

# Teacher

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*Almost 550 delegates attend the 2006 BCTF Summer Conference at UBC in August. The conference opened with a First Nations greeting by Bob Baker and a speech by Jinny Sims. Charity Peal and Lillian Lincoln attend as delegates from Nisga'a.*

## Columns

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# Working together for public education

by Jinny Sims

**W**hat a difference a year makes! In some ways it seems like only yesterday that we were preparing to take a strike vote as schools opened last September. In others, it seems like another lifetime. We had two strike votes, the beginning of limited job action, the imposition of a contract and a two-week provincial shut down, all within the first six weeks of school opening. That courageous stand was overwhelmingly supported by parents, by labour, both organized and unorganized, and the business community. We received support from around the world. During that time we learned that when we talk to each other, when we spend time with each other, and when we learn what is happening in each other's classrooms, we gain strength.

*We made gains last fall and again in June when we negotiated a fair increase for teachers over the next five years.*

This fall we are reaping the benefits of taking a stand. Together, we changed the political landscape of our province. The government learned that it could no longer impose conditions of employment and changed its approach to public-sector bargaining.

We made gains last fall and again in June when we

negotiated a fair increase for teachers over the next five years. You can read about the specific improvements in Irene Lanzinger's article on page 3. However, now that our collective agreement has been resolved for the next five years, we have an opportunity and a challenge—to work with the provincial government and our other education partners to build, support, and improve the excellent public education system we have in this province.

Our first collective challenge will be to ensure the proper implementation of the class size and composition improvements introduced in Bill 33 last spring. Bill 33 didn't just appear out of thin air. It came from the Learning Round Table and the round table came from our stand to protect students' learning conditions. Everyone now knows about class size and class composition. However, we still need to advocate for and achieve full funding for Bill 33 so that all programs and services in schools are maintained and improved. The Learning Round Table gives us a vehicle to address this issue and ongoing issues related to improvements in the classroom conditions in BC schools.

At our Annual General Meeting in March, delegates decided it was time to challenge the accountability agenda that government has been advancing over the past number of years. The focus on standardized testing and student achievement has replaced an emphasis on teaching and learning in our schools. Our AGM said it is time to reverse that and to work toward an education system that

recognizes that testing and evaluation have a role to play in the learning process but that our current obsession with testing is wrong. Teachers and the BCTF have been cut out of any influence in the direction education has been taking in this province over the past five

*When we work together we can make improvements for our students, our profession, and public education. Together we will tackle our challenges and opportunities so that we work with others to build a just civil society.*

years. It's time that changed. A public education system needs to have the full benefit of our professional experience if it is to serve the interests of the broader society that includes all students and communities.

The emphasis on testing in our public schools is but one more aspect of the move to privatize public education. The commercialization of our schools as evidenced by the Canadian Teachers' Federation survey of all Canadian schools last spring has to be reversed. And the increased reliance of schools on school fees has to end. We need to rededicate our profession and our union to work toward a public school system that is truly free to all

students and is free of the commercial intrusions into the lives of our students while they attend school.

Our schools also reflect the social problems that we experience in our communities and in broader society—problems like poverty and racism. We need to develop programs through our union that help us collectively address those issues in our schools and to develop and implement teaching strategies that build understanding and inclusivity at every level of social interaction.

As in other initiatives, we have to seek the help of government and other education partners to take on these challenges.

The issues and concerns I have mentioned are not unique to BC or even to Canada. Teachers in other provinces and other countries are facing many of the same circumstances with respect to government-driven accountability agendas, the threat of commercialism and privatization and the social problems that students and teachers face every day. Our challenge is to build a strong and healthy public education system in this province, which means taking on many of these issues. It means finding allies to work with us in our communities and provincially. When we work together we can make improvements for our students, for our profession, and for public education. Together we will tackle our challenges and opportunities so that we work with others to build a just and civil society.

*Jinny Sims is the BCTF president.*

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## President's message



**Jinny Sims**

What a school year! Over the last 12 months teachers of this province voted to stand up to the state to defend our rights, our students' learning conditions, and fair and reasonable salary increases.

The support we received from parents, our communities, and from working people was tremendous. Teachers across Canada and around the world supported our historic stand.

We continued to pursue our goals through the bargaining process and every other venue we could find. We are now proud members of the BC Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress. These affiliations will provide us with the opportunities to tackle major issues for workers' rights everywhere, and will ensure the support of labour in our continuing struggle for our students' right to a quality public education.

On June 30 we signed an agreement-in-committee and this September we ratified a negotiated settlement. What a feat! Did we achieve all of our goals? Absolutely not. Did we make significant progress? Absolutely, yes! We exercised our rights and we forced this government to acknowledge that student learning conditions need to be addressed.

Bill 33 is a baby step in the right direction, and the settlement begins to address the economic welfare of our teachers. All of our gains are due to the passion, courage, and commitment of our members. When we take a collective stand, we make gains. Over the last 12 months BCTF members determined our actions in six provincial votes.

Together we exercised our rights and took a stand. You are my heroes, and I have never been more proud to be a teacher.

What a year!

### Troops provide security

I am delighted to read in *Teacher* the interest in educating to create a culture of peace. My hope is that all teachers will make peace education a high priority in their classrooms.

While traveling in Russia we saw a newspaper photo of a young woman in a nearby border town in Afghanistan who had had her right hand cut off by the Taliban. Her "crime" was reading a book in her own home.

I cannot agree that Canada is "a combatant nation" as Jane Turner has labeled our country. Canada is to be commended for their difficult, delicate role in attempting to maintain law and order in Afghanistan so a just and civil society can eventually establish itself there. Our troops are there to protect the public from the Taliban, who are largely a group of insecure, uneducated thugs who used Islam as an excuse to impose its

own arbitrary laws on the people. When in power the Taliban's chief resource was its ruthlessness. Arbitrary assassinations, arbitrary confiscations of property, and the most heinous treatment of women eventually reduced Afghanistan to a country of fear and squalor. The industrious people and the educated people either left the country or retreated into subjugated silence. Let us all hope with Canada's help a new Afghanistan will be born with a populace that will be able to freely criticize their government as Jane Turner has criticized hers.

**Muriel Walton**  
Retired teacher and chair of the Community Advisory Committee, Mir Centre for Peace Education, Selkirk College, Castlegar

### Teaching peace is vital

As a retired Kindergarten teacher I was impressed by Jane Turner's article in the recent *Teacher*, entitled "Teaching

peace is more important than ever." I agree with Turner that it is vital for teachers to learn as much as possible about incorporating peace education into their curriculum. Attitudes and values are developed early in life.

When I was teaching, part of the curriculum focused on social responsibility. For me, teaching peace was an essential aspect of that goal. Our classroom became a war-toy-free zone and children and parents responded favourably. One day, in moving around the classroom, I overheard an interesting encounter in the block centre. A child began to use a block as a gun, and another child said, "Don't you know this is a war-toy-free zone?" The 'gun' was replaced by more creative play!

Blessings to all peace advocates in the classroom—both large and small.

**Arlene Krupp**  
Abbotsford

### BCTF web site redesign

The BCTF web site will have a new look later this fall. The Federation initiated this project in response to feedback from members and local leaders about what they wanted to find on [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca) and how the site could better serve their needs.

As a result of the re-organization, the BCTF URLs cited in this issue of the *Teacher* may change when the new web site is launched in the fall. If you are not able to easily locate the information, please e-mail [dbroome@bctf.ca](mailto:dbroome@bctf.ca) for assistance.

### Not an urban legend

In the May/June 2006 issue of *Teacher*, we printed a short piece entitled "What do you make?" with no credit line. Several people contacted us to set us straight.

This was a "version" of a poem written by Taylor Mali, a New York teacher. You can read the whole unedited version of his poem at [www.taylormali.com/index.cfm?webid=13](http://www.taylormali.com/index.cfm?webid=13).

### BCTF communications wins awards

This past year was a busy one for the communications and campaigns staff at the BCTF. They were rewarded by their peers, the Canadian Educational Press Association for the following:

- Writing—News Story: Nancy Knickerbocker for "We are available 24/7"—*Teacher* Newsmagazine, Nov./Dec. 2005
- Media Campaigns—Web site Communication: Communications and Campaigns Division, "A message from BCTF President Jinny Sims"—BCTF web site
- Visual Communications—Photography: Peter Owens, "We are available 24/7"—*Teacher* Newsmagazine, Nov./Dec. 2005

### BCTF President elected to national position

Jinny Sims, president of the BC Teachers' Federation, has been elected as one of four vice-presidents of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Sims will help represent 215,000 teachers in 17 provincial and territorial member organizations and affiliates.

Sims said, "Public education is the cornerstone of our democracy, and teachers have to be prepared to take on the phoney 'accountability agenda.' We have to assert our professionalism. We have to ensure the joy of teaching and learning that brought us to this amazing teaching profession."

The CTF assists teacher organizations in difficult times: the strength and unity of 215,000 teachers provide a formidable force for any government. "The CTF has been active on a wide range of issues that affect teachers and education," said Sims.

- Design & Layout: Karen Steel, "Taking a Stand" poster, BCTF Graphics Department

Also, NOW Communications and the BCTF have been the joint recipients of several awards for their work. The television spot "Taking" won a Bronze medal in the political broadcast category at the 2006 Summit International Creative Awards held last April. The Summit Awards are an international creative competition for a wide range of categories with entries from 26 countries.

We also won a Gold medal in the International Television category at the 2006 Pollie Awards for the television spot "Most Devastating."

