The advisory committee members also went to First Nations conferences and Aboriginal events, and hand-delivered the survey to their colleagues.

Who responded?
When all the forms had been processed, the total number of respondents was 92. The advisory committee have asked that the surveys be mailed to individuals who have not yet filled it out.

General responses
The responses generated a number of central themes, including the need for improved Aboriginal curriculum, and the need for more Aboriginal

teachers in every area of the public school system. The most pressing concern, however, remains racism. It continues to have major impacts on Aboriginal teachers and is clearly a critical area the membership needs to address.

The advisory committee members believe that we need to gather up explicit examples. This would be done not to ostracize members but to illuminate and begin the transformative journey to address the racism that Aboriginal teachers endure on a daily basis.

Our survey results support the findings of the 1997 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, which states: “The teacher is a role model whose own behavior and attitudes are absorbed by students.”

The Royal Commission also recognized that, “While there are many more Aboriginal teachers in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal school systems today than a decade ago, the numbers remain far too low relative to the current and projected need. At least three times as many are needed to achieve parity with the number of non-Aboriginal teachers serving non-Aboriginal children.”

Christine Stewart is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division.

On being well

China's English-language teachers

by Julia Johnson

In July 2005, I volunteered with 40 other people from the United States, Great Britain, and Hong Kong to teach conversational English to language teachers of China through the Amity Foundation's Summer English Program (SEP). The SEP is funded by the Chinese government and provides an opportunity for language teachers of China to improve their English speaking ability. Volunteers are organized into teams of four to six and after a three-day orientation are sent to a regional capital where they become immersed in 20 days of English instruction and Chinese culture. My team was sent to Inner Mongolia.

My participation was a milestone for Amity; it was the first time a Canadian had volunteered for the SEP in its 20-year history. Even though this was

my first experience, there were many who were returning for their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th time. It seemed to be a popular activity for those who were retired. Selection to the program was based on good health and a desire to make a difference. Age and teaching experience were not limiting factors. As a result, there was a balance of volunteers ranging in age from 20 to 70, and from every walk of life.

The Chinese government, in their effort to grow economically, wants its English-language teachers to be very good at their job so more people will be able to speak the language of international business, especially with the Olympic games being held in Beijing in 2008.

For the Chinese English-language teacher, however, the issue is how to inspire students when they perceive English as a subject they must learn in order to pass. In the rural areas, the

task of teaching English is even more daunting as most students will remain in the farming community, where English will not be spoken. Another issue for these teachers is their working and learning conditions. Class size ranges from 40–100 students. With large classes there is little opportunity for individuals to practise, and students, impatient with a teacher who attempts to speak English during a lesson, complain that they don't understand what is being said. Hence, English is taught by speaking the language of the region using an English text.

If anyone needs a wellness program it is China's English-language teacher. There is a prevalent attitude amongst them that their students are not conversant in English because they themselves lack the skill to speak English fluently. They readily accept the blame for

their inadequacies stating they are lazy, unmotivated, and too shy to open their mouths to speak English. They suggest that the lack of an English-speaking environment makes it difficult for them to improve their skills. In reality, these teachers are far from lazy and unmotivated. What they are is weary. After the long hours they spend preparing their lessons and marking their students' work, they have no time or energy to nurture their passion, which is learning the English language. However, regardless of their adverse teaching conditions, they tell you they love their students and they love what they do.

To say I learned a lot about myself and something of China, doesn't begin to describe the impact this teaching experience had on me. I valued this educational, relational, and cultural journey not only because it was

stress-free and safe, but because the work was meaningful and fulfilling. The opportunity to be immersed in a culture is a unique way to explore a new land. Much can be shared about this work, culture, and travel, but with limited space, I will say, for the purpose of this column, that personal wellness is a universal concern and needs to be our quest for the 21st Century. If you wish a conversation regarding my China experiences, I would be pleased to speak with you. For more information on this teaching opportunity, visit www.amityfoundation.org.

Julia Johnson, a learning resource teacher at Red Bluff School, in Quesnel, is a BCTF PD wellness associate and a member of the Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory board. johnsonj@abccom.bc.ca, 250-747-3650.

Bringing home the school library sea

by Kalen Marquis

Einstein stated that, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." This celebrated man of science knew that knowledge—whether acquired as facts or applied as skills—is not nearly as significant as what learners do with it. Einstein, who did his most important thinking visually, trusted the expansive and abundant imaginative process that transforms, transcends, and creates anew. He knew the importance of metaphor.

As a teacher-librarian, the picture I would like to paint is the school library as the ocean, the salt chuck, the sea. In its abundance, it is a marvel of sensory wonder, a book and resource collection that yields many timeless treasures. Whether archetypically "deep, dark, and mysterious" or meek, mild, and shallow, it mirrors the values and sensibilities, the wishes, wants, and dreams of

each beholder. With each term's beginning and ending, with every daily and weekly ripple created by staff and student borrowers, a sea of books and resources rises up, depositing carefully selected words and images in classrooms and in staff and student homes. One book at a time, borrowers literally bring home the school library sea.

Knowledge, as Einstein knew, is not enough.

In waves of fiction and non-fiction, the school library sea ebbs, pulses, crashes, erodes; it deposits and builds, creating and recreating each school's cultural and educational heritage, the broadest and best of "old" and "new." From republished classics to the increasingly commercial contemporary, each book, poster, CD, and DVD advances and retreats, riding lunar tides of wind and water, before

returning home—very often requiring a teacher-librarian's replacement or repair.

Whether that teacher-librarian is perceived to be a meticulous seaside groundskeeper, a stealthy lifeguard, a knowledgeable ocean-park interpreter, a remote yet luminary lighthouse keeper, or even a much more fanciful, star-struck storyteller, depends upon the needs and priorities, the values and sensibilities of each school community.

Admittedly, after generations of decline that has left teacher-librarians on duty for just over one day a week in the average Canadian school, it is difficult to imagine a teacher-librarian with the time and resources to respond thoughtfully and lovingly to the minds and hearts of learners.

While current generations of students are trained in the narrow, equidistant lanes of highly chlorinated lap pools, complete with coaches, timers, and scoreboards to put them through their competitive paces, there is a growing call from the wisest, most seafaring families and educators: When will our children return to the more treasure-laden folds of the school library sea? Will we, with warm, daily welcomes and some requisite hand-holding, help children from land-loving families to move beyond smooth-bottomed wading pools and the narrow, directed confines of the lap pool? Will

our children have the opportunity to seek the majestically shifting plains of sand and sea where they can venture out, swimming widely, deeply, and joyfully in every direction in the school library sea?

Setting sail in ships marked "Coalition for School Libraries" those bold seafarers know that the tide has been out for several decades and they must navigate in deep, dark, increasingly distant waters with the competing allure of a landlubber's paradise. Their mission, on a nationwide scale, is to bring back the school library sea.

While teacher-librarians might be lured onto makeshift wharves to await these docking ships, their time is precious. As groundskeepers on litter patrol, lifeguards doing first aid, and interpreters preparing self-guided tours, their time is fragmented. They are distracted from their role as lighthouse keepers who salvage handfuls of fine books from across Canada and around the world—

As star-struck storytellers, they are often unavailable—too harried or hardened from hoping against hope that this year will mark the lowest ebb.

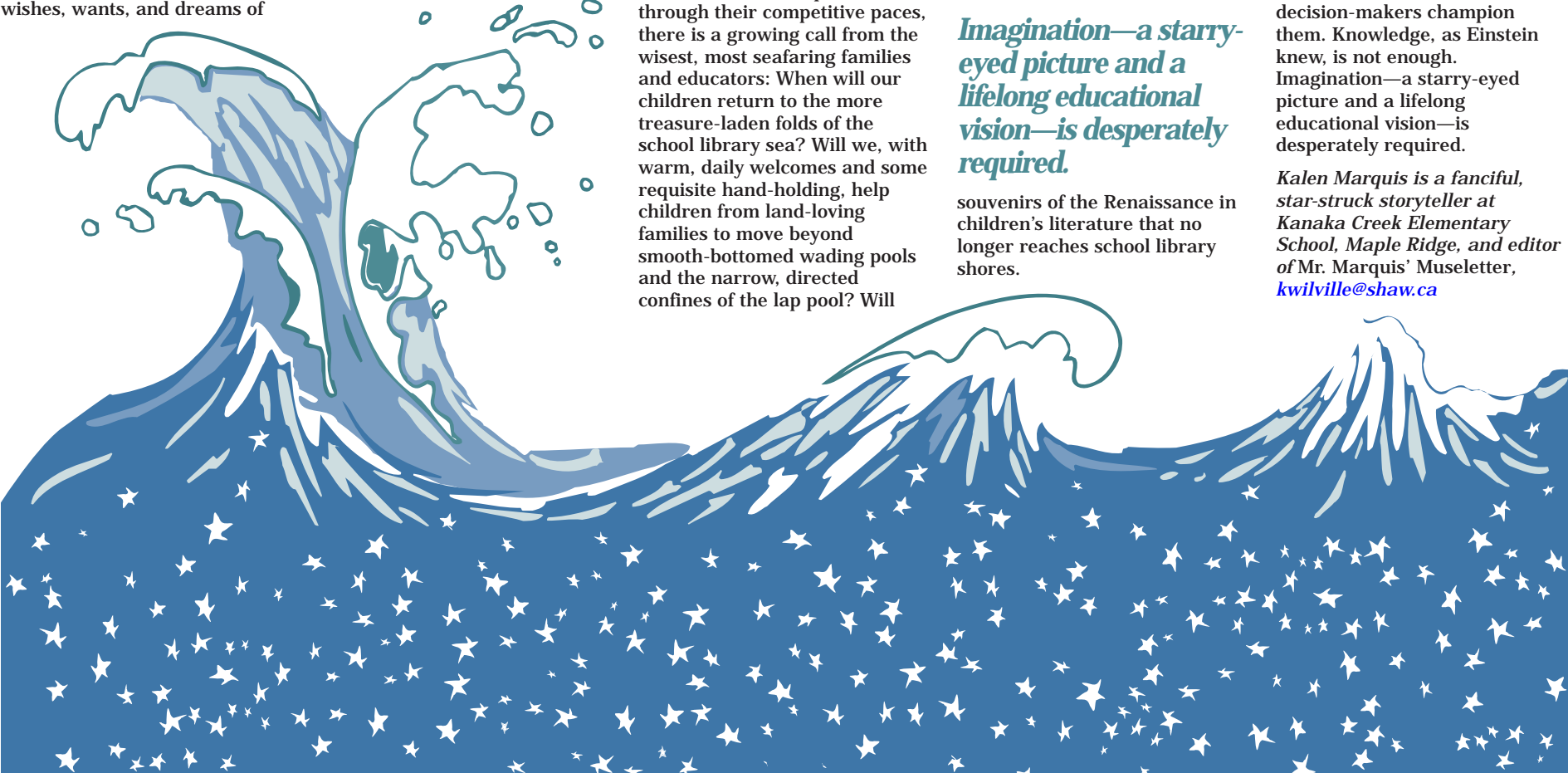
Like those on ships marked "Coalition," they are witness to a generation of seaside learners set loose with modern metal detectors to find treasures of a tinny kind, or lined up for a turn on high-powered hovercraft that skim across barren shores to reach a more distant worldwide sea. These exciting vessels do not come equipped with form-fitting life jackets, all-weather navigation equipment, or the depth sounder of a human mind and heart. They do not, as indeed they cannot, recognize the wisdom in Omar Bradley's saying, "We need to learn to set our course by the stars, not by the light of each passing ship."