—Kathleen Smith

## BCTF 90 years old



CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES/SGM48

*Teachers met at Vancouver's Dawson School, October 28, 1916 to discuss organizing a union that would represent the interests of public school teachers in British Columbia.*

by Ken Novakowski

Ninety years ago on October 28, 1916, teachers from Vancouver, North Vancouver, South Vancouver, Point Grey, and Victoria met at Dawson School in Vancouver to discuss organizing a union that would represent the interests of public school teachers in British Columbia. The meeting was organized by George Lister, a Vancouver teacher who went on to be the first president of the BC Teachers' Federation. The new organization held its first annual meeting on January 4, 1917, at King Edward Secondary School in Vancouver. Prior to the formation of the BCTF, teachers had no organization to represent them or their interests as they were employed by 744 separate school districts.

With clear objectives of improving the economic welfare of teachers and dealing with their professional concerns, the new BCTF also assumed a mandate to promote the cause of public education. Those overarching goals still constitute the central core of BCTF work to this day, in spite of failed attempts by numerous provincial governments to split and divide us.

This year we will be celebrating the 90th birthday of the BCTF. In previous articles in the *Teacher* Newsmagazine over the past five or six years, and in my annual reports to delegates at the Annual General Meeting, I have recounted various aspects of our history in an attempt to relate our past experiences to our current struggles. I'm hoping to include an article in each issue of the newsmagazine this year that continues that pattern and provides members with a window on our organizational past.

*Ken Novakowski is the BCTF's executive director.*

Sims has previous experience with the CTF, having served as a director. Her election victory follows on the heels of victory at home a week earlier when she led the BCTF to a successfully negotiated settlement for BC's 38,000 public school teachers.

—Yvonne Eamor

### Run for the Cure October 1, 2006

The BC Teachers' Federation is proud to support the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation Run for the Cure, Sunday October 1, 2006. Teachers all around the province participate in the largest single-day volunteer event in Canada.

Here's how you can register:

- Register online at [www.cbcf.org](http://www.cbcf.org). A fast and secure step-by-step registration process. Donors can easily support you online and you can also track your fundraising success.
- Register on run day. Bring your completed registration, donation forms, and your donations to the run location on Sunday, October 1. Come early to avoid the rush.

For more information, go to [www.cbcf.org](http://www.cbcf.org).

—Sylvia Bishop



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# Benefits of our new agreement

by Irene Lanzinger

The 2005–06 school year was definitely an eventful one for BC teachers—two strike votes, a two-week strike, court challenges, rulings and fines, ad campaigns, and lots of news coverage. It was a year that will go down in history. Teachers demonstrated an unprecedented degree of courage, strength, and unity as they defended rights that had been so sadly eroded over the past few years.

The result of the actions of teachers—the Ready recommendations and the negotiated settlement in June—will bring significant gains for teachers over the next five years.

## Salary

Ready allocated 2% of teachers' salary, or \$40 million, for salary harmonization. The cost of the salary increase negotiated in June is 16% of teachers' salary; this represents the basic increases of 2.5% for the first four years, 2.0% for the fifth year, the amount needed for increases of 2.5 to 3.0% to the top of the grid in 2008, and the 2.0% salary indemnity allowance. The resulting 18% is a good estimate of the average increase to teachers' salaries and allowances as a result of the work we did together in the past year, though actual amounts will vary. Many teachers will have increases of more than 18% because they will benefit from harmonization.

Salary harmonization benefited districts that had lower salary scales. These lower salaries resulted from arbitration rulings in the 1980's and differences in local bargaining between 1988 and 1993. The teachers who benefited least from harmonization were teachers paid at maximum salaries and teachers in isolated areas of the province who had higher salaries in order to be able to recruit and retain teachers. Both of these issues were addressed in the agreement negotiated in June.

A further harmonization was negotiated in June that will have the impact of increasing the

**Teachers demonstrated an unprecedented degree of courage, strength, and unity as they defended rights that had been so sadly eroded over the past few years.**

maximum positions on scales by 2.5% to 3.0%. The amount varies to provide a further degree of harmonization at the top of the scales. Increasing maximum positions on salary scales is important because the majority of teachers are on maximum and we spend the majority of our careers at that salary position. Also, our pensions are based on our salaries in our final years of teaching when we are on maximum salary.

Harmonization diminishes the ability of remote areas to recruit teachers with higher salaries. The agreement negotiated in June addresses this concern. In 11 districts teachers will receive a \$2,200 annual allowance. The

11 districts are: Central Coast, Haida Gwaii, Prince Rupert, Peace River South, Peace River North, Fort Nelson, Coast Mountain, Vancouver Island North, Stikine, Nechako Lakes, and Nisga'a. Also, in the salary increases to the top of scales in 2008 all of these districts will automatically get a 3.0% increase. The increase will not produce any further harmonization in those isolated districts. A fund of \$3.5 million will allow the BCTF and BCPSEA to identify other areas of the province that need higher salaries to recruit and retain teachers.

Several other benefits of harmonization apply to many teachers. Every district will now have a 5+ scale for teachers with work beyond their undergraduate degree and teaching qualification. Information will be available in September with regard to the process for application and placement onto the new scales.

In addition, no salary scale in the province will be greater than 10 steps. The reduction of longer salary scales has resulted in significant increases for some teachers at mid-scale.

The process by which teachers are paid will also improve. For the first time, all teachers in the province will be paid twice a month and all teachers will have access to an optional 12-month pay plan.

## Salary Indemnity Plan allowance

In the past several rounds of bargaining, the BCTF has argued that we should be compensated for paying for our own long-term disability plan. Finally, the employer and government have agreed. Every year after all salary increases have been applied to grids, a 2.0% allowance will be calculated. This allowance will be paid monthly to teachers as part of their pay. It is both taxable and pensionable. BCTF members retain full control of the Salary Indemnity Plan.

## The bonus

Teachers will receive a signing bonus of \$4,000 per full-time equivalent, pro-rated for part-time teachers. The bonus is taxable and will count for pension purposes but union dues will not be deducted.

## Other benefits and compensation issues

The increasing cost of health benefits makes improvements to benefits plans one of the most difficult items to achieve at bargaining tables. The only significant improvement to the benefits plans negotiated is the removal of any lifetime limits on Extended Health Benefits. For teachers facing the prospect of exceeding the lifetime limit and no longer having access to EHB this represents an important improvement.

Mileage rates will be adjusted from \$0.47 to \$0.50 per kilometer during the term of the agreement. Personal property rates will also be improved to \$600 for damage to a vehicle and \$150 for loss or damage to personally owned professional materials.

Teachers will now have standard language that entitles them to leave for compassionate care to provide care and support

**We reminded the government and BCPSEA of our determination with our strong strike vote in June.**

for seriously ill relatives. Under the *Employment Insurance Act* teachers may also qualify for EI benefits for a portion of the leave.

## Pension plan

At the bargaining table we raised the growing concern teachers have regarding the ability of the Inflation Adjustment Account of the Teachers' Pension Plan to continue to provide protection for teachers' pensions. The government agreed to pay \$20 million into the IAA as part of this agreement.

## Preparation time

The new agreement guarantees a minimum of 90 minutes of preparation time for elementary teachers. Perhaps most importantly, beginning in September of 2007 the preparation time is guaranteed to teachers every week of the year and cannot be averaged over the year.

## Employment equity for Aboriginal teachers

The BCTF is committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers in the province. To that end, we have consistently made proposals regarding an employment equity program for aboriginal teachers. This agreement contains a commitment on the part of the provincial parties to encourage and assist school boards and locals of the BCTF to institute measures that would help them

attract and retain Aboriginal teachers.

## Portability of sick leave and seniority

Teachers will finally see some benefit to belonging to a provincial bargaining unit. Teachers moving from one district to another will be able to bring up to 60 days of earned sick leave and up to 10 years of seniority from another district. The sick leave will be credited to them once they are hired into another district. Seniority will be credited when the teacher receives a continuing contract. This will provide teachers moving from one district with a greater level of security.

## Processes for the establishment of middle school and alternate school calendars

The establishment of alternate calendars, such as four-day weeks or nine-day fortnights, has caused some difficulty between boards and locals with respect to how the altered calendars impact teachers' salaries and working conditions. Similar issues arise when boards establish middle-school programs.

The agreement established clear processes and timelines for the negotiation of changes to the collective agreement necessitated by the introduction of an alternate calendar or middle-school program.

## Updating local agreements

The agreement also contains an important provision that will allow locals to update their collective agreements. Local bargaining followed by many years of dysfunctional provincial bargaining has resulted in agreements that contain many provisions that are out-dated or

no longer relevant or functional. The BCTF and BCPSEA have agreed to allow locals to update these provisions without interference by the provincial parties. Hopefully this will allow locals and boards to print agreements that are clear, consistent, and relevant and allow teachers to refer to the agreement in order to fully understand their rights.

## The final analysis

This round of bargaining brought some gains that are easily itemized and some that are more difficult to quantify, such as the activism of young members, the attention and respect of government, and an unexpected level of support from parents and the public.

Bargaining is a complex process governed by some simple truths. No agreement is ever as good as the negotiators would like it to be. Every deal is about compromise on all sides. A union will make greater gains in the long term when the members are prepared to take risks, stick together, and use their collective strength.

**While the deal is not perfect, the amazing courage and solidarity of teachers have enabled us to negotiate significant improvements that teachers will enjoy for years to come.**

Teachers took that strong stand in October. We reminded the government and BCPSEA of our determination with our strong strike vote in June. While the deal is not perfect, the amazing courage and solidarity of teachers have enabled us to negotiate significant improvements that teachers will enjoy for years to come.

*Irene Lanzinger is the BCTF's first vice-president and a member of the negotiating team.*

# Looking back

## 70 years ago

Probably nothing in recent history has given the thoughtful observer more reason for disquiet than has the collapse of elemental human freedom in so many parts of the world. Of all liberties none is more essential than freedom on the part of teachers to speak the truth in their classrooms and to take their place as citizens in the community at large. One favourite form of teacher-baiting is the passing of loyalty laws. Such statutes have been enacted in nearly half of the States of the American Republic during recent years and there is no sign or probability of a turn in the tide.

– September 1936, *The BC Teacher*

## 50 years ago

The beginning of a school year is an excellent time for teachers to look over the protection they carry on their lives, their homes, their cars. How many will think to

consider the protection they carry on their health? The BCTF Medical Services' Association has been actively in the business of protecting the health of teachers for 15 years. During that time payments on behalf of members have exceeded half a million dollars. A serious illness, without protection, can cripple a family financially.

– Sept/Oct. 1956, *The BC Teacher*

## 30 years ago

Unless we've not yet shaken the last grains of sand from our eyes, fellow ostriches, we must admit that the magic has gone from the first exciting dreams of school guidance. After more than a generation of try-out in this province, even the most confident must conclude that the conduct of guidance—at least as compared with what was at first conceived—has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. An elite guidance force found it hard to defend itself against the charge that it had lost touch with the workaday classroom.

At the same time the subject teacher was only too happy to attend to geography and leave the behaviour problems to the specialist.

– Sept/Oct. 1976, *The BC Teacher*

## 10 years ago

Experiencing stress in our lives is universal and stress-related disorders are increasingly on the rise. In fact, statistics indicate that over half of all visits to health-care professionals are associated with stress-related disorders. Ongoing changes within our society and workplace such as expanded workload with downsizing, demands to do as much or more with decreased funding, technological developments, and societal changes often where we have fewer social supports, all lead to lifestyle demands that have become difficult to manage at the best of times.

– Sept. 1996, *Teacher*

*Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich*

## Yours for the asking

### October: Women's History Month

The theme for Canadian Women's History Month this year is *Aboriginal Women: The Journey Forward*. Full details are available on the Status of Women Canada web site at [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca) under commemorative dates: October.

There is a list of web sites; posters and other information can be ordered and events posted.

October 18 is National Persons' Day.

### SEVEC

The Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC) is recruiting participants and groups for its youth learning programs.

#### Youth

A variety of exciting experiences are available to youth during the summer as well as the school year:

- second language exchanges
- exchanges focussing on leadership, community engagement, and volunteer skills
- educational travel to Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto
- educational roundtables.

New SEVEC program themes also include the environment, physical activity and youth at risk for 2006–07. All programs can be tailored to fit school curricula. Exchange, explore, and experience why more than 300,000 youth have enthusiastically participated in SEVEC learning programs over the past 70 years! For more information, contact [jkendrick@sevec.ca](mailto:jkendrick@sevec.ca) or [kfraser@sevec.ca](mailto:kfraser@sevec.ca) or call 1-800-387-3832.

#### Groups

Provide your students with a valuable head start toward the careers and successes they dream of achieving! School groups participating in SEVEC's Community Involvement Program:

- choose a project to improve their community
- plan its implementation
- exchange with a group of students in another part of the country and help them carry out their community involvement project.

Youth enhance their skills in leadership, public relations, project management, communication, and learn about municipal politics. Participants gain pride in completing a project that makes a real impact on their community. Funding for all of the travel expenses and some of the project expenses is provided. SEVEC also offers ongoing support to realize all of the objectives of the program. Exchange, explore, and experience with SEVEC and help motivate tomorrow's leaders today! Find out how your students can participate, contact [mwright@sevec.ca](mailto:mwright@sevec.ca) or call 1-800-387-3832.

### Helping students act for global change

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) is helping students act for global change with their newly designed *Tools for Action*, free, downloadable resource toolkits. The online educational resources are designed to help students engage their school in the global struggle for health and development.

The resources provide students with the necessary how-to advice to organize effective advocacy and fundraising campaigns in their schools on a variety of international development issues.

The toolkits inspire students to ask the question What Will You Do for the World Today? The answers to this question help broaden their awareness about our global community while empowering students to educate their school through advocacy, information, and fundraising campaigns on a variety of development issues.

CPAR has also designed *Tools for Learning* resources units for high school teachers, and is expanding into Western Canada.

For more information, contact Roxane Tracey, [rtracey@cpar.ca](mailto:rtracey@cpar.ca), web site [www.cpar.ca](http://www.cpar.ca).

### Graduation portfolio update

In the middle of the summer, the ministry announced that during the 2006–07 school year, the graduation portfolio is not mandatory for Grade 12 students. Over the next few months, the Ministry of Education will consult with educators and students to see if the portfolio program is accomplishing what was intended.

#### Key implications for students, parents, and teachers:

- Grade 12 students who complete their portfolios receive four credits and can choose to have the percentage and letter grade reflected on their final transcripts.
- Grade 12 students who do not receive a percentage and letter grade for their portfolios during the 2006–07 school year will receive "Standing Granted" (SG) credit. SG does not carry a percentage or letter grade and does not affect a student's grade point average. Students may receive standing granted either because they have not completed the portfolio or because they elect to have standing granted credit rather than a percentage and letter grade listed on their transcript.
- Schools may use the portfolio mark to calculate Grade 12 passport-award stamps.
- Schools should apply the Grade 10 and 11 passport award stamp criteria to students who have elected to use SG.
- Grade 10 and 11 students continue working on their portfolios as part of their graduation program requirements.
- The Ministry of Education will bring together educators and students to discuss the goals of the portfolio. This might include ways to improve the portfolio process or other strategies for meeting the portfolio goals.

## Teaching to diversity It's IEP season

by Marilyn Miller

Excellent online information and assistance is available through the BCTF web site.

The BCTF homepage will link you to *Teaching to Diversity*. There, open the *Resource Inventory* and then open *Documentation*. That is your main source of diverse information and multiple supports to assist with IEP development.

Within *Documentation*, you can access the ministry's Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines to find out exactly what the manual states regarding who must have an IEP and what must be contained in an IEP. You can also access the ministry's Special Education Resource Guide, which provides helpful information and strategies regarding all aspects of the IEP, including determining when an IEP is necessary, which processes should be considered and who should be involved. The guide also includes sample forms and plans that teachers will find useful in preparing their own IEPs.

In addition to those sample forms, there are several sample IEP and Student Learning Plan templates found in the *Documentation* section of the Resource Inventory. They range in length from full, multipage

IEP formats to more concise formats to suit students with less intense needs. Useful checklists of typical adaptations are also found within these templates.

Are you interested in learning what research tells us about what will make the greatest difference in student learning? Go to "Looking at IEPs as Best Practice" for reasons why we need to involve students in their IEP development/review and how their involvement enhances achievement.

You have no doubt noticed that the Resource Inventory contains many more access portals. Why not have a look around those other portals. You will find that the Adaptations, Modifications, and Strategies sections contain varied and useful sources to augment your IEP development as well as general educational practice. One of my favourite sections is Graphic Organizers found within Adaptations. There are literally hundreds of easy-to-use visual templates to scaffold learning. Have a look!

Marilyn Miller teaches at *Trafalgar Junior Secondary School, Nelson*, and as a member of the *Teaching To Diversity committee* is content co-ordinator for the web site.

## Métis culture for BC students

This first-ever multimedia social studies program called Primary and Elementary Métis Awareness (PEMA) program, has earned the praise of teachers throughout the lower Fraser Valley. The program includes 48 lesson units of one-page stories about historical and modern Métis that reveal their place in Canada's history. Four supporting units extend the learning objectives beyond those required for the BC Ministry of Education curriculum guide-

lines. The 32-page colouring and exercise book, 12 artifact and craft projects unit, CD of traditional Métis music, and instructional DVD help teachers and students learn more about Canada's least-known Aboriginal culture.

For more information about this comprehensive, entertaining social studies program, contact Mission Community Services Society at 604-826-3634, or e-mail [mcssexecdir@shawbiz.ca](mailto:mcssexecdir@shawbiz.ca).

# Celebrate school libraries!

by Rick Mulholland

Almost every school has some form of a school library. To paraphrase a quote by American novelist Shelby Foote, a school is just a group of classrooms gathered around a library. In the past few issues of *Teacher* newsmagazine, we have read a number of articles relating to school libraries, their programs, their personnel, and how important they are to the education of our students. Now we need to turn the attention to something that is rarely done for school libraries. It is something that many teacher-librarians find difficult to do—we need to promote ourselves—we need to celebrate! This is supported by a leading researcher in school librarianship, Dr. Ross J. Todd, who says it is "part of critically

reviewing objectives in relation to learning, and ensuring that student learning outcomes are not only able to be identified, but are acknowledged and celebrated by the school community."

We can celebrate our programs by showcasing students' projects in a number of ways, including displays in the library or office display cabinet and publishing written work in the school newsletter or on a web site. Why not approach the local newspaper to have students' work published in the weekend paper? What about the local media showcasing the actual unit in action?

But the best way to celebrate school libraries is on the fourth Monday in October. International School Library Day was proclaimed in 1999 by then International Association of

School Librarianship president Dr. Blanche Woolls and reaffirmed last year by the current International Association of School Librarianship president,

**On Monday October 23, 2006, school communities around the world will be celebrating the 8th International School Library Day with the theme *Reading. Knowing. Doing.***

Peter Genco. International School Library Day is an opportunity for school libraries to showcase their role in the promotion of reading and literacy skills as well as infor-

mation literacy skills, which help to provide the foundations for lifelong learning. School libraries matter and make a difference!