While study after study shows the importance of an abundant library sea with innovative, flexibly scheduled programs provided by an accessible and enthusiastic old salt, few decision-makers champion them. Knowledge, as Einstein knew, is not enough. Imagination—a starry-eyed picture and a lifelong educational vision—is desperately required.

Imagination—a starry-eyed picture and a lifelong educational vision—is desperately required.

souvenirs of the Renaissance in children's literature that no longer reaches school library shores.

Kalen Marquis is a fanciful, star-struck storyteller at Kanaka Creek Elementary School, Maple Ridge, and editor of Mr. Marquis' Museletter, kwilville@shaw.ca



Refocusing PD through inquiry

The paper and references listed here can be accessed on the BCTF web site, bctf.ca.
“A teacher union’s collaborative research agenda and strategies: One way forward for Canadian teacher unions in supporting teachers’ Professional Development?” (Charlie Naylor, BCTF Research) bctf.ca/ResearchReports/2005tr01
This paper reviews some of the current literature on professional development, including Hargreaves’s (2000) four stages of professionalism, Randi & Zeichner’s (2004) stress on collaborative professional development epitomized by teacher research, networks, and study groups, and a critique of the increasingly prescriptive,

professional learning communities by Dufour *et al* (2005). Other sections of the paper consider:
• Teacher union-PD connection (Leithwood 2004, Bascia 2000)
• Networking for the schools of the future (OECD 2001, 2003)
• Networks and strategic alliances in business (Wallace 2004, Linden 2003)
The paper’s key argument is that the BCTF can build support for teachers’ professional development through teacher inquiry as a union-led approach that fits within current and cutting-edge literature in PD and collaboration.
Three examples of BCTF research collaborations with universities, school districts, and

community organizations are provided:
1. A federally funded research project with several universities and school districts in two Canadian provinces. Research project title: “From Literacy to Multiliteracies: Designing knowledge frameworks for the new economy.”
2. A collaborative project in three BC school districts—“Teaching to Diversity,” with a focus on web-based information for teachers, and as a place for the publication of teachers’ writing on diversity issues and practices.
3. Teacher-union collaboration with community organizations with a focus on inclusive education, and subsequent union participation in a “National Summit on Inclusive Education.”
Eight recommendations are made and explored:
• Teacher unions need to be aware of shifting societal, schooling, and professional contexts, and should be ready to adapt to meet changing professional needs of teachers.
• Accessing the literature on professional development allows for a reasoned case to be made for teacher unions’ promotion of specific types of professional development.
• Teacher union capacity and credibility is enhanced by internal collaboration and by collaboration with external agencies.

• Teacher unions might develop their own forms of learning communities, which might offer an alternative to prescriptive and directive frameworks for professional development.
• Teacher unions should learn about collaboration from sources other than just the education literature.
• Documentation of our experience and analysis of the literature allows teacher unions to share learning with teachers and with actual or potential collaborators/partners.
• Teacher unions should develop cohorts of union-sponsored leaders who can promote, support, and write about present union-led professional development.
• Teacher unions and their partners should consider how collaborating supports student learning and teachers’ work, and might potentially reduce conflict in education systems.
Some BC teachers are involved in union-initiated inquiry through the BCTF’s Research Division projects, or through the BCTF’s Program for Quality Teaching (PQT). But the scale is small, with BCTF funding in decline and at critically low levels. These small-scale efforts may not survive in the BCTF unless a case for union-led teacher inquiry is made, which this paper aims to do. Teacher inquiry is a highly appropriate

focus for a teacher union wanting to support teacher-directed, collegial professional development. It just needs more attention and resources from the BCTF to make it happen. Learning from the literature, developing collaborations, improving training for cohorts of teacher research leaders, and building on BC’s strong base of teacher knowledge could help to make union-sponsored teacher inquiry an effective and powerful form of professional development.
BCTF inquiry projects could be linked to specific subject areas, social-justice issues, or issues important to all teachers, such as assessment or inclusion. They could explore elementary, middle, or secondary schooling practices and issues. PSAs might be involved as sponsors or co-ordinators of inquiry groups. Local PD chairs might play a facilitative role to encourage teacher inquiry in districts. Expanded facilitation of teacher inquiry groups and facilitator networks could be supported by the BCTF, as might dissemination through publishing and conferences. Some of these ideas have been piloted by BCTF Research and have proved successful but they need a wider application to become systemic within the union and the province.
– Charlie Naylor
BCTF Research



The BC Association for Community Living’s Executive Director Laney Bryenton, and Board Member Nancy Hoyano, presented the Canadian Association for Community Living

Inclusive Education Award to BCTF Researcher Charlie Naylor. The award is for significant contributions to inclusive education practice in Canada.

Poverty a result of priorities

The following is a speech given by Josephine Watson at Campaign 2000’s press conference on child poverty.

The poverty of our century is unlike that of any other. It is not, as poverty was before, the result of natural scarcity, but of a set of priorities imposed upon the rest of the world by the rich. Consequently, the modern poor are not pitied; they are written off as trash. The 20th century consumer economy has produced the first culture in which a beggar is a reminder of nothing.
My name is Josephine Watson and I am a single parent of three boys, 10, 12, and 13 years old. I would like to speak today to the issue of being a single parent on welfare and the difficulties encountered, mainly in upgrading a work skill set and finding employment; particularly employment that offers sufficient compensation to support a family of four.
I found myself on welfare with three small boys—all less than four years old, with no extended family to rely on. I planned that I would go back to school when they were old enough, upgrade my education or hopefully complete my BA (which still had two years left), and go to work to support my family.
I soon discovered that this was not to be. The system that was in place did not allow for me to study a program of my choosing while on welfare. I was either on, or off. In the early 1990s such a program did exist and women could take a 9- or 12-month course to become a dental hygienist or legal secretarial program, but that program had been scrapped.
I contacted my financial aid worker to see what was available and was sent to an employment department of the

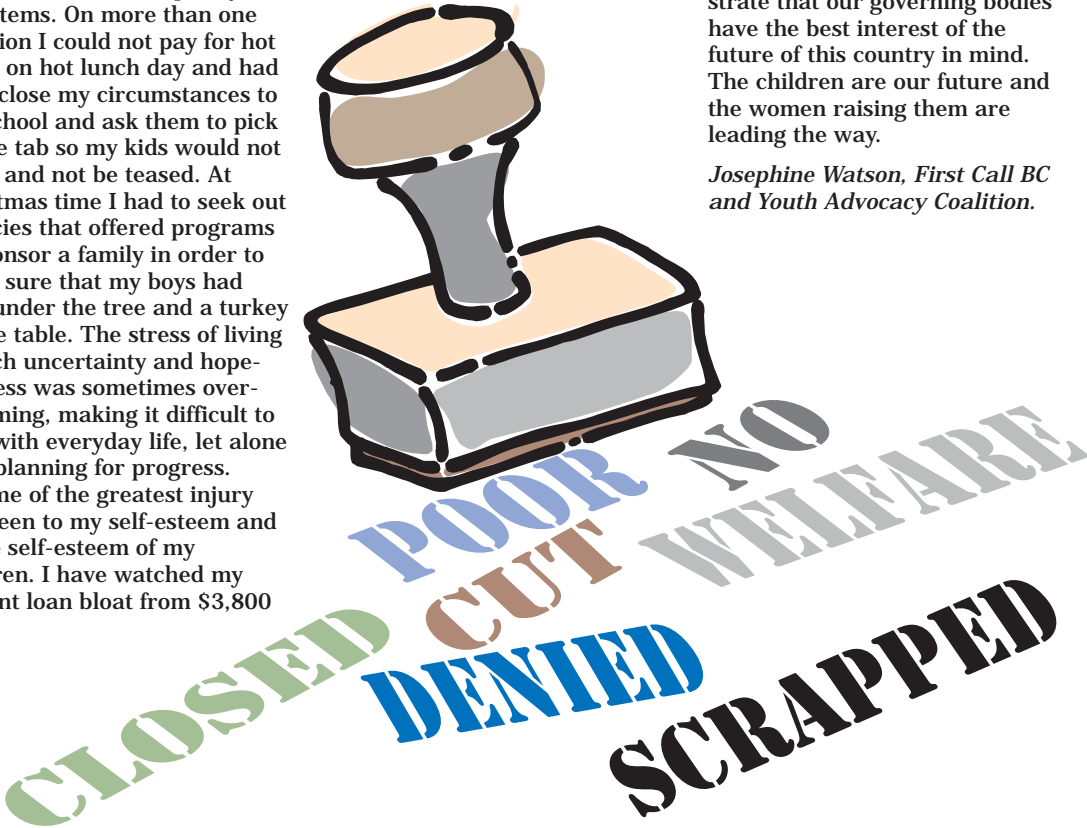
ministry and given a list of approved programs. The programs available were for jobs that would have paid wages so low I would have continued to live in poverty and required state assistance. Many programs were aimed specifically at men. I asked if I could attend a program of my own choosing from, say, Douglas College and was denied. I explained that I would just be staying on welfare, doing nothing, rather than being on welfare and getting a working skill set. I was told that was just the way it was. The worker told me that her hands were tied. I felt
The system was set up for me to either stay put or get a low-paying job, but not to get an education.
helpless and hopeless; that this did not make sense and could not be right. But she was right. The system was set up for me to either stay put or get a low-paying job, but not to get an education.

I was not in a position to acquire a student loan, as I had been attending my second year of college at the birth of my oldest son and now found myself in default of the loan and unable to make any payments. My welfare income barely supplied enough for us to eat and pay bills. I applied for respite from the interest being charged, explaining my situation, and was denied. I even requested that I be extended a further loan so I could finish my education and become a viable contributing taxpayer, but this was also denied.
I was left with no choice but to self-educate. I volunteered where I could, offering my services in hope of learning something current, taking

advantage of a program that provided respite childcare two days per week. That program has since been cut, so if I were in that circumstance today that would be one more opportunity closed to me.
By the time my boys were 5, 7, and 8, I had been out of the work force for over nine years. Given the speed at which technology changes and my lack of recent job experience, I found it impossible to acquire a decent paying job. My skill set was sorely inadequate. I took books out of the library in an attempt to learn current software and update myself. I eventually started working as a temp for an employment agency, taking what came along, living on EI when work was not available.
Throughout this struggle, I frequently denied my children new clothes, shoes, recreation, sports activities, and quality food items. On more than one occasion I could not pay for hot lunch on hot lunch day and had to disclose my circumstances to the school and ask them to pick up the tab so my kids would not know and not be teased. At Christmas time I had to seek out agencies that offered programs to sponsor a family in order to make sure that my boys had gifts under the tree and a turkey on the table. The stress of living in such uncertainty and hopelessness was sometimes overwhelming, making it difficult to deal with everyday life, let alone with planning for progress.
Some of the greatest injury has been to my self-esteem and to the self-esteem of my children. I have watched my student loan bloat from \$3,800

dollars to over \$10,000 and still no relief. I have had to say no to familiar family events such as Playland, water slides, tobogganing, and first-run movies with popcorn and pop. Even renting new release movies was out of my price range.
My children have endured being called “welfare” by school mates, being teased for not participating in fundraisers at school, and having to deal with teachers who harassed them for money for school events, agendas, etc. when I simply did not have the money to give.
I pride myself on being a role model to my sons and have struggled to maintain that position under the most trying circumstances of my life. I have struggled to hold my head high when wearing clothes that were out of date and shabby. I have been forced to plead for food,

clothing and an education, things for which no one in a civilized nation should ever have to beg.
I suggest that barriers to education be removed, and that women and children be treated with the dignity and respect they merit...
I suggest that barriers to education be removed, that women and children be treated with the dignity and respect they merit, and that the needs of women and children living in poverty be acknowledged and acted upon. We say we are a civilized nation, so we need to walk that talk!
This action would demonstrate that our governing bodies have the best interest of the future of this country in mind. The children are our future and the women raising them are leading the way.
Josephine Watson, First Call BC and Youth Advocacy Coalition.



The folly of provincial examinations

by Gordon R. Gore

Provincial examinations ruin good science courses. The purpose of laboratory-based science courses is to make science real to students. It is far more productive to teach fewer concepts well, using selective hands-on investigations, than it is to teach an encyclopedic science course and have students memorize trivia for an examination made up by outsiders.

British Columbia has long been a leader in science education in this country. BC science teachers were using laboratory-based, conceptual science courses back in the 1960s.

Learning how to write tests is more important than learning how physics works. In other words, back to the 1950s.

Physics 12 (BC) was originally designed as a laboratory-based course, emphasizing the big ideas in classical physics. Students performed numerous thought-provoking experiments, which gave them a taste of how physics knowledge is obtained. They did solve a significant number of word problems, but the word problems were ultimately based upon what students learned through their experiments. The 'hard' thinking was in the analysis of results.

Within a few years of provincial examinations being re-imposed in 1984, one could see the emphasis changing: More chalk and talk, plenty of practice in doing word problems, lots of time writing old tests "for practice." Laboratory work is not tested, so leave it out. Learning how to write tests is more important than learning how physics works. In other words, back to the 1950s.

What would happen if we actually trusted our professionally trained physics teachers to evaluate their own students, at least on a district basis? The quality of instruction would improve remarkably, that's what would happen! When a knowledgeable teacher has ownership of her or his course and how she or he teaches it, the emphasis is on fitting the course to the students you have that year, rather than fitting the students to "the test." There is incentive to try different approaches to see what works best. Physics teachers know in their gut that students learn more physics if the subject is made real through hands-on experiments. Without artificial pressure from provincial examinations, the course has a degree of openness, which permits the teacher to adapt to individual interests and needs.

I am certain that the grades teachers give physics students are a better predictor of future success than the marks from provincial exams. The bureaucrats, politicians, and some teachers and administrators

will say, "But you need a level playing field!" Well, if they think the present system provides a level playing field, they are living in a fantasy world.

If you really want something close to a level playing field, try this:

1. Give every student a physics teacher with a talent and a passion for teaching physics, who has an adequate background in physics, and who has time to dedicate to teaching physics.
2. Give every student an equal background in mathematics before (and while) he or she takes physics.
3. Put every student on a timetable that provides equal hours of instruction.
4. Provide every school with the same textbooks.
5. Equip every physics class with a full set of quality equipment for all laboratory experiments.
6. Make sure that every physics class spends equal time on laboratory work.
7. Ensure that every class is limited in size so that all students have adequate assistance.
8. Give every physics student a home situation that permits the student to study in a comfortable and supportive environment.
9. Allow each student the luxury of being able to dedicate full time to schoolwork and of not having to work part time.

How should students be evaluated?

Testing is an important part of science education, and it should be done properly. However, it should be a school or district responsibility. Teachers within a district could easily come to a consensus on what physics students should have accomplished during a course. There are several advantages to making final evaluation a local responsibility:

1. The local marking load would be more manageable, so more use would be made of open-ended questions, where students have to explain how they arrive at their answers, or put into words "how things work."
2. A laboratory component could be introduced. Within a district, teachers could agree on what equipment is available, and what skills are worth testing. Creative physics teachers could come up with laboratory tests that are actually fun to do!
3. Results of local tests would be known by the end of June. If local testing were used, students would not need to wait until August to find out how they stand.

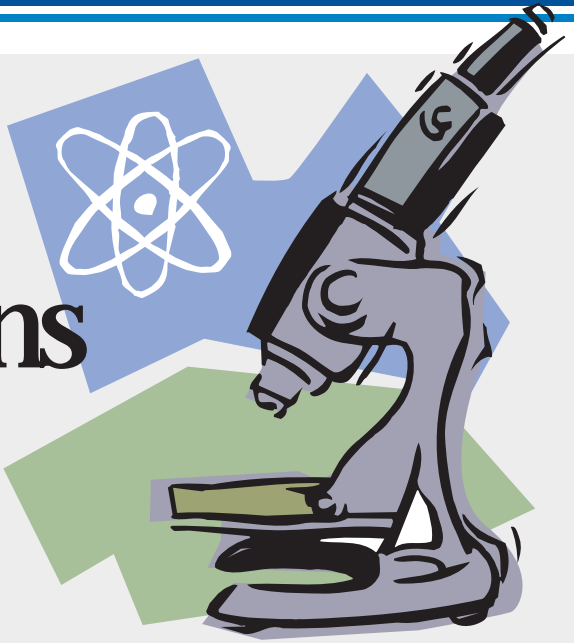
4. District-designed tests would have greater face validity. Marks would be based on what we actually did this year, rather than what some external examiner decides should be tested. Physics teachers as a group are an intellectually honest, dedicated bunch, and don't need Big Brother to tell them what they should teach or test.
5. Localized testing would likely have the effect of increasing participation rates in Physics 12. Physics is a beautiful, fascinating, interesting subject if the emphasis is placed on real-life situations, on hands-on physics. Give teachers ownership, so they use their common sense and creativity in adapting the course to their students instead of *painting by number*; and in a short time, they will build a program that is far more attractive and meaningful.

I am certain that the grades teachers give physics students are a better predictor of future success than the marks from provincial exams.

6. Localized testing would really upset the Fraser Institute and their silly annual ranking of schools. In my opinion, this would be a very good thing. Are these ideas revolutionary? Not really. There have been several windows of opportunity in the past few decades where there were no provincial examinations at all. During those years when there were no provincial examinations, the sky did not fall. Standards did not go down. In fact, one former ministry official told me that teachers were harder on students than the provincial examiners are.

How would we determine who wins scholarships? Surely district teachers know best who is university material and who excels in their subjects. Why not have some sort of quota system and leave the ultimate selection of scholarship winners up to the schools and districts? Selection of scholarship winners will then be based upon a thorough knowledge of student abilities and academic potential, rather than who can practise most and get the largest number of correct answers on multiple choice tests. Would that be any better or worse than the present system?

Gordon Gore, a retired BC science and physics teacher, is still teaching science and physics on a volunteer basis at the BIG Little Science Centre in Kamloops.



Plaintiffs vindicated despite "systematic campaign of character assassination"

by Nancy Knickerbocker

Nine teachers, a former school trustee, and a parent won a resounding Supreme Court victory over a Comox Valley woman who cruelly defamed them on internet sites, in chat rooms and on voluminous quantities of email.

In reasons for judgment released January 11, 2006, Madam Justice Jacqueline Dorgan states that parent activist Sue Halstead "published the defamatory statements in the context of a prolonged and sustained campaign of character assassination against each of the plaintiffs."

Judge Dorgan wrote: "Ms. Halstead's shockingly vicious attack upon, and her manifestly fictitious account of, each of the plaintiff's character and conduct is deserving of rebuke.... Her actions are malicious and cruel. Such publications and actions have absolutely nothing to do with freedom of expression. Ms. Halstead has seriously transgressed the boundaries which prescribe that hallowed right."

Evidence showed that all of the allegations were defamatory and fictitious.

The BCTF agreed to take the plaintiffs' case because years of efforts at discussion and mediation had failed to dissuade Halstead from her continued campaign against them. "We did not take on this litigation lightly," said BCTF President Jinny Sims. "But we felt very strongly that individuals cannot be permitted to spread untruths and rob teachers of the excellent reputations they have earned in their communities."

Halstead, a mother of five, has a long history as a parent volunteer and anti-bullying activist. The self-described president of Parents Against Violence Everywhere and the Comox Valley Learning Disability Association, she was active at the local, district, and provincial levels with the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC). She twice ran unsuccessfully for school board.

"The evidence establishes that since in or about 1997, Ms. Halstead has been highly conflict-driven, waging battles with everyone from PAC parents to teachers, trustees, and the Superintendent of Schools," the judgment states. Her output of "outrageous and scandalous" correspondence and complaints to numerous official bodies was prodigious, and was copied widely to many politicians and officials on the education scene. Halstead wrote innumerable letters to editors of papers across the province, gained spurious credibility from being frequently quoted in the media.