In Canada, National School Library Day, which is celebrated on the same day as International School Library Day, was proclaimed by Roch Carrier, then National Librarian of Canada, at the National School Library Summit held in Ottawa in June of 2003. The first National School Library Day was held on Monday, October 27, 2003.

International School Library Day and National School Library Day provide the school community an opportunity to celebrate the importance of the school library. It is a day where teachers, students, parents, administrators, and of course teacher-librarians stand up and show the Canadian public that school libraries matter.

On Monday October 23, 2006, school communities around the world will be celebrating the 8th International School Library Day with the theme *Reading. Knowing. Doing*. This highlights the connection between reading and the application of knowledge. I urge every member of the BC school community to join their teacher-librarian in celebrating the important role that school library programs have in our education system today and in the future.

For more information, visit the following web sites: International School Library Day ([www.iasl-slo.org/isld.html](http://www.iasl-slo.org/isld.html)), National School Library Day ([www.nsls.ca](http://www.nsls.ca)).

Rick Mulholland is a teacher-librarian at *East Clayton Elementary School, Surrey*.

## Social Studies 11

# Back to names and dates

by Stephanie Tarr

Since I came to BC as a Social Studies and English teacher in 2002, I have been crossing my fingers and wishing for the opportunity to teach Social Studies 11. In my opinion, this was a course to beat all courses. It spans the 20th century, introducing Canadian politics, and looking closely at key elements of global geography and globalization. I couldn't wait

*Social Studies 11 stood out for me as a critical opportunity for teachers and students to discuss and engage in social responsibility and critical thinking, presumably desired outcomes of public education.*

to sit down with students so that we could sink our teeth into a great meal of issues and controversy and they could examine their own potential for involvement in this complex web of history-in-the-making. Social Studies 11 stood out for me as a critical opportunity for teachers and students to discuss and engage in social responsibility and critical thinking, presumably desired outcomes of public education. The primary focus of the course, it seemed to me, could be the promotion of active citizenship.

This year, I was finally given my chance. I was hired to teach (among other things) a Social Studies 10/11 split class at a tiny rural school and was given a class of 13 students, with nine in Grade 11 and two students on modified programs. Not many high school teachers teach split classes and this year was my first opportunity. This was the first obstacle, and I could see it coming well ahead. I prepared well and luckily had support staff to assist with my program.

The shock was not teaching the split class, although this has of course proved challenging in itself. The real shock was the Grade 11 Social Studies program. This is the first year

that Social Studies 11 students are required to write a provincial exam and I dutifully printed off a copy of the sample at my first opportunity. It blew me away. The exam clearly requires a detailed factual understanding of the entire course textbook (we use Cranny and Moles' *Counterpoints*). It is a very good textbook and suits the course well, but due to time constraints we had to march full speed ahead right through the book's 18 chapters in order to cover all the material within the semester.

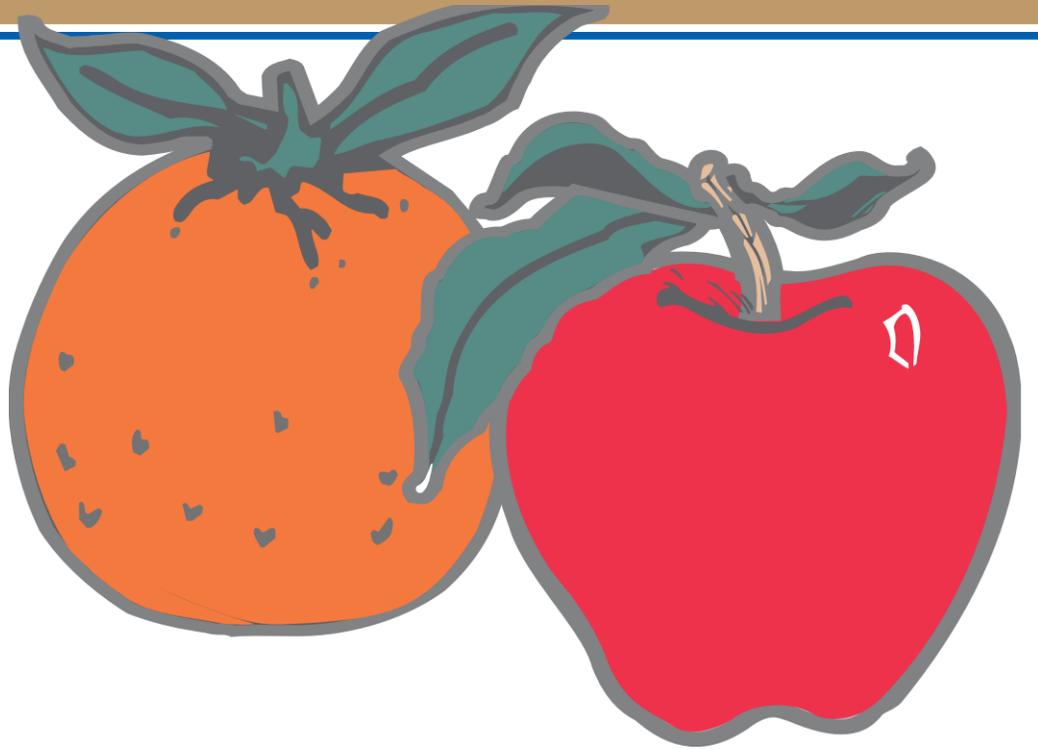
As a professional, I am angry because my hopes for lively and engaging debate of the issues, critical thinking, simulation activities, research, document study and video analysis have been largely forfeited in the interests of time and the requirements of the standardized test.

For all the talk about social responsibility in our schools today, one message has been clearly presented to me by way of this exam. Our priority in this province is not really to promote active citizenship or social responsibility. We are taking a key means to this end and turning it into something else entirely, a scanty look at history and the politics of justice that amounts to names and dates on a two-dimensional test. I worry for my students and the young people who leave BC's public schools to enter a world filled

*We are...turning it into something else entirely, a scanty look at history and the politics of justice that amounts to names and dates on a two-dimensional test.*

with media hype and propaganda. Have we done enough to equip them to participate in this globalized world? Have they had enough time to develop critical thinking skills while at school? What kinds of decisions will they make in our communities in the future as a result?

*Stephanie Tarr teaches at Sk'il' Mountain Community School, Shalalth, BC.*



## Canadian and Chinese classrooms are different

by Wenxing Zheng

Having studied at Simon Fraser University as a master of education student for one year, I've had the chance to visit Canadian classes and compare them with the education I experienced in China. The following are 12 differences I found between the two countries. It needs to be said that these are general observations based on my experience and feelings. There are exceptions, of course, in both countries and among different students.

### *Students in Canada are under less pressure than students in China.*

1. Students in Canada are under less pressure than students in China. In China, most high school students spend more than 10 hours studying everyday with some students studying even longer, usually from 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

2. In Canada, teachers use diversified teaching methods in class, like role playing and group work. In China we rarely use these kinds of pedagogies. Most of the time teachers are lecturing and students are busy taking notes.

3. Teachers give students a lot of handouts in Canadian classes. Maybe this is the reason why students needn't take notes here. Everything is on the handouts. In China we depend more on the course books and some exercise books.

4. There are also some differences in the assignments teachers give. Canadian assignments are more practical and interesting. Students have to use their imagination to express their opinions. There are a lot of subjective factors for a student to consider in completing an assignment. Assignments in China are examination-orientated, tend to be based objectively on facts only, and are intended to focus on students' memorization and analytical skills.

5. In Canada, students can pursue their own interests. But in China, parents play a big role in determining what a student's interests should be.

6. Comparatively, and generally, in China students tend to excel in academic work

because often students have to take extra academic classes after school, usually in math, English, and writing subjects. In Canada, students can pursue their own interests after school.

7. In China, the classroom is for the students. Teachers go to different classrooms to teach. In Canada, the classroom is for the teacher. Students go to different classrooms to study.

8. In Canada, teacher's classrooms are designed in all kinds of styles according to the personality and subjects the teacher teaches. In classrooms in China, the classroom walls are hung with the portraits of famous people who have made great contributions to human development.

9. In China, parents like teachers to give students difficult questions. In Canada, parents seem to prefer teachers to give students suitable questions. I don't know whether it is a common phenomenon in Canada. I have a Canadian friend. Her daughter is in Grade 7. Several times, the teacher gave some difficult assignments, which frustrated the young girl. The parent was unhappy and talked to the teacher asking for easier assignments. Such things would never happen in China.

### *There is only one teacher in a Chinese class, but in Canadian classes there may be a teacher, as well as a teaching assistant or co-teachers.*

10. There is only one teacher in a Chinese class, but in Canadian classes there may be a teacher, as well as a teaching assistant or co-teachers.

11. Except for some schools in big cities, Chinese classrooms only have Chinese people. In Canadian classes there are students from different ethnic origins. In Canada, a teacher needs to have the skills to teach a diverse group.

12. In Canadian classes, students from different grades may share a classroom. In China students only have classes with students in the same grade.

Comparatively speaking, it is easier to become a teacher in China than in Canada. In my opinion, the differences between the two countries in education

originate from conditions and cultural background of the two countries. Canada is a developed country. Its education has a lot of advantages that we lack in China. However, considering the different situations of the two countries, we cannot duplicate the Canadian education system

### *In Canada, a teacher needs to have the skills to teach a diverse group.*

in China. I realize that my observations are only limited to my personal experiences and opinions. But, interacting in two different education systems gives me the luxury of re-examining my own teaching philosophy in the context of the Chinese education system.