In addition, "Ms. Halstead's use of the Internet in the publication of defamatory statements was incessant and the reach was broad," the judge wrote. Her web site and chat groups published reams of material and opinion, including "very serious allegations of manifestly improper conduct."

In 2003, Halstead created a website that featured what she called "B.C.'s Least Wanted

Educators." She described several of the plaintiffs as "Bully Educators," and placed their names under cartoon-style pictures of apples with worms in them. The judge described it as "a rogue's gallery" of people Halstead accused of a wide range of misconduct including violence, drunkenness, pot smoking, sexual harassment, and befriending child pornographers. She even likened one plaintiff to convicted pedophile Robert Noyes.

In addition, she ordered Halstead to stop writing about any of the plaintiffs, either on the Internet or in any other medium.

Cumberland teacher Edmund Newman, in particular, bore the brunt of Halstead's attacks. For example, Halstead referred to Newman as being subject to an RCMP investigation, but didn't reveal the fact that she herself had launched the complaint. The bogus allegation remained on Halstead's web site long after the RCMP had informed her that investigations revealed the complaint to be utterly groundless.

Evidence showed that all of the allegations were defamatory and fictitious. "I find that Ms. Halstead is entirely without credibility," Judge Dorgan wrote. She also chastised Halstead for failing to appear in court and simply attempting "to walk away" from the proceedings.

Judge Dorgan awarded the individual plaintiffs a total of \$626,000 in compensatory damages and a further \$50,000 in punitive damages to be shared amongst the eleven, with costs to the BCTF. The judge acknowledged it may well be difficult to collect the damages, given Halstead's financial circumstances. In addition, she ordered Halstead to stop writing about any of the plaintiffs, either on the Internet or in any other medium.

"...Not only students, but the community as a whole, suffers when those involved in education are unfairly and unnecessarily publicly maligned."

Judge Dorgan concluded by praising the plaintiffs and expressing the hope that with the end of the litigation they would be able to move forward in their personal and professional lives. She wrote:

"Each of these remarkable people has displayed strength of character and professionalism throughout; each has exhibited a passion for and a commitment to the education and well being of young people in their communities. Not only students, but the community as a whole, suffers when those involved in education are unfairly and unnecessarily publicly maligned."

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.

Destination imagination

by Greg Murray

I believe creativity can be taught. There are many examples of this in our daily lives. Many adults have tried sketching something in later years and discovered that it looked good. Previously they thought they could not draw. Singing, drawing, painting, and writing are only small examples of a very large group of skills that are inherently present in every human being.

Destination imagination is an all-encompassing invention (graphic, design, and drama group) where students are placed in teams of five to seven people.

If this were not the case, then Steven Hawking would have never written books, Helen Keller would not have become a public speaker, and we would not have a paraplegic man as the mayor of Vancouver.

You never give up the dream. Tenacity means finishing what you start, however small the start is. Too often we place barriers in our way without realizing it. We see an astronaut reaching for the stars and say to ourselves, I could never do that. The model airplane they built as a child, sits on the mantle. We hear a guitarist play a beautiful piece and say to ourselves, I could never do that. The guitar they played their first notes on is propped against the wall, for you to pick up.

If you look around you will find the tools to make your dream real—a used recorder, an old paint set, a pencil and a piece of paper. It is your decision whether you pick up the tools and start down the road to fulfilling your dream.

That is what *destination imagination* is all about. It lets

people be themselves and gives team members a chance to shine in an arena where they know they are valued, they are special, and they are talented in so many ways, some of which they realize only now.

Over the years I have seen the glowing faces after a presentation—wonder at their own accomplishments recorded in their actions, and happiness in each team member's success.

For this reason I have included destination imagination activities as part of my flexible daily timetable. Although we have a fixed and printed timetable, there are so many interruptions, changes, deletions, guests, performances, assemblies, and observers throughout a typical school day that I created a flexible timetable. It is at the front of the classroom and I place the various activities for the day on the front wall. When the students enter the room, they simply look at the timetable and adjust their supplies accordingly—a working and effective system. You see, *creativity can be taught*. It can also be learned.

As adults, when we are short of money and have to pay bills, we create. When we are backed into a corner, we create.

Destination imagination provides the means by which we can avoid some corners. As a team member, it enhances, grows, and ignites the talents already hidden within you. In

In our classroom the time frame is broken into thinking time, creating time, and production time.

the classroom I provide the time, the necessity, and the tools to accomplish this goal. Then I stand back and let the kids do the wonderfully creative things they do.

Destination imagination is an all-encompassing invention

(graphic, design, and drama group) where students are placed in teams of five to seven people.

Each team is given a problem to solve within a specific time frame. They are supplied with tools such as a box of 20 items, a roll of masking tape, and a pair of scissors. They are to use *only* these items to complete the task. They get no outside help. Team members create, construct, and complete all items and activities by themselves. This theme is critically important. All parents can relate to this if you have ever helped with a project at home and the time is running out. The team members have to cut, glue, form, attach, and construct everything as a team.

In our classroom the time frame is broken into thinking time, creating time, and production time. Each team member has to have an active part in all three phases, including a speaking part in the presentation phase where the scoring is done.

Throughout the school year I incorporate “short snappers” into daily activities. These are one-minute activities where the students have to write or say a list of items based on a category, i.e., make a list of all the four-legged animals you can think of. This teaches them to categorize, which is a major science IRP goal and a very useful activity in enhancing creativity.

Team members are actively encouraged to help each other, to assist the shy members, to support the weaker skilled and to applaud every attempt. It is an incredibly positive event and can easily become a philosophy in daily living. Over time, team members learn to go home and say I'll help with the dishes or Let me do that for you. No one tells them to do this. It is not an assignment. It is a self-fulfilling idea.

In today's stress-filled classroom, where large student numbers, lack of supplies, and

ever-increasing demands on the teachers and the students is a daily event, remember these goals. Remember the philosophy behind destination imagination. Whatever you call it, use it. Encourage the behavior-problem student to be a team member. Encourage the reluctant parent to participate.

Team members are actively encouraged to help each other, to assist the shy members, to support the weaker skilled, and to applaud every attempt.

Phone home and tell the parents some good things about your class and their kids.

Teaching is one of the most creative professions in our world. Teachers learn to be “self-reinforcers” early in their careers. We learn, mostly on the job, to avoid those “corners.” Tenaciousness occurs daily. Faced with an overloaded classroom full of independent skills and individual learning goals, modified programs, and adapted learning styles, we are forced to create, often on a minute-by-minute basis.

Remember to encourage yourself. Teachers are fixers. We learn to make do with less. We learn to accomplish without proper supplies. We learn to construct and present because we are a conscientious lot. It is in our nature to provide the means to succeed. We do it because the goals need to be finished. The rungs on the ladder need to be built. We do it because we can see our students, as adults, facing the terrors of the real world.

We do it because we love teaching.

Greg Murray teaches at Eagle View Elementary School, Port Hardy.

Yours for the asking

Shoes of memory



Shoes of Memory explores the ceramic work of acclaimed British artist Jenny Stolzenberg. The exhibit will challenge students to examine the issues of representation, identity, individuality, confiscation, and loss as related to the Holocaust.

The 90-minute school program for Grades 8–12 includes a guided tour of the exhibit, and an art or social studies based interactive workshop. Pre-visit materials may be downloaded from the VHEC web site (www.vhec.org) or can be mailed upon request. The package includes background information on the Holocaust, a glossary of terms, and pre- and post-visit activities.

Admission is \$50 per class and can be booked through the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 604-264-0499, e-mail admin@vhec.org.

Income tax preparation and independent financial planning for union members

Working Enterprises Tax Services Ltd. is union owned and provides personal income tax and financial planning services for union members and their families in all regions of BC.

Rates for income tax preparation are set at 40 to 70% off competitors' rates. Most members pay a flat fee of only \$45 to prepare and electronically file their return. This rate applies to those who have seven or fewer information slips to process. Individuals who have more than seven slips, or more complicated returns, pay a little more.

During the past year, there have been numerous announcements by our federal politicians about changes to the *Income Tax Act*, starting with the budget speech in February 2005 and continuing through the economic update in November 2005 and of course during the recent federal election.

The changes announced affect *all taxpayers* with increases to the personal exemption rate and decreases in the base federal tax rate. Other important changes, such as the upcoming change to the dividend tax rate will affect many of you. To make certain you minimize the taxes you pay, make use of the tax and financial planning professionals at Working Enterprises.

Drop your documents off at our Vancouver or Kelowna office locations or fax, mail, or e-mail attachments. Contact us at 1-800-845-1181 or e-mail tax@wegroup.ca once you have all your documents. We will make the process easy for you.



Teacher Greg Murray with some of his Grade 5/6 class of 32 students at Eagle View Elementary School in Port Hardy.

AGM 2006 Agenda

March 11–14, 2006

FIRST SESSION
March 11, Saturday evening

7:00 p.m.
Welcome
First Nations recognition
Preliminaries:
a. Adoption of chairpersons, scrutineers, tellers, resolutions committee
b. Chairpersons' orientation session
c. Adoption of agenda
d. Adoption of 2005 AGM Minutes
e. Stewardship Report on 2005 AGM

President's report
Jinny Sims

Greetings/Comments
B.C. Federation of Labour
Jim Sinclair, president
Canadian Teachers' Federation
Winston Carter, president
Canadian Union of Public Employees BC Division
Barry O'Neill, president
B.C. School Trustees Association
Penny Tees, president
BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Kim Howland, president
BC College of Teachers
Dale Townsend, council chairperson
Special video presentation on the BCTF protest action, October 2005

9:30 p.m.
Election statements from candidates for table officer positions
Call for nominations

10:00 p.m.
Adjourn

SECOND SESSION
March 12, Sunday morning

9:00 a.m.
Leadership Report
– Presentation
– Recommendation 1
Constitution and By-laws
– Recommendation 2
Board of School Trustees, School Districts, and BC School Trustees Association
– Recommendation 15
Education Finance
– Resolution 116
Independent Schools
– Resolutions 134–135

12:30 p.m.—Lunch

THIRD SESSION
March 12, Sunday afternoon

2:00 p.m.
Education Policy
– Recommendation 27
– Accountability agenda (in-committee)
– Resolutions 117–122
Professional Development
– Recommendations 34–38
Teacher Education
– Resolution 150

4:15 p.m.
Report of the Executive Director
Ken Novakowski

4:30 p.m.
Election statements from candidates for member-at-large positions
Call for Nominations

5:00 p.m.
Adjourn

5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.
All candidates' meeting (main ballroom). All delegates invited.

FOURTH SESSION
March 13, Monday morning

9:00 a.m.
Guest speaker—*Stephen Lewis*
Special presentation

10:00 a.m.
Bargaining (in-committee)
– Reports
– Recommendations 10–14
– Resolutions 103–115

12:30 p.m. Lunch

FIFTH SESSION
March 13, Monday afternoon

2:00 p.m.
Bargaining (continued)

3:00 p.m.
Pensions
– Report
– Resolutions 136–138

4:00 p.m.
Code of Ethics
– Report from the task force
– Recommendations 17–26

Privatization and Commercialization
– Resolutions 139–142

Public Affairs
Resolutions 143–145

5:25 p.m.
Final call for nominations

5:30 p.m.
Adjourn

SIXTH SESSION
March 14, Tuesday morning

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
BALLOT DISTRIBUTION
For one hour, the election tellers will distribute ballots, one pad for each voting card, in the Prince of Wales Room (on the convention level). Each delegation is asked to assist by appointing one of its members to present all the delegation's cards, (including the LR cards) and to receive all its ballots individually.
No ballots will be distributed after the session has begun.
AGM Standing Rule 12.2 specifies that ballots will be given out only at the place and times specified on the agenda.

9:00 a.m.
Elections
BC Federation of Labour
– Recommendation 16
Health, Welfare, and Safety of Teachers
– Recommendations 32–33
– Resolutions 130–133
School Buildings, Grounds, and Facilities
– Recommendations 39–40

10:30 a.m.
Aboriginal Education
– Presentation
– Recommendations 3–8
Affirmative Action
– Recommendation 9
– Resolutions 101–102
Social Justice
– Recommendations 41–42
– Resolutions 146–149

12:15 p.m.
Committee Reports—Questions

12:30 p.m.
Lunch

SEVENTH SESSION
March 14, Tuesday afternoon

2:00 p.m.
Finance
Comments from the treasurer
Comments from the president
– Recommendations 28–31
– Resolutions 123–129

4:00 p.m.
Awards, Honorary membership, Recognition of retiring activists
Unfinished Business
Late Resolutions
New Resolutions
New Business

5:15 p.m.
Closing Courtesy Motion

5:30 p.m.
Adjourn

Please note: Evening sessions may be scheduled if required.

Special resolutions

Recommendation
That 13.2 be amended to read:
“No benefits shall be paid in respect of July or August. However, in the event that an adult educator, with a contract for services during July and August makes a claim, the plan administrator, with the Income Security Committee, has the authority to grant benefits during July and August.”

Resolution—Burnaby Teachers' Association
That Regulation 13.2, page 92, of the *Salary Indemnity Plan* (Short Term) Regulations be changed to read as follows:
No benefits shall be paid in respect of July and August with the exception of Adult Educators who work in July and/or August.

Resolution—Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association
That Regulation 13.2, page 92, of the *Salary Indemnity Plan* be amended by adding “with the exception of adult educators who work in July and/or August” to the end of the statement.

Recommendation
That By-law 5.4 (d) be amended by:
1. deleting “January 31, or” and “whichever is later” from the first line.
2. deleting the whole second line “If January 31 falls on a Sunday, nominations must be received by close of business on the next day.”

Recommendation
That By-law 7.8(b)ii be amended to read:
“impose a fine on a member except in the case of provincial collective strategy.”

Recommendation
That By-law 16 be amended by deleting the second paragraph and replacing it with the following:
“Complaints of an alleged breach by a member, of the Code of Ethics or of conduct harmful or prejudicial to the interests of the Federation may be submitted by any member having a legitimate interest in the complaint and not having available a more appropriate recourse.”

“Complaints of an alleged breach by a member, of the Code of Ethics with respect to relationships with students and discharging of professional duties may be submitted by any person having a legitimate interest in the complaint and not having available a more appropriate recourse.”

Recommendation
That Clause 2 of the *Code of Ethics* be amended to read:
The teacher respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare.
The teacher follows legal requirements in reporting child protection issues.

Recommendation
That Clause 5 of the *Code of Ethics* be amended to read:
The teacher directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private, and only then, after informing the colleague in writing of the intent to do so, may direct in confidence the criticism to appropriate individuals who are able to offer advice and assistance. *
It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow legal requirements or official protocols in reporting child protection issues.

*See 31.B.12. of the *Members' Guideto the BCTF*.



Candidates' statements

For President



Jinny Sims

We have begun a journey to achieve full, free collective bargaining rights, restoration of our stripped teaching and learning conditions, and a fair and reasonable salary increase. Our unity and collective strength led to a significant shift in attitude and expectations in BC, and we experienced overwhelming support for teachers and for public education. We know we are not alone. We are only part way there and must continue to fight for our profession, our students and our public education system.

We will also fight for our professional rights, including

our right to make professional judgments in terms of student learning. We know the government's accountability agenda is damaging to teaching and learning. We must focus the debate on the critical need for additional resources to meet the needs of every child, no matter where they live in this province .

I will continue to provide strong leadership, based on membership involvement and co-ordinated strategic action. We will continue to build allies and work with parents, labour, students, and others to build a strong and stable public education system and a just

society. It would be an honour to once again speak for the teachers of BC.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF President (2 yrs.), BCTF 1st Vice-president (2 yrs.), BCTF 2nd Vice-Ppresident (2 yrs.), BCTF Executive member-at-large (1 yr.), CTF alternate (2 yrs.), CTF delegate (3 yrs.), CTF director (3 yrs.), BCFed Education Committee (2 yrs.), Ministry for Children & Families (3 yrs.), Coalition for Public Education (3 yrs.), Social Justice (3 yrs.), PSA/PSAC (4 yrs.), Health & Safety (3 yrs.), Income Security (3 yrs.), Finance Cttee., Pensions, Summer conference

workshop presenter/facilitator, Advisory council of local presidents, pension plan training, Bargaining training; AGM delegate (12 yrs.), LR (5 yrs.). *Local:* Nanaimo President (3 yrs.), 1st VP (2 yrs.);, Bargaining ctte. & neg. team (7 yrs.), Grievance ctte. (6 yrs.); S/W member & chair (3 yrs.), ProD ctte. (2 yrs.), Program Against Racism (2 yrs.), Malaspina College partnership ctte. (2 yrs.), EAC advisory board (5 yrs.), Co-ordinator for multicultural curriculum (3), Facilitator for conflict resolution. *Teaching:* 25 yrs., English, social studies, counsellor. *Education:* B.Ed, UVic & Manchester, UK.

For First Vice-President



Irene Lanzinger

Through our actions last fall, teachers sent a strong message about the importance of funding public education and providing teachers with the support and resources they need to meet the needs of every child.

Through our united collective action we asserted our right to bargain and highlighted our need to be fairly compensated for the important work we do in public education. In spite of the courageous stand taken by teachers and the strong support from other unions, parents, and the public, we did not achieve all of our goals. Our challenge for the coming year is to use the

momentum and support we have built to achieve those goals.

We must continue our vigorous defense of teachers' professional autonomy and our opposition to the damaging impact of the persistent accountability agenda. Through our defense of public education and our broader commitment to social justice we strive through every aspect of our work to do our part to build a just and compassionate society.

I consider it an honour to be engaged in that work with teachers and promise my

continued commitment to the very important issues we face.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 1st Vice-president (2 yrs.), BCTF 2nd Vice-president (2 yrs.), Co-chief Negotiator Bargaining Team (2000–02), Advisory council of local presidents (3 yrs.), AGM delegate (8 yrs.), Summer conference (6 yrs.), Job action planning committee, LR (1 yr.), (alternate) (5 yrs.). *Local:* President (3 yrs.), Vice-president (2 yrs.), Member-at-large (2 yrs.), Staff rep (2 yrs.), Bargaining Committee (2 yrs.), Status of Women Committee (2 yrs.).

Teaching: Secondary (9 yrs.), Elementary (4 yrs.). *Education:* B.Sc. (UBC), Teacher Training (UBC), M.Sc (SFU)

For Second Vice-President



Susan Lambert

I truly believe the gains we made with our strike are immeasurable. The economic gains were one thing. The incredible respect for the profession that developed is quite another and as Paul Shaker says "no small matter." We changed the course of history in this province. And yet it is not enough. As you read this statement you are probably facing the very same teaching and learning conditions that drove you to the picket line in the first place.

It seems as though every component of the government policy known as the

"accountability agenda" is a disservice to public education. From the stripping of our agreements, to accountability contracts designed to de-professionalize teaching, to drive-by teacher supervision practices—every component has resulted in an insidious de-valuing of both teacher and learner autonomy. Promises were made at the end of our strike that have yet to be fulfilled. It is time again to get the attention of policy makers and to take action in defense of public education. We have a tremendous unity of purpose that will sustain us in the

challenges ahead. I would be honoured to continue meeting those challenges as a part of our strong leadership team.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 2nd Vice-president (2 yrs.), BCTF Executive member-at-large (1 yr.); AGM delegate (21 yrs.), Task Force on the Code of Ethics, Trainer/ facilitator in Namibia (8 sessions) and South Africa (1 session), Staff Rep Trainer (5 yrs.), WOW facilitator, Summer Conference Participant and workshop presenter, BCTF OSD/PD Administrative Staff (4 yrs.), Federation Appeals Board (2 yrs.). *Local:* (Prince Rupert):

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

For Member-at-Large



Marty Bowles

It has been an interesting year so far. It is going to be more interesting in the time to come. Teachers won the first round, but that was only the beginning. We have found our voices and have stood up for our profession in an historical action. But there is a lot more work left to do.

We should be on the verge of a bargaining breakthrough. I support the bargaining strategy of the BCTF, with the understanding that we must have enough money in the "Big Pot" to make local bargaining a realistic exercise.

I am passionate about Social Justice Issues and I am pleased

to see us take on the privatization agenda of the Liberal Government. Our local has been a strong supporter of First Nations teaching interests. Our Union understands the poverty issues so prevalent in our schools today and we have been innovative in our approach to help.

One advantage of teaching in a small local is that I have had the opportunity to teach almost every subject—I have coached every sport offered. This gives me a unique perspective to listen, to any teacher and understand from where they are coming from.

EXPERIENCE: *Local:* President of the Prince Rupert District Teachers' Union (1 yr.), Local Rep. for the PRDTU (1 yr.), Staff Rep. (3 yrs.), every union position in the local. *Teaching:* 27 years (Grades 5–12 in the public system, as a TOC, and on contract basis at Lester Pearson College of the Pacific and at UVic. *Education:* UVic, I have also been a member of CUPE, the BCGEU, and the United Auto Workers' Union.