Chinese education needs reform. In China, a lot of educators, teachers, and parents ask for that, but it is not an easy job, since we have a large population and comparatively limited education resources. We cannot make sure everybody has a university education, but we try to make sure every student has the equal chance to go to university. We once had a debate in class about whether we should use examinations or authentic tests to evaluate students. Authentic tests usually use portfolios to evaluate students. It looks at the whole learning process of the students, not only one-time examinations. The result is that authentic tests have all kinds of advantages compared to examinations, but currently in China, we cannot use them nationally. It costs more time and money. Basically we cannot afford them. I think we will change the examination-dominated education system gradually, but I don't think we can dismiss it completely. Even in Canada I know, examination scores occupy 40% of student evaluation in Grade 12.

The things I learned here will definitely help me when I go back to teach. I may not completely copy what I have learned from Canadian classes, but I will combine them with the situation in China. I think learning here gives me more choices in teaching and broadens my mind about education.

*Wenxing Zheng attended SFU as a master of education student for one year.*

# WORLD PEACE

## Educating a generation to create a culture of peace

by Jane Turner

Forty-five hundred people came to Vancouver to participate in the World Peace Forum from June 23–28, 2006. From over 92 countries delegates attended workshops, discussed and debated peace initiatives and took part in the 13,000-strong peace march. At its closing, the WPF launched the Vancouver Appeal for Peace (to view the full document go to [www.worldpeaceforum.ca](http://www.worldpeaceforum.ca)).

*From over 92 countries delegates attended workshops, discussed and debated peace initiatives and took part in the 13,000-strong peace march.*

*The Vancouver Appeal for Peace calls upon civil society to raise its collective voice to:*

- build a just peace based on social justice, human and democratic rights, and economic equality.
- educate our children and youth to cultivate a culture of peace.
- recognize the needs and aspirations of all indigenous peoples.
- respect the dignity of difference.
- ensure the leading role of women and youth as peace-makers.
- declare war as a crime against humanity and demand an end to war.
- insist on the protection of the environment.
- work to eliminate nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and terror.

*Specifically, to achieve this, we call for:*

1. the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.
2. a negotiated settlement in Israel/Palestine within the framework of International law and UN resolutions.
3. a commitment to address global warming and sustainable energy policies.
4. implementation of UN Resolution 1325 to ensure the full and equal participation of women.
5. the end of torture and the closure of the Guantanamo prison.
6. governments to reduce military spending and invest in human needs.

7. governments to constitutionally renounce war (e.g., Japan's Article 9).
8. a stronger role for the UN General Assembly.
9. the UN to declare a special session and decade for disarmament.
10. all states to negotiate verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

*We commit ourselves to:*

- mobilize cities, communities, and citizens for peace (C4P).
- promote a culture of peace and strengthen the human spirit through peace education, the arts, and the media.
- build more effective networks and increase global capacities across divides, building co-operation and finding common ground, relying on the strength of our diversity.
- ensure collaboration across generations.
- support those who work on other social and sustainability issues that are ultimately related to a just peace.
- learn from the past and insist on redress and reconciliation for past injustices.
- realize the capacity of civil society to make and build peace.

We want a world without war—the world our children deserve.

*The keynote speakers at the education conference articulated the broad range of work that teachers can engage in under the rubric of peace education.*

Along with civil society in general, teachers were given a special role in fulfilling the promise of the Vancouver Appeal for Peace. We are challenged and charged with cultivating a culture of peace in our schools and for our students. Fortunately, the keynote speakers and workshop presenters at the International Peace Education conference held as part of the World Peace Forum provided some direction for us.

The keynote speakers at the education conference articulated the broad range of work that teachers can engage in under the rubric of peace education. Mary Gordon, the creator of the Roots of Empathy program, described the changes that occur when seven- to nine-year-olds are educated about the care and development of babies. A young student who had been shipped around to various foster homes after his parents abandoned him as a baby asked his teacher if she thought a child who had never

been loved could be a good parent. Dr. Budd Hall from the University of Victoria exhorted everyone to do peace aerobics, where one leans to one side and listens, then leans to the other side and listens, then twist and turn and shake hands with those

*It is up to us individually and collectively to stand up for peace, to demand peace and create a culture of peace in our schools. The delegates at the World Peace Forum have asked us to step up and help ensure a world without war becomes a reality for our students.*

around you. Hall, who is a poet, knows that the serious problems facing our world need to be leavened with humour. However, Hall's poetry contained spearing words that skewer the insanity of war. Nurit Peled, an Israeli educator encouraged the participants to keep a sharp eye for nationalist stereotypes about historic enemies that can pervade curriculum and textbooks. Dr. Michael Apple, from the University of Wisconsin, drew the link between peacemaking and the neo-liberal global agenda for privatization of public education. Keynote speakers, like Cora Weiss from *The Hague Appeal for Peace* set the challenge for delegates to engage in peace making by critiquing the actions of those in power and standing up and speaking out as members of civil society. "If we wait for the politicians to create peace, we'll be waiting a long time", said Weiss as part of her keynote presentation.

*"If we wait for the politicians to create peace, we'll be waiting a long time."*

—Cora Weiss, *The Hague Appeal for Peace*

That sentiment was echoed throughout the conference. It is up to us individually and collectively to stand up for peace, to demand peace and create a culture of peace in our schools. The delegates at the World Peace Forum have asked us to step up and help ensure a world without war becomes a reality for our students.

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



UBC student teacher Kim Meredith takes a break with the Olinda (Brazil) students at the World Peace Forum.

## No wall high enough

*Don't you get it?  
Don't you understand?  
There are no walls high enough  
No doors thick enough  
No guns big enough  
No tanks strong enough  
No bombs that can kill enough  
No means to kill all the enemies  
Forever  
Or even for now  
And there are no security checks  
at airports that will  
Save the powerful, the greedy, the  
innocent or the holy  
From death should it be loosed  
into the sky  
As Margaret Atwood has said,  
"Whole armies have prayed  
fervently throughout the night,  
And meant it, and have been  
killed the next day"  
War is not the answer  
Death cannot bring forth life  
Imagine spending billions or even  
trillions of dollars/pounds/  
euros/yen  
On making sure that everyone has  
a home, water, food  
On making HIV/AIDS medicines  
free to all around the world  
On making poverty history as we  
say in our campaigns  
On providing space for healing  
between Israelis and  
Palestinians  
Between First Nations and those  
who live on their land  
Between fundamentalists and  
moderates*

*How does it start?  
One person puts down their gun  
Another puts down theirs  
Four and then 40 put down theirs  
And they do not wait for the  
bombers to do the same  
Like the non-violent movements of  
the many centuries  
Someone has to start  
They create community choirs,  
healing circles, study each  
others pains and dreams  
They think of the future for all the  
children of the world as Rafji  
says  
They write poems together late  
into the night...a universal  
Mushaira for life  
They bake bread together in ovens  
that they have built  
Their children marry each other  
They respect all traditions of  
peace, no matter the origin, the  
theologies or the languages  
They lay in the road in front of  
tanks and on runways and  
generally become a non-violent  
nuisance in their communities  
They become raging Grannies  
They become Veterans for Peace  
They turn war museums into  
peace museums  
They never stop  
They demand the public monies  
are used to create National  
Departments of Peace  
They sing  
Oh how they sing*

—Budd L. Hall



MAE JONG-BOWLES PHOTO

# PEACE FORUM

## For the sake of the children

by Murray Corren

Following her riveting presentation at the World Peace Forum in June, I had the honour of interviewing children's literature author, Deborah Ellis. "Deborah is that all too rare artist whose deeply rooted sense of social justice is manifest in writing that is lively, lucid, and highly entertaining. In settings as diverse as Afghanistan, Malawi, Bolivia, medieval Paris, and Regent Park in Toronto, her novels chronicle the lives of youngsters faced with enormous challenges," was the verdict of the Vicky Metcalf Award for Children's Literature jury.

This extraordinary writer is a long-time women's rights and anti-war activist who has authored socially engaging novels about children living in environments of violence, conflict, and earth-shattering calamities. However, anyone reading her work will also be deeply touched by the extraordinary and uplifting acts of courage by her child-heroes.

Of herself, Deborah says, "My books reflect the heroism of people around the world who are struggling for decent lives. It has been a real privilege for me to sit with people in many parts of the world and learn how their lives have been drastically altered by war or disease, and how they try to remain kind in spite of it all. This has taught me how fundamentally alike we all are."

All the royalties from many of her books, translated into numerous languages, are donated to the education of women and girls in Afghanistan, to Street Kids International, and to UNICEF. When I mention

**"My books reflect the heroism of people around the world who are struggling for decent lives."**

—Deborah Ellis

these generous acts of kindness, Deborah responds with, "Oh, it's nothing." To date, *The Breadwinner* and *Parvana's Journey* alone have raised over \$500,000 to support the women and girls of Afghanistan.

Winner of numerous children's literature awards, Deborah Ellis works as a mental health counselor in a group home for women in Simcoe, Ontario.

*How did you become involved in anti-bomb politics and in feminism?*

I came of age in 1978, when the world was about to blow itself up in an atomic war. I write about what interests me, which is how people move about in a world of cruelty, and find some measure of kindness in that cruelty.

When I was in high school in Paris, Ontario, some local volunteers involved in the antibomb movement came and gave a talk and I became

interested in it and became involved. Unfortunately, the guys who were there were very chauvinistic. Various organizations were connected to the antibomb political movement, one of them being a feminist organization. It was then that I became interested in feminism.