For Member-at-Large



Jim Iker

We are the BCTF and proud to be teachers.
Our strength and passion comes from our daily work in our classrooms, locals, and Federation. This passion was evident in October as we stood firm in defense of our rights and public education.
Continued membership involvement, engagement of new members, and support for all locals is critical for a strong BCTF.
Supporting members in the classroom, defending our professional autonomy and changing the government accountability agenda are important.
I believe in leadership that promotes democratic processes,

seeks and heeds member input and provides pro-active strategies that help achieve our goals, and when necessary, stands up for our profession, students, and working people.
Through our united actions we took back our right to strike, achieved unprecedented public support, cracked the “0” mandate, put class size/composition on the public agenda and Learning Roundtable, and achieved local involvement in spending decisions.
By staying unified, we will improve teaching and learning conditions and achieve a fair salary increase.
We must continue to advocate for full scope collective

bargaining, funding for a strong public education system, and protection of our social safety net with our allies in Labour.
I ask for your continued support to work on your behalf.
I look forward to talking with you at the AGM.
EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Executive Member at Large (4 yrs.), Learning Roundtable, CTF AGM Delegate (3 yrs.), Bargaining Mobilization Committee Chair (1 yr.), Provincial Bargaining Team member—1st 2 rounds of Provincial Bargaining, GR/LR (12 yrs.), AGM delegate (18 yrs.), Local Presidents’ Advisory Committee (2 yrs.) ,Chair (1 yr.), BCTF Interim Bargaining

Structures Committee, Legislative Advisory Committee/team, Staff Rep Training, Summer Conference Participant (24 yrs.).
Local: President (14 yrs.), Bargaining Chair (2 yrs.), Chief Negotiator Local Bargaining (all 3 rounds), Bargaining Committee, WLC Chair (2 yrs.), Staff rep, District Health And Safety Committee Rep (4 yrs.), EAP District Committee (14 yrs.).
Teaching: 28 yrs. (full and part time), K/2/3/4/6/7—Learning Assistance, Counselling, Special Ed. *Education:* Honours BA McMaster, B.Ed Dalhousie, Various Counselling Courses, UVic.



Ritchie Kendrick

‘I am the BCTF!’ A great slogan and one our members displayed proudly during the long campaign. This statement is the very cornerstone of our Federation and the foundation of our strength and unity. It is important we never lose sight of what we are: a member-driven professional union. I will work to ensure that teachers’ voices continue to be heard whether they work in our urban centres or in the isolated regions of our province.
During our action in October, we stood firm on our values and inspired citizens of BC to share our goal of protecting

and improving public education.
Across the province teachers echoed the same sentiment; it wasn’t about the \$50! It was about standing up for our rights and the rights of all students. It was about being brave enough to stand up to a government that didn’t want to acknowledge the state of working and learning conditions in our schools.
We have earned the trust of the people of BC. I am proud of what we have achieved and I welcome the opportunity to build on this relationship as we continue to strengthen our stand

for public education and the rights of teachers.
EXPERIENCE: Executive member of SOTA/SOSTU (15 yrs.), local President (2 yrs.), Staff Rep (13 yrs.), PD Chair, Strike Committee Chair, PR Chair, Communications Chair, all committees. Zone meeting Rep (5 yrs.), AGM Delegate (4 yrs.), Summer Conference (2 yrs.), BCTF Public Education Conference (2 yrs.)
Teaching: Teacher-in Charge: Aboriginal Education (4 yrs.), BC Secondary Alternate (14 yrs.), Elementary (2 yrs.) and TOC (2 yrs.): UK Secondary (2 yrs.)

Education: Certificate of Education (Theatre Arts), University of Wales, Bangor, Wales, Bachelor of General Studies (English major), BC Open University (ongoing).



Kathleen Thomson

We live in times whereby the rights of teachers and students to a quality public education system are under open attack. We have had our collective agreement stripped of its most child-centered provisions; our freedom to bargain eroded; and our professional autonomy challenged. All this is taking place in an education system characterized by underfunding, an obsessive accountability agenda, and a climate increasingly conducive to greater teacher surveillance.
As an experienced Executive member, I am enormously proud of our collective decision last fall

to walk off the job and say: “Enough is enough.” Our defiance yielded some returns, not the least of which was a groundswell of parental support. But much remains to be done.
If re-elected as Member-at-Large, I promise to work unceasingly to achieve:
• improved salary and working conditions, a return of stripped provisions, and the right to strike.
• meaningful bargaining structures that enshrine local negotiations.
• action plans aimed at returning professional autonomy to teachers.

• an end to government’s agenda to run public schools through SPCs, site-based management, and a slavish adherence to quantitative performance goals.
Let’s return education to those who truly own it—the public, teachers and the kids we serve.
EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive member-at-large (6 yrs.), CTF delegate (5 yrs.), Staff pension plan advisory committee (2 yrs.), Negotiations training, bargaining conference (2 yrs.), Summer conference delegate and workshop presenter (9 yrs.), Chair Metro

West zone council (1 yr.), AGM delegate (12 yrs.).
Local: President (8 yrs.), Vice-president (1 yr.), grievance panel (2 yrs.), Staff Rep (5 yrs.), Negotiations, job action, advocacy committees, etc.
Community: Co-chair, Municipal planning/environment committees, SFU senate (2 yrs.).
Teaching: Secondary English, German, French (11 yrs.), SFU TA (2 yrs.).
Education: BA, PDP (SFU), PhD courses and comprehensives.



John Wadge

I can’t recall a time when our union, our profession, or public education has not faced some kind of threat. But for the last four years all three have faced an attack of unprecedented intensity. Clearly, the current government has a comprehensive plan that would see our union rendered powerless, our profession degraded, and public education turned over to the private sector.
We have met the challenges admirably, stopping the government’s attempt to control our profession through their take-over of the College. Now our professionalism is again

under attack from the accountability agenda. We must take this challenge head on as we did with the College issue.
We have taken back the right to strike and given the government pause.
But we now face the uncertainty of a new bargaining structure and quite likely restructured governance. We must be prepared to take back our bargaining rights regardless of the changes.
I draw on a depth of experience in union work that will serve the Federation well in our struggle. If elected I will be a tireless defender of our union,

our profession, and our public schools.
EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM Delegate, Local Representative, Summer Conference delegate and presenter.
Local: Surrey Teachers Association President (3 yrs.), Grievance Officer (3 yrs.), Bargaining Committee, Job Action Co-ordinator, Grievance Committee, Staff Rep., Staff Committee Chair.
Teaching: 24 yrs. Elementary, Secondary, Special Ed.



Val Windsor

My proudest moment as a teacher was in October, when teachers in this province rose with a single united voice to protest more than three years of repressive government actions and legislation. Throughout the job action, the BCTF Executive Committee worked tirelessly to provide crucial leadership, direction and support to members.
The issues that moved teachers to strike in October are far from settled and all members will work to ensure they remain at the forefront. Continued attacks on teacher professionalism and the

pervasive nature of the accountability agenda are two major issues among others that need to be addressed. We must also continue to work on involving our new members in the work of the Federation.
The BCTF Executive must continue to reflect the diverse views of all members to better enable the Federation to meet the challenges that teachers face today. As an activist and Executive member for the last two years, I have been a voice for classroom teachers and a voice for a strong and united Federation.

I would be proud to continue representing you as a Member at Large on the BCTF Executive Committee.
EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive Member at Large (2 yrs.), Local Rep (9 yrs.), BCTF AGM delegate (14 yrs.), Judicial Council (3 yrs.), Staff Rep Trainer (2 yrs.), CTF AGM delegate (4 yrs.), Organizing Committee CTF AGM Vancouver (1 yr.), G.A. Fergusson Award Trustee (5 yrs.)
Local: President (4 yrs.), 1st vice-President (3 yrs.), 2nd Vice-President (3 yrs.), Secretary (3 yrs.), Local Rep (9 yrs.),

Bargaining Chair (3 yrs.), and member (6 yrs.), Health and Safety Committee, Working and Learning Conditions Committee.
Teaching: 36 years in the profession, Grades 3 – 7.
Education: BA, BPBD, PDP SFU

Teachers' pension plan

Environmental, social and governance: Factors for investing

Most Canadian pension-plan sponsors still think of socially responsible investing (SRI) as a “screening framework” to eliminate investments in certain equities. Speaking at the University of Toronto’s Environmental Finance Workshop Series session entitled “Responsible Investing—will we reach a tipping point?” Susan McGeachie, of Innovest Strategic Value Advisors said that one of the reasons SRI is taking longer to be accepted in this country is confusion over the terminology. The confusion lies in the common perception that SRI is only achieved with negative screening. To better describe ethical investing, Jaqui Parchment, of Mercer Investment Consulting, said that the focus of SRI has shifted in recent years from ethical investing to something broader, which incorporates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into mainstream investments.

The Teachers’ Pension Plan is active in ESG activities. One such activity involved supporting a recent symposium. BC Investment Management Corporation (bcIMC), on behalf of the Teachers’ Pension Plan and the other public-sector pension plans, and in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment and the University of Victoria, hosted the “Climate Change and Responsible Investing Symposium” in September 2005. The focus of the symposium was to present the scientific aspect

bcIMC generally votes against issues such as excessive executive pay and slate voting for directors, votes in support of separate CEO and board chair positions, and thorough disclosure of social and environmental policies.

of climate change and the implications on institutional investing. Guest speakers included Dr. Greg Flato from Environment Canada, David Russell from the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change, United Kingdom, and Truman Semans from the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, United States. The symposium, chaired by Dr. Tom Pederson from the University of Victoria, generated constructive discussion and was well received. On behalf of the trustees of the Teachers’ Pension Plan, bcIMC recognizes that climate change will present both opportunities and risks to investment activity, and therefore seeks to remain informed of the relevant trends and issues in this area.

Through bcIMC, the Teachers’ Pension Plan participates in a real estate pool called Realpool. Recently Realpool received recognition for the excellence of its environmentally friendly

buildings. When the Building Owners’ and Managers’ Association (BOMA) announced the winners of the 2005 national awards in recognition of excellence in commercial real estate, Realpool took home awards for three of its office properties: Western Canadian Place in Calgary, Allstate Corporate Centre in Markham, and the Hatch building in Mississauga. The awards recognized excellence in property management, operations, resource conservation, environmental awareness, leasing, building design, customer service, and innovation.