*Tell me more about those measures of kindness you have witnessed.*

I have seen so many acts of kindness, I hardly know where to begin. I have seen people in the Afghan refugee camps, who have lost their own children through war or illness, take in other children who have lost their parents and made them their own.

*You spent time in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan prior to writing the "Breadwinner" trilogy. What were the circumstances that brought you to do that?*

I and some others were doing solidarity work with Afghan women after the Taliban takeover of Kabul in September 1996. I went over to the camps to collect their stories to share with others, and heard about girls masquerading as boys in order to support their families.

*Who were some of the people you met?*

I met former teachers, principals, and doctors working in secret trying to get medical help to people inside Afghanistan. I met a woman who had been married at nine years old and was widowed at 10 when her husband was killed in the war. I met women who smuggled guns for the Mujahadine into the country to fight the Russians.

**War not only destroys buildings, it also destroys the social fabric of a people and leaves them with no way of putting their lives back together.**

*I'd like to turn now to the "Breadwinner" trilogy. The books portray events that some might say are too disturbing for children to read about and could take away their innocence. What do you say to those concerns?*

The children I've met who have read my books, or lived in the situations I write about, are capable of knowing the truth of the world as it is presented to them, and, at the same time, believing in make-believe, in dreams, and in decency.

*What message would you like children to get from those three books?*

We often carry with us the books we read as children. If the kids who read my books remember them when they get to be decision makers, and their government says its time to go to war, hopefully they'll remember that there are real people under those bombs, people like Parvana, and will

think seriously before letting their government get away with killing them in their name.

*The Canadian government recently announced an increased expenditure of \$17 billion on the military. How else do you think that money might have been spent?*

A teacher in Afghanistan earns roughly \$750 a year. Seventeen billion dollars would hire a lot of teachers, build a lot of schools, put a lot of people back to work, give a lot of people a sense of future.

*There are Canadians who think we should not be in Afghanistan in combat mode, that our soldiers are being injured or killed. The theme of the World Peace Forum is the futility of war and how conflict does not solve problems. What would you say to those people?*

We should not be in Afghanistan in combat. What invariably happens is that innocent people will be in the way of the fighting and will be hurt or killed. War not only destroys buildings, it also destroys the social fabric of a people and leaves them with no way of putting their lives back together. What we should be doing as Canadians is bringing a whole other set of skills—building schools, hospitals, roads, etc.—setting up an infrastructure whereby people affected by the war can begin to re-establish a functioning social structure that gives them peaceful alternatives to war. For instance, I think it's in the Congo where a very exciting program is happening, where people are being given bicycles in exchange for their guns and are being shown lots of different ways they can use those bicycles to make a living.

*Apart from the "Breadwinner" trilogy, what other books have you written?*

Other books of mine are: *The Heaven Shop*, a novel about children dealing with AIDS in Malawi, *Our Stories, Our Songs*, interviews I did with kids affected by AIDS in Malawi and Zambia, *Three Wishes, Children of Israel and Palestine Speak*, Interviews I did with kids in Israel and Palestine, *A Company of Fools*, a novel about the plague in the Middle Ages is my favourite because it was the most fun to write, *Looking for X*, a novel and some books in the "Our Canadian Girl Series."

*Deborah, thank you.*

For any teachers considering using Deborah Ellis's books in their classrooms but who may wonder if their students are ready for such powerful stories, I would say that I have used Deborah Ellis's books in Grade 4 and 5 classrooms and, without doubt, children have received and responded to them with maturity, insight, and compassion that would put many adults to shame. So, if you are an intermediate, middle, or secondary teacher, and you are looking for a writer who will engage, inspire, and inform your students, I can think of no better choice.

*Murray Corren is district staff at Winslow Centre, Coquitlam.*

### Social justice conference

## Remembering our rights

This conference on women's struggle for justice and equality is being held on Remembrance Day weekend, November 10–12, 2006, in Creston, BC. The conference is sponsored by the BCTF Status of Women Social Justice Action Group.

This is an opportunity for feminists involved in their unions and/or their communities to come together to discuss the state of the rights of women in Canada since the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. By bringing together women from diverse backgrounds, the goal of the conference is to develop plans and actions to improve the rights of all women.

**By bringing together women from diverse backgrounds, the goal of the conference is to develop plans and actions to improve the rights of all women.**

At the 49th Session of the United Nations Status of Women Commission, women from the developing world challenged those of us living in privileged countries to maintain and improve our status and rights because they need models of women's emancipation if they are to improve their lot in their home nations. Canadian women have a responsibility to take action to ensure the rights of women worldwide.

Each local teachers' association is entitled to send one social justice activist at BCTF expense. Other BCTF members may attend at local expense. Community members may attend on a first-come, first-registered basis. The registration fee for community and additional social justice contacts is \$200, which will include all breakfasts and lunches and one dinner during the conference. Subsidies for community participants will be available as funding provides. Registration is limited so please submit your on-line registration early in September when the registration will be opened.

Keynote speakers confirmed to date are: Daphne Bramham, *Vancouver Sun* columnist, Shelagh Day, human rights activist, Carolyn Jessup, former Latter Day Saints member, and Mary Woo Sims, human rights activist.

Workshops will be offered on violence against women, workplace harassment, women in closed communities, women's rights nationally and internationally, global education, assertive communication skills, and choosing our battles and planning to win.

For more information about the Remembering Our Rights conference, contact Jane Turner, Professional and Social Issues Division, BCTF, 604-871-1871 or [jturner@bctf.ca](mailto:jturner@bctf.ca).



Student-made lanterns keep peace afloat.

MARIAN DODDS PHOTOS

## Health &amp; Safety

## The right to know

by Mark Keelan

There is a saying that goes something like this: "What you don't know can't hurt you." The saying may sometimes be true. For example, perhaps you forget you are getting a raise. It didn't hurt to forget and then to find a pleasant surprise when you check your bank balance. Or, it probably will not hurt you if your partner is planning a surprise birthday party. But, when it comes to health and safety, what you don't know can, and often does, hurt you.

**It is a legal requirement that workers must report promptly to the employer if they suffer an injury in the course of their work.**

Many BCTF members are very good about standing up for their rights. We don't allow the employer to underpay us. The principal can't arbitrarily take away our prep time. Why is it, then, that we often tend to allow our health and safety rights to be trampled? Perhaps it is because many members are not aware that the first of our basic health and safety rights is "the right to know."

*Did you know that there are over 100,000 human-made chemicals in the world, that fewer than 10% of them have been tested for their long-term effects, and that many commonly used chemicals are known human carcinogens?*

The *Workers' Compensation Act* clearly states that workers have the right to know what toxic chemicals exist in their workplaces. Despite that fact, few teachers know what chemicals make up the cleaning products, the building materials, and the lab supplies in their schools.

Enforce your right to know! Find out what cleaning products are being used in your school. Are there chemicals in the science or home ec labs that haven't been used for years? If you work in a school that was built before about 1980 it is likely that the building contains asbestos. Have you seen the asbestos inventory? Do you know how to get the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for a chemical that is being used?

Don't know where to start? Help is available. The BCTF, the Labour Environmental Alliance Society (LEAS), CUPE, and others are participating in a joint venture to find out what types of chemicals exist in schools. The ultimate goal of the project is to eliminate all toxic chemicals from schools. Please contact Mark Keelan at the BCTF who can assist you in conducting a chemical inventory of your school.

*Did you know that the employer must advise every worker who may come in contact with a student, or a parent who has a history of violence, of the nature and extent of that history of violence and of ways to deal with that person?*

Many teachers who work with violent students think that it is simply part of the job to be kicked, punched, slapped,

threatened, and spat upon. This is particularly true of teachers who work with students with special needs, some of whom are violent, although many not intentionally so. In fact, teachers do not have to be beaten up at work. The employer has a legal obligation to keep every one of its workers safe.

Teachers are often told that they cannot have access to information about the violent past of a student because it would violate the student's right to privacy. This is simply not true. The *School Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* all contain provisions that allow the release of information related to safety. All supercede the student's privacy rights.

Insist that your school and your school district have provisions in place for the prompt disclosure of information about histories of violence. Insist that a proper risk assessment and safety plan is in place before a student with such a history is placed in your class. And, insist that the employer provides appropriate training for dealing with violent students.

*Did you know that every time there is an incident at work in which a worker is injured, or there is an incident that has the potential to cause an injury, the employer must ensure that the incident is thoroughly investigated?*

It is a legal requirement that workers must report promptly

**There is a further legal requirement that the employer must ensure that the incident is investigated and that the investigation include recommendations for how to prevent further injury.**

to the employer if they suffer an injury in the course of their work. There is a further legal requirement that the employer must ensure that the incident is investigated and that the investigation include recommendations for how to prevent further injury.

The reality is that teacher injuries, particularly injuries arising from violence and ergonomics, are vastly under-reported. In addition, it is a fact that when incidents are reported they are often not investigated. These two facts combine to increase the likelihood that other workers will be injured the same way.

Probably the best way to correct these problems is to make sure that there is a well-trained, effective, and assertive joint health and safety committee in the school. Such a committee will ensure that members are educated about their obligation to report injuries, will ensure that committee members are part of the investigations into every incident, and will help to write and implement the recommendations that will prevent incidents from reoccurring.

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



## On being well

## Wellness is lifelong personal development

by Julia Johnson

Last year September came with uncertainty. Teachers began their school year not knowing where their collective stand to negotiate a contract that would restore working and learning conditions was going to take them, and 10 months later on June 30th they ended the school year with a five-year collective agreement in need of ratification by its membership.