Corporate engagement is another mechanism for applying ESG factors to investing. The Teachers’ Pension Plan, through bcIMC, encourages good corporate governance and corporate responsibility by voting at company AGMs. bcIMC generally votes against issues such as excessive executive pay and slate voting for directors, votes in support of separate CEO and board chair positions, and

...the Teachers’ Pension Plan is applying environmental, social, and governance factors to investing the pension fund.

thorough disclosure of social and environmental policies. As well, bcIMC meets privately with CEOs and management to promote positive change in corporate governance structures, labour relations, and environmental impact of company activities. As in teaching, the objective is to change behaviour rather than simply expelling the misbehaving student.

Doug Pearce, bcIMC’s CEO, has recently been appointed along with David Denison, the CEO of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, to the board of the Canadian Coalition for Good Governance (CCGG). The mission of this coalition is to represent Canadian institutional shareholders in the promotion of best corporate governance practices and to align the interests of boards and management with those of the shareholder. The appointment of Doug Pearce gives bcIMC, and therefore the Teachers’ Pension Plan, a stronger voice in helping to shape the corporate governance agenda in Canada. bcIMC is also a member of the Asian Corporate Governance Association and the International Corporate Governance Network.

These are examples of how the Teachers’ Pension Plan is applying environmental, social, and governance factors to investing the pension fund.

Teachers’ Pension Board of Trustees.



10 New BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 8504—High Tide, Low Tide by Gloria Snively, 46 p. ©2005. This coloring, story and activity book gives children a chance to explore the rocky shores at high and low tides. The story describes how the animals move, gather their food, protect themselves from predators and behave at high tide and at low tide. Included are 39 carefully researched and rendered drawings of barnacles, mussels, snails, sea stars, hermit crabs, shore crabs, tidepool sculpins, sea anemones, sea urchins, octopuses, seaweeds and shore birds. The story and thinking activities enable parents and teachers to help children understand basic seashore relationships such as tidal cycle, predator-prey, habitat, plankton, scavenger, how animals protect themselves from predators, from drying out at low tide, and how animals keep from being battered to death by waves. Grades K and up. \$11.95

2 LA 9174—Frindle by Rob Seath, 36 p. ©2005. This reading response for the novel *Frindle* by Andrew Clemente can be used with any classroom groupings, from individuals to whole class. It is effective for children on adapted or modified programs as well as those learning English as a second language. It is helpful for students who find written output to be a challenge and weaker readers are provided structure because most of the responses focus on critical story elements such as characters, setting, problems and plot. The responses can be photocopied for classroom use as overheads or for individual use. This resource includes open-ended responses, classification activities, analogies, puzzles and word searches and answers. Grades 3–5. \$20.

3 LA 9344—Caring for Young People’s Rights by Jan Nicol, Dan Kirk, and Roland Case, 126 p. ©2006. This resource fosters understanding of the nature and range of basic human rights and appreciation of the importance of protecting these rights. Human rights are personalized through real-life profiles of young people in a variety of developing countries. Students then translate the shortfalls in these young people’s daily lives into statements about the rights that everyone needs in order to enjoy a minimum quality of life. Students examine successful development projects by Canadian NGOs and then assume the role of development director in planning a project to secure the rights of one of the profiled young people that students have

read about. Includes seven critical challenges with suggested activities: judging quality of life, drawing the line on rights, refining the class charter, reporting on the status of rights, getting the word out, deciding who to support, and designing a development project. Includes blackline masters. Grades 4–12. \$29.95

4 LA 9929—Learning Assistance: Heading in to the Future by the Learning Assistance Teachers’ Association, 88 p. This summer 2004 issue of LATA’s *The Vital Link* Journal, volume 9, number 2, features articles and viewpoints from learning assistance teachers. Grades K–12.

5 LA 8522—Climate Change Action Kit—Primary produced by FORED BC, ©2006. This resource kit produced by FORED BC in co-operation with government agencies, business, NGOs and others, contains original lesson plans, age-appropriate activities, experiments and handbooks to help students track their own climate change emissions and to see how easy it is to reduce emissions around their homes and schools. Students are introduced to concepts including global warming, greenhouse gases, and alternative energy sources such as wind power among others. Curriculum links and two pages of helpful websites are included. Grades K–3. \$30.

6 LA 9512—Climate Change Action Kit—Intermediate produced by FORED BC, ©2006. This resource kit produced by FORED BC in co-operation with government agencies, business, NGOs and others, contains original lesson plans, a large colorful activity poster, fact sheets, resource booklets and pamphlets. Students will track their own climate change emissions and see how easy it is to reduce emissions around their homes and schools. Students graph weather patterns and explore climate change impacts in their communities and on wildlife populations. Curriculum links and two pages of helpful websites are also included. Grades 4–7. \$38.

7 LA 4092—Climate Change Action Kit—Secondary produced by FORED BC, ©2006. This resource kit produced by FORED BC in co-operation with government agencies, business, NGOs and others, contains original lesson plans, resource information pamphlets, activities, fact sheets and a large colorful activity poster. Students track their own climate change emissions and see how easy it is to reduce emissions around their homes and schools. Students will be introduced to concepts such as ozone layer and renewable resources.

They will conduct a media analysis of climate change articles with opposing views and participate in a debate. Curriculum links and two pages of helpful websites are included. Grades 8–12. \$38.

8 LAF9916—100 trucs pour améliorer vos relations avec les enfants Danie Beaulieu, 48 p. ©2002. Une synthèse sur les attitudes et stratégies éducatives pour relever les défis du quotidien avec les enfants ainsi que des situations exceptionnelles. S’adresse aux adultes travaillant avec des jeunes jusqu’à 11 ans. M-6. \$13.95

9 LAF9925—Le Métaguide : un outil et des stratégies pour apprendre à apprendre, Antonio Gravel, Clément Robillard et Stéphane Robitaille, 24 p. ©1995. Le Métaguide sert à appuyer le jeune à l’intermédiaire et au secondaire dans son apprentissage en lui fournissant des stratégies pour mieux étudier, mieux s’organiser, mieux planifier, gérer et présenter ses apprentissages. La beauté du Métaguide s’est qu’il fournit l’échafaudage tout en laissant l’élève et l’enseignant décider le contenu. 6e à 10e année. \$16.95

10 LAF9926—Coopérer pour réussir : Scénarios d’activités coopératives pour développer des compétences, M. Sabourin, L. Bernard, M-F Duchesneau, H. Fugère, H., S. Ladouceur, 170 p. ©2002. Malgré que cet ouvrage utilise les termes de la réforme scolaire au Québec, sa présentation Claire et structurée permettrait aux enseignants du primaire de promouvoir des activités de coopération tout en visant des compétences disciplinaires et des compétences transversales. Ce livre contient de nombreuses fiches reproductibles facilitant l’interaction entre les jeunes en équipe. M–3 \$48.95

More curriculum resources and information are available at www.bcalmer.ca.

To order any of the above lesson aids, enclose a cheque payable to the BCTF or authorized purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service 100-550 West 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 or telephone 604-871-2180 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, 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; 9:00-5:00 Tues. to Fri. during July and Aug.; 9:00-12:00 on Sat. during Sept., Oct., Jan., and Feb. bctf.ca/LessonAids.

Take education out of GATS, teachers urge

In a statement released December 13, 2005, delegations to the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, the global union representing more than 29 million teachers and education workers is calling on member countries to remove education services from the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

“The GATS is a commercial agreement designed to expand business opportunities for investors...”

“Because there are so many unanswered questions about the impact of GATS on education, and because there is so much at stake, we believe all members must adopt a precautionary approach. They must neither make nor seek any commitments that constrain the rights of government to regulate education as they see fit,

including research, audio-visual services, and libraries,” stated Thulas Nxesi, president of Education International (EI).

The statement, adopted by participants to EI’s higher education and research meeting last week in Melbourne, Australia, also recommends that countries make no commitments on private education services.

“As the boundary between public and private education becomes increasingly blurred in many countries, the danger is that commitments taken in private education could easily expose the public system,” explained Nxesi.

Education International is also concerned about proposals for compulsory benchmarking and plurilateral approaches to the services negotiations. According to Nxesi, such changes would put undue pressure on developing countries and coerce them into making more extensive commitments in sensitive areas like education and other public services.

In addition, Thulas Nxesi says

teachers are deeply disturbed by the recent New Zealand-led establishment of a “friends of education exports” group that is specifically targeting education services.

“...Education, by contrast, is a human right that serves the public interest and must not be treated as a commodity subject to commercial trade rules.”

“We believe strongly that, at its root, GATS is in conflict with educational values. The GATS is a commercial agreement designed to expand business opportunities for investors. Education, by contrast, is a human right that serves the public interest and must not be treated as a commodity subject to commercial trade rules,” said Nxesi.

Canadian Teachers’ Federation

Pension seminars 2005-06

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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
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May 6, 2006	Nelson	BW Baker Street Inn

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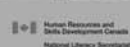
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MISCELLANEOUS

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TEACHER EXCHANGE. Hobart, Tasmania. I am seeking a 1-year teacher exchange to Vancouver for 2007. I teach English, History, and French at Newtown High (boys), an excellent school. Would you like to spend a year in a beautiful city? kate.black@education.tas.gov.au

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EXAM PREP SERVICE for university students, www.prep101.com, seeks dynamic lecturers in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Math, and Physics in Vancouver. Positions are part-time on weekends and remuneration is excellent. Interested? E-mail resume to andy@prep101.com or phone 778-786-3263 for more info.

TEACHER EXCHANGE. Toronto Grade 1 teacher wants exchange with teacher in Prince George for next year. Downtown arts/cafe district, school emphasizes art with much parent support. I have a 1 bd. condo in downtown, new building, close to lake and transit, concierge service, gym, pool, and whirlpool. Would like an area in Prince George serviced by transit. Contact: cherylp02@hotmail.com.

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TEACHER'S GUIDE to Miracle at Willowcreek \$19.95, Novel \$9.95. Order from Burns Bog Conservation Society, 4-7953 120th Street, Delta, BC V4C 6P6, phone 604-572-0373 or 1-888-850-6264.

BRAIN COACH: STUCK KIDS? Unmotivated classes? Does your school or district need a boost? LA teacher, 30 yrs. experience, brain gym coach, brain-based learning facilitator presents useful, practical, meaningful pro-d for new and veteran teachers. Magical Brain presentations in over 25 BC districts plus numerous conferences over last 8 yrs. Find out how the brain learns best. www.braincoach.ca. **TEACHING WEATHER?** Finally! A cohesive, comprehensive package of well-planned lessons and resources for teaching the foundations of weather science. Designed for BC's new science curriculum! "Destination Discovery: The Weather Zone" www.discoverysciencelearning.com

CANADA: A PEOPLE'S HISTORY viewing guides to assist students using this video series. Download sample materials at www.bcguidebooks.ca.