For BCTF President Jinny Sims, this agreement-in-committee with the employer is being viewed as a significant gain for the teaching profession of BC—significant because "[teachers] stood firm for their students, public education, their profession, and their own rights." (*BCTF Bargaining Bulletin #31*).

At the Summer Associates' and Trainers' Institute held at UBC in August, Irene Lanzinger, BCTF first vice-president, suggested that this five-year contract was significant because it would provide time for teachers, local executives, and the Federation to reflect on the work of each member and each focus group. Instead of being "intensely engaged in actions related to union issues such as bargaining, the Federation as a whole and its individual members now have the opportunity to think more deeply about their work."

Mike Lombardi, speaking about professional development for teachers at the trainers' institute stated that the ProD priorities, as determined at the AGM in March 2006, would be as follows: "Teachers would (1) be instrumental in developing

educational policy as it relates to student learning and what goes on in the classroom, (2) advocate for continued improvements in student learning conditions, (3) continue to strive for autonomy of their professional development because they know what is best for kids, (4) continue to challenge the accountability agenda at the school, district, and provincial levels, (5) advocate for a quality education system that is free from the privatization of commercial interest, (6) promote the work of social justice action groups, and (7) extend the work of the Federation in Aboriginal education.

This September, teachers are relieved they will be able to begin their school year without political drama. They are grateful for the opportunity to enter their classrooms knowing that for the next five years there will be no province-wide interruption to their teaching. Beginning a school year with this stability will help to promote professional development, as teachers will have more opportunity to converse about their teaching practices. When teachers spend time with their colleagues talking about things they care about—in particular the practice of teaching—their intellectual, social, and emotional wellness needs are attended to.

Educator John W. Gardner, author of books on changing and decaying societies and personal renewal wrote: "Every institution in our society should contribute to the growth of the individual. Every institution must, of course have its own purposes and preoccupations, but over and above everything else that it does, it should be

prepared to answer the question posed by society: What is your institution doing to foster the development of the individual within it?"

For the next five years the direction of the BCTF will be to explore this question through the diverse PD workshops they provide. Facilitating this endeavour are volunteer PD associates who have been trained to help you think more deeply about the issues you encounter and the work you do. If we are to "continue to advocate for our students, ourselves, and for a socially just and civil society" (Jinny Sims) then we must also ask the question, "What am I becoming?" because "unless you change how you are, you will always have what you've got" (Jim Rohn). And what we have is a diverse society manifesting its troubled heart by warring. Rohn, author of *Claim Your Power*, suggests that we need to learn to work harder on ourselves than we do on our job and that "the business of personal development lasts a lifetime." To be sure personal development is what keeps us healthy in mind, body, and soul and maintaining a regime of personal well being is lifelong work. Getting help in achieving personal wellness and workplace health is only a phone call away through the BCTF workshop wellness program.

*Julia Johnson, a retired learning resource teacher in Quesnel, is a BCTF PD wellness associate and a member of the Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board. livingjewels@shaw.ca.*

## The BCTF Assistance Society

by Steve LeBel

The BCTF Assistance Society exists to help current and retired BCTF members who require emergency financial assistance. The assistance also extends to their dependents and spouses (including common-law and same-sex partners). It is another example of "teachers helping teachers."

The BCTF Assistance Society, an entity separate from the BCTF, was incorporated as a society in 1971, with residual funds from the former provincial and Vancouver Teachers' Medical Services' Associations (prior to creation of the B.C. Medical Services' Plan), as well as some bequests and donations. BCTF staff administer the society, and the BCTF bears those costs as its contribution.

The BCTF also appoints six active BCTF members as directors to the society's board each year. Another six directors are elected directly by the society's members at the society's AGM every April. The directors, and the BCTF staff members who work with them, treat every application for assistance with respect and confidentiality.

The society usually offers a modest, interest-free loan, and in special circumstances, an outright grant. Recipients are expected to repay their loans within a reasonable time, so that other members can access the same services. A repayment schedule is based on each applicant's finances.

Financial assistance is usually requested because of a personal disaster, such as a sudden medical or housing emergency,

or a family crisis. Assistance is not available for such things as debt consolidation, summer expenses, education costs, or situations arising from strikes or lockouts. Generally, assistance is not available until all other avenues have been explored.

To obtain an application form for assistance, go to [bctf.ca/pensions/index.html#AS](http://bctf.ca/pensions/index.html#AS) or ask your local teachers' association for an application form, or contact the BCTF Assistance Society directly at 604-871-1921, or 1-800-663-9163, and ask for the Assistance Society secretary. To be considered by the directors, an application form must be completed in full, and the applicant must sign a release authorizing a credit check.

*Steve LeBel is president of the BCTF Assistance Society.*

# Community school teams

## A made-in-Vancouver success story

by Yvonne Eamor

A ground-breaking Vancouver initiative aimed at refining the community schools concept has caught the attention of school districts as far away as Quebec.

And for good reason—it's helping keep kids on the right track at a time when the federal government is toying with the idea of jailing 10- and 11-year-olds with its proposal to expand the age of criminal responsibility.

Community School Teams (CSTs) have proven to be the success the COPE-led Vancouver School Board (VSB) envisioned when the initiative debuted in the 2004-05 school year. In that first year alone, CSTs co-ordinated or managed more than 1,600 programs for 55,000 students, and they helped improve the literacy and social responsibility of students who needed the extra helping hand. That's pretty impressive stuff for an initiative that had no map and no blueprint—only enthusiasm and a burning desire to serve typical and vulnerable children.

**“...We want high-risk kids to be part of a group they'd not normally associate with during the year.”**

This innovative program grew from a VSB concept to bring school and community members closer together by revamping its community school model to offer more resources and outreach for the city's vulnerable students, and to maximize the way it utilizes CommunityLINK funding. The result has been a made-in-Vancouver success story.

Community School Teams' Co-ordinator and former Vancouver principal, Dan Marriott, says the CSTs are not focused on one school, but on a family of schools, which allows team members to reach more students, and helps develop the neighborhood school as a key component of a community. “Vancouver used to have 10 or 11 community schools but they weren't necessarily situated in locations that served vulnerable children. The VSB shifted that focus so that community schools became more targeted, and more partnerships were created in the community.”

The board formed a dozen CSTs and chose one secondary school to serve as a hub for its neighboring elementary schools. Each team has a co-ordinator, a teacher, and a youth and family worker. “These team members are mobile,” says Marriott, “on a Monday morning the teacher could be with a Grade 5 class writing poetry and then teaching study skills for seventh graders in the afternoon and on Tuesday, it's off to another school where they might work with a small group of kids or they could co-teach. The youth and family worker might run a ‘demons and dragons’ group to talk about kids and their problems. The team co-ordinator might be meeting with community partners.” Essentially, the CSTs become part of several schools.

The teams work year-round, and during breaks in the school year, part-timers are hired to offer numerous recreational programs for neighborhood kids.

Marriott says while the focus of the CSTs and their various programs is vulnerable kids, any student can utilize what CSTs have to offer. “We run targeted and non-targeted programs. Within those programs, we know we have a set of vulnerable kids in there, but we don't want to separate them. We want the mixture, we need the mixture of kids for role modelling. We want high-risk kids to be part of a group they'd not normally associate with during the year.”

Marriott says such inclusion helps “let these kids be just ordinary kids in the neighbourhood. We don't want them separated and forming cliques or gangs and we don't want them to be alone. And we don't want that disconnect you get with really high-risk students. We want them to be part of the community.”

Marriott says it's been documented that youth as young as 10 can have characteristics that indicate they are vulnerable to dropping out of school. “Dropping out of school is not an event,” says Marriott, “it's a series of events. Our teams help keep kids in school, help them stay connected, and help their parents stay connected. It all has to help keep the kids on track.”

While CSTs spend time with kids during school hours, the teams are arguably most successful after school—when at-risk kids are most vulnerable.

“Almost all our hubs have hired a part-time programmer who is busy from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. running after school programs,” says Marriott. “It could be a homework program, or a recreational activity ranging from basketweaving to piano lessons to baseball. The key is to keep them involved with a quality experience after school.”

Marriott says the teams have found that if they can capture kids in the “soft time” between after school and after work—when parents return home—

**“They've created a huge connection with the school as the centre of the community, the parents and the kids feel that...”**

they've accomplished a couple of things. “They've created a huge connection with the school as the centre of the community, the parents and the kids feel that. And, they've taken the kids out of harm's way by ensuring they're not influenced by negative factors.”

Heading into the third year of operations, Marriott says the results have been terrific. “We've managed to put resources where they had not been before. Our informal results show a 37% growth in literacy in the kids who fall under our umbrella, and an improvement of about 55% in social responsibility. This model works very effectively.”

A researcher has been hired to compile detailed data to determine just how successful and valuable the CSTs have become to the district.

The only downside, says Marriott, is there are more kids than staff. “We have 42 staff members to handle the city's 4,000 vulnerable kids. The notion of who is vulnerable is difficult so basically, the work we're doing has no limits.”

He suggests that CSTs may have to become more selective about the programs they offer to ensure programs remain high quality. “And probably, we could target populations that have not been targeted before and have a bigger, more comprehensive impact on our neighborhoods.”

Marriott estimates BC's CommunityLINK funding comprises barely 1% of the province's total education budget. “We receive about \$3 million from CommunityLINK, so the impact of that 1% is considerable. I believe the province is getting a pretty good bang for its buck.”