CIVICS 11 reading guides for students using the texts *Canadian by Conviction* and *Civics: Participating in a Democratic Society*. Download sample materials at www.bcguidebooks.ca.

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PD CALENDAR

MARCH 2006

2–4 Vancouver. SFU Faculty of Education Conference, Teacher Development: The Key to Education in the 21st Century, SFU's Faculty of Education celebrates 40 years of educating teachers to touch the future. An international conference featuring Stephen Lewis, Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Kenneth Zeichner and Rob Tierney, Hyatt Regency Vancouver Contact Josh Coward at jcoward@sfu.ca or 604-291-4344.

2–4 Vancouver. International Conference on Teacher Development: The Key to Education in the 21st Century. Hyatt Regency Hotel. Hosted by SFU's Faculty of Education. Presenters: Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Ken Zeichner, Rob Tierney, Stephen Lewis, and more. Flyer online at www.tdevconference.ca/sept16flyer.pdf, web site: www.tdevconference.ca.

3 Prince George. Educational Spring Fling 2nd North Central Conference. Keynote Speaker: Carol Boothroyd. Partially supported by a grant from the BCTF. Contact Deb Vandal at dvandal@sd57.bc.ca, or 250-562-7214. Web site web.bctf.bc.ca/locals/Local57/index.shtml.

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, or visit bctf.bc.ca/psas/SEA.

24–25 Richmond. Radisson President Hotel & Suites. The conference is a PD opportunity designed specifically for new teachers (those in their first five years of teaching) and for student teachers. Registration Feb. 1 to March 10 on a first-come, first-served basis. Conference details and registration forms will be available on our web site February 1, 2006. Cost: \$70 (teachers), \$35 (students). Contact Ghislaine Varin, gvarin@bctf.ca or 604-971-1844.

APRIL 2006

20–22 Coquitlam. Encompass 2006 Conference, Celebrating Social Emotional Learning and Academic Success, with keynote speaker Roy Henry Vickers, featured speakers Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl, Dr. Shelley Hymel, Dr. Martin Brokenleg, Dr. Gordon Neufeld, Lesra Martin, Marc Kielburger, Bruce Wellman, Raffi, and 50 to 60 related workshops, Terry Fox Secondary School. Registration information online February 2006. Contact Gerry Lush, 604-936-9971, pd43@bctf.ca.

28 Vancouver. FREE! UBC Faculty of Forestry presents: Forestry: Science made practical. Focus on materials and ideas to match high school science learning outcomes. FREE lunch provided. For more information, or to register, please contact Lesley Fettes at 604-827-5195 or lesley.fettes@ubc.ca by March 31, 2006.

MAY 2006

4–6 Vancouver. Second National Biennial Conference on Late Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Navigating the Rapids: Doing What Works in Practice—designing optimal environments for the social, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of individuals with FASD, The Coast Hotel and Conference Centre. Contact Leanne Fuhr, 604-822-2801, ipinfo@interchange.ubc.ca, www.interprofessional.ubc.ca.

6 Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices 2006, 9th Annual Conference. Teachers from different educational contexts convene at UBC to share their investigations, understandings and questions. Call for Proposals—Share Your Classroom Inquiries. Submission deadline: March 10, 2006. Scarfe Education Building, 2125 Main Mall, UBC. Contact Judy Paley, 604-822-2733, judy.paley@ubc.ca, www.eplt.educ.ubc.ca/workshops/

11–13 Whistler. B.C. Science Teachers' Association Conference Catalyst 2006, with Dr. Joe Schwarcz, of McGill University and Discovery's Daily Planet. Contact David Barnum, dbarnum@dccnet.com, or visit bcscta.ca.

12 Whistler. Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association (PITA) Regional Miniconference in conjunction with the science teachers' association conference, with presenter Dawn Reithaug. \$85. Contact Ray Myrtle, 604-224-3388, f: 604-224-5754, rmyrtle@canada.com.

JUNE 2006

1–13 Vancouver. Maternal Child Youth Conference 2006: Optimizing the Care of Mothers, Children, and Youth, sponsored by UBC Interprofessional Continuing Ed. Participants will learn about evidence-based programs or services from across the country and strategies for linking hospital and community. Abstracts accepted until June 15, 2005. Contact 604-822-2801, ipinfo@interchange.ubc.ca, interprofessional.ubc.ca.

25–27 Vancouver. Peace Education Forum, Educating a Generation To Create a Culture of Peace, UBC. Contact Jane Turner, jturner@bctf.ca.

JULY 2006

3–20 Quebec City. Institut de Français, UBC – Québec, French Bursary Program for Teachers. This French immersion program is intended for all teachers and administrators interested in learning or improving their French language skills. www.frenchcentre.ubc.ca/quebec or toll-free 1-866-528-7485

July 27–August 8 China. Peace & Reconciliation Study Tour to China for Canadian Teachers. An excellent professional development opportunity supported by BC Social Studies Teachers' Association. The Study Tour facilitates selected teachers to have better understanding of the cultural and historical background of China during the Asia-Pacific War (1931–1945) through meeting survivors and historians, as well as visiting museums and historical sites in five cities. The tour organizer covers all ground costs inside China while teachers need only to take care of their own international travel costs between Canada and China. Application deadline: March 15, 2006. Contact Thekla Lit at 604-436-3002, bcalpha@shaw.ca, <http://alpha-canada.org/StudyTour>.

OCTOBER 2006

20 Vancouver. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Regional Conference, Inclusionary Practices: Building a Community of Learners in Our Classrooms, with Vianne Timmons, Ph.D. Contact Alan Peterson, 250-377-2226, or e-mail lataconference@hotmail.com.

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



Teaching peace

by Kim Meredith

In June, individuals and organizations working for peace around the globe will gather in Vancouver for the World Peace Forum 2006. In conjunction with the forum, the BC Teachers' Federation is organizing an International Peace Education Conference to be held at the University of British Columbia, June 25–27, 2006.

...over 2,000 students, teachers, elders, and citizens with interests in pre-school to post-secondary education will come together to discuss, create, and disperse a curriculum of peace.

For BC teachers, our students, and our communities, this is a *teachable moment* for peace.

As a student teacher just about to begin my practicum in BC's Lower Mainland, I recognize that this is a particularly exciting time to be a part of the education profession. We are living in a decade declared by the United Nations as the Decade for Peace, in a country that prides itself as a keeper of peace, and in a city appointed as an International Messenger City of Peace. These designations are as meaningful or as meaningless as society chooses to make them. As teachers, we are in the position to make that difference.

Leading up to the conference, we can engage our students in a

dialogue of peace and challenge them to create their own definitions of a peaceful world. What would that world look like? What are the barriers that are preventing us from living in that world now? What can we do to overcome those barriers?

At the conference itself, over 2,000 students, teachers, elders, and citizens with interests in pre-school to post-secondary education will come together to discuss, create, and disperse a curriculum of peace. Through plenary sessions, workshops, keynote addresses, and informal discussion groups, we will move closer to achieving the conference's aim of transforming society by seeking answers to the question, "How, through education, are we going to get the world we want?"

The International Peace Education Conference provides a unique opportunity to connect with peace educators from around the globe. Ultimately, it will be our students and communities that benefit as

The International Peace Education Conference provides a unique opportunity to connect with peace educators from around the globe.

BC's teachers join this network of peace. I expect that the insight and motivation gained from this experience will inspire my teaching for years to come.

Registration and program information are now available at

www.worldpeaceforum.ca. Visit the site today to find out how to participate in pre-conference initiatives and how to begin embracing our teachable moment of peace.

Kim Meredith is a UBC student teacher doing her practise teaching in Richmond.

For information about the Peace Education Conference, contact Kim Meredith or Jamie Beck at practicingpeace@mac.com.

Forest of peace: A lesson idea

Help us create a forest of peace, at this year's World Peace Forum.

How?

Have your students write messages of peace on maple leaf paper cutouts. Decorate them and hang them on a tree.

What kind of tree?

The design of your tree is up to you and your students. It could be a freestanding fake tree, a painted tree on a cardboard display, or even one on a simple piece of poster paper. The possibilities are as limitless as your students' imagination.

Why maple leaves?

Your peace tree will be displayed among those from other schools in a forest of peace, at the 2006 World Peace Forum. At the forum's conclusion, the leaves will be gently removed from the trees and donated to the peace boat, a ship that sails around the world transporting messages of peace and volunteering for peaceful organizations worldwide.

What then?

The peace boat will drop off the leaves at schools, community organizations, or anywhere else where people are receptive to messages of peace. If your students have included contact information, maybe they will hear from a penpal in another country like Japan, Vietnam, or Jordan. Though of course no response can be guaranteed, students may enjoy sending out a "message in a bottle."

Peace forum shaken, but not deterred

On Thursday February 2, 2006, Vancouver City Council narrowly passed a motion rescinding their support for the Peace Messenger cities and the Mayors for Peace. While this is not a death blow to the World Peace Forum, it will make organizing the forum more difficult. However, the organizers of the World Peace Forum are committed to try to overcome the loss of Vancouver Council support and make the forum happen in June as planned. Organizers will turn to other municipalities to step in to the vacuum left by city council and to the local, national, and international community to make up the funding shortfall.

Already individuals and organizations are stepping forward to help the Peace Forum meet its funding requirements. Ian Graham, a Quaker peace activist from Burlington, Ontario, donated \$10,000 after hearing of Vancouver City Council's decision to flip flop on the funding of the mayor's

meeting. Local association presidents, PD chairs, and social justice contacts have been contacted by BCTF President Jinny Sims asking for locals to make donations and sponsor teachers' attendance at the Peace Education Conference. Local communities can also fundraise to help make the forum a reality.

Organizers are encouraging all communities to "Give Peace a Dance," a way to have fun and fundraise at the same time. Charitable donations to the World Peace Forum can be made through the peace forum web site at www.worldpeaceforum.ca. Donations to the BCTF International Peace Education Conference can be sent to the BCTF, attention Larry Kuehn.

– Jane Turner

Registration

Early Bird registration (before April 30, 2006)

Full week: \$175

Full week: fixed-income seniors and students: \$100

Registration after May 1, 2006

Full week: \$225; Full week/fixed-income seniors and students: \$150

Daily Rates (No Early Bird Rate)

\$50 a day

Fixed income seniors and students: \$30 a day

Field-trip rate, Monday, June 26

International Peace Education Conference only: \$5 per student (K–12 students must be accompanied by teacher/supervisors)

Peace Raven by Corrine Hunt, Gwa'wina.