Marriott says there is one thing with which CSTs can't help: poverty. “Many vulnerability issues stem from poverty and while we can't mitigate poverty, we can improve the chances of getting a good education. And if there's something going on that can help these kids, we're going to try to get it to them.”

That's a pretty good model for other districts, like those in Quebec, to emulate.

*Yvonne Eamor is the BCTF's media relations officer.*

## Programmes et Services français de la FECB

par Pierre Blouin

La Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de la C.-B. (FECB) compte parmi ses membres un nombre important de personnes dont le français est la langue de travail. L'an dernier, on comptait près de 2 000 membres travaillant en immersion française à travers la province, plus de 300 au programme francophone et un certain nombre en français langue seconde. Ces membres représentent donc un minimum de 7 % de la membricité de la Fédération.

Pour répondre à leurs besoins, la FECB a créé, il y a maintenant 12 ans, le Comité consultatif des programmes et services français et le Bureau des programmes et services français.

Le Comité consultatif qui est composé de sept enseignantes et enseignants : Darlene Abbie (Oliver), Daniel Bélanger (Vancouver), Donald LeClair (Prince George), Eva Paré (Comox), Caroline Picard (Sechelt), René St-Martin (Abbotsford), Karina Younk (Nanaimo) a pour mandat de :

- conseiller le Comité exécutif quant aux besoins et aux préoccupations des enseignants du programme d'immersion et du programme francophone.
- suivre l'évolution du domaine éducationnel en ce qui a trait à l'éducation en français langue première et seconde et en aviser le Comité exécutif.
- aviser le Comité exécutif au sujet de la négociation collective, du perfectionnement professionnel et autres questions d'ordre organisationnel concernant les membres dont le français est la langue de travail ou première (FLTP).
- passer en revue les énoncés de politiques et les objectifs de la FECB par rapport aux membres FLTP.

Concrètement, le Bureau assure la communication en français aux membres FLTP, offre des activités de perfectionnement professionnel en français, soutient le corps enseignant en les représentant devant le Collège des enseignants (BCCT), publie le bulletin d'information *Le Coin français*, organise une conférence pour le nouveau personnel enseignant, coordonne les rencontres de la Coalition du Français composée de divers partenaires en éducation, coordonne les services de traduction en français, fournit un dossier d'information pour ceux et celles à la recherche d'emploi, maintient un site Web ([bctf.ca/francais/](http://bctf.ca/francais/)), etc.

Simplement dit, si vous avez besoin de renseignements, de services ou d'aide en français contactez Louise Fort (604-871-1869) ou Pierre Blouin (604-871-1844) (appel sans frais d'interurbain 1-800-663-9163) et il nous fera plaisir de vous répondre... en français.

*Pierre Blouin, coordinateur des Programmes et Services français à la FECB*

**Synopsis:** This article presents the French programs and services offered by the BCTF.



(Top) Rec-and-reading students and volunteers at the Teddy Bear picnic, (left) volunteer Justin Hirayama and (right) volunteer Audrey Wong.

*Homelessness Awareness Week 2006  
October 16–22*

# Together we can solve it

by Catherine Evans

**H**omelessness is a growing tragedy in BC. The visible homeless are becoming more visible and showing up in a broader range of communities and neighbourhoods. The number of invisible homeless is also growing. The invisible homeless include families staying with relatives, teenagers sleeping on friends' sofas, and people living in their cars. An even greater number of individuals and families are at serious risk of becoming homeless.

*Homelessness is expensive in ways that are not always obvious...*

In response to the urgent need to address the needs of people who are homeless, and to bring attention to the promising ways that communities have found to end homelessness, volunteer groups and social service agencies in dozens of municipalities throughout North America have organized "Homelessness Awareness Weeks" and "Homeless Connect Days."

Last year in BC alone, there were Homelessness Awareness Weeks in Nelson, Kelowna, Nanaimo, and

Victoria. This year, from October 16 to 22 there will be Homelessness Awareness Weeks in Nelson, Nanaimo, Kelowna, Prince George, Kamloops, Whitehorse and in approximately 10 of the Greater Vancouver communities. Victoria and Port Alberni started the year off with Homelessness Awareness Weeks in early February.

These weeks increase understanding of homelessness—how it happens and what can be done about it—and they connect homeless people to services and programs that can provide assistance with some of their basic needs. This year in the Greater Vancouver region, Homelessness Awareness Week is focussing on health—the health of the individuals who are homeless and the health of the communities where they live. There will be a number of events spread throughout the region that will deal with some aspects of the health of people who are homeless, e.g., providing a foot care clinic because many people who are homeless develop conditions such as "street feet" from having chronically damp shoes and socks.

Studies show that people who are homeless often become homeless as a result of a health condition or develop a health condition as a result of living

without proper shelter and access to basic health care. The 2005 homeless count for the Greater Vancouver region, for example, found that 25% of the approximately 2,000 homeless people interviewed during the count identified a health condition as the principle reason they became homeless. More serious was the finding that of the people who are homeless, 39% reported having a current health condition, and a further 35% reported having more than one current health condition. The kind of health conditions identified were addictions 49%, medical conditions 35%, mental illness 23%, and physical disabilities 21%. For more information about the 2005 homeless count in the Greater Vancouver region, go to [www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness](http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness).

Apart from the human tragedy these figures represent, there is an enormous social and economic cost that accompanies homelessness. In some communities, business leaders have become involved in addressing homelessness because the presence of significant numbers of people who are homeless directly affects their ability to attract and keep employees. They have also learned that dealing with homelessness by providing housing is the most cost effective and socially beneficial way to deal with the issue.

Homelessness is expensive in ways that are not always obvious—from doubling the average cost of health care on an annual basis, to higher law

*In San Diego, researchers tracked 15 chronically homeless people over 18 months and discovered that more than \$3 million was spent providing this group with emergency response, health, and other services.*

enforcement costs. US researchers in particular have quantified the costs of homelessness and the results are surprising. In San Diego, researchers tracked 15 chronically homeless people over 18 months and discovered that more than \$3 million was spent providing this group with emergency response, health, and other services. The sad thing was that at the end of the day, all of these people were still homeless. More effective in every way and much more affordable would be the provision of supportive housing.

Action is needed in BC to bring about an end to homelessness in our communities. During Homelessness Awareness Week teachers have an opportunity to talk to young people about homelessness and how to solve the problem. Information and resources are available on the following web sites: Greater Vancouver Region: [stophomelessness.ca](http://stophomelessness.ca) and Kelowna: [aware.phat-co.ca](http://aware.phat-co.ca).

*Catherine Evans is a coordinator of the 2006 Greater Vancouver Homelessness Awareness Week sponsored by the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness.*

# Is your classroom in the closet?

by Joan Merrifield and James Chamberlain

*"I hope this workshop about queers is not for us!" exclaimed one teacher.*

Has this thought ever crossed your mind?

When you first started your career did you ever envision yourself teaching about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) issues? Probably not! The BCTF first began its anti-homophobia work in 1997. Ten years later the average classroom teacher continues to struggle in dealing with homophobic name-calling and curricular integration of LGBT issues for a variety of reasons. This article examines the barriers and our common fears in teaching anti-homophobia education in schools.

**What is your reaction to gay issues in schools?**

When colleagues try to broach the topic of LGBT issues and support for same-gender families in schools, do you oppose them or work together for positive change?

Our challenge as educators is to check any moral, religious, or cultural objections to homosexuality at the classroom door and focus on our professional responsibilities to children. Namely, we must provide a safe, supportive welcoming school environment, where children can learn to their full potential. To do so, every child must see their life mirrored and positively reflected back to them through the curriculum.

Curricular change is coming. The Ministry of Education recently announced a complete review of the K–12 curriculum as a result of a resolution to the human rights complaint by Coquitlam teacher, Murray Corren. This review is specific to issues of race, ethnicity, gender, family structure and sexual orientation. Just as we examine our personal attitudes on other social justice issues, so too must we begin to think about homosexuality, homophobia and our classroom practices.

Nanaimo teacher Joan Merrifield conducted a survey for her master's thesis on the effectiveness of the BCTF's anti-homophobia workshops. She polled teachers from across BC who had participated in these workshops as part of their professional development training. The results provide insight into what we think and how our profession has begun to deal with LGBT issues. Some common themes emerged:

- Personal apathy, ignorance and/or discomfort
- Resistance from colleagues and administrators
- Fear of parent and community reactions
- Lack of skills and strategies in dealing with LGBT issues.

**How do our personal attitudes hinder inclusive teaching?**

Clearly as professionals, we need to examine our own attitudes toward LGBT people and think about how our actions impact the school climate.

Where do our ideas come from? What accurate information did we learn as students about LGBT issues? How do our present day attitudes toward LGBT people play themselves out in a school setting?

Merrifield's research found that the most pressing matter for us, as educators, was dealing with our colleague's negative attitudes. Educators wrote about hearing homophobic jokes and slurs in the staffroom and how this was difficult to deal with. One educator said that it was challenging to create a climate of acceptance and inclusion when dealing with rudeness and put-downs from colleagues. A counselor said that the hardest part was being perceived by angry colleagues, "of having a personal agenda and being accused of being a lesbian for supporting a transgender student."

After attending a BCTF workshop another educator commented on the negative reaction she received from staff at her school when she tried to bring up LGBT issues. She said in her survey, "I felt so angry and frustrated that I was in tears. I suddenly realized that LGBT people live with this intolerance everyday."

Contrary to the scenarios, more and more educators are willing to examine these issues

*The reluctance of colleagues to consider gay bashing and homophobia as serious issues helps perpetuate this "code of silence" within our profession.*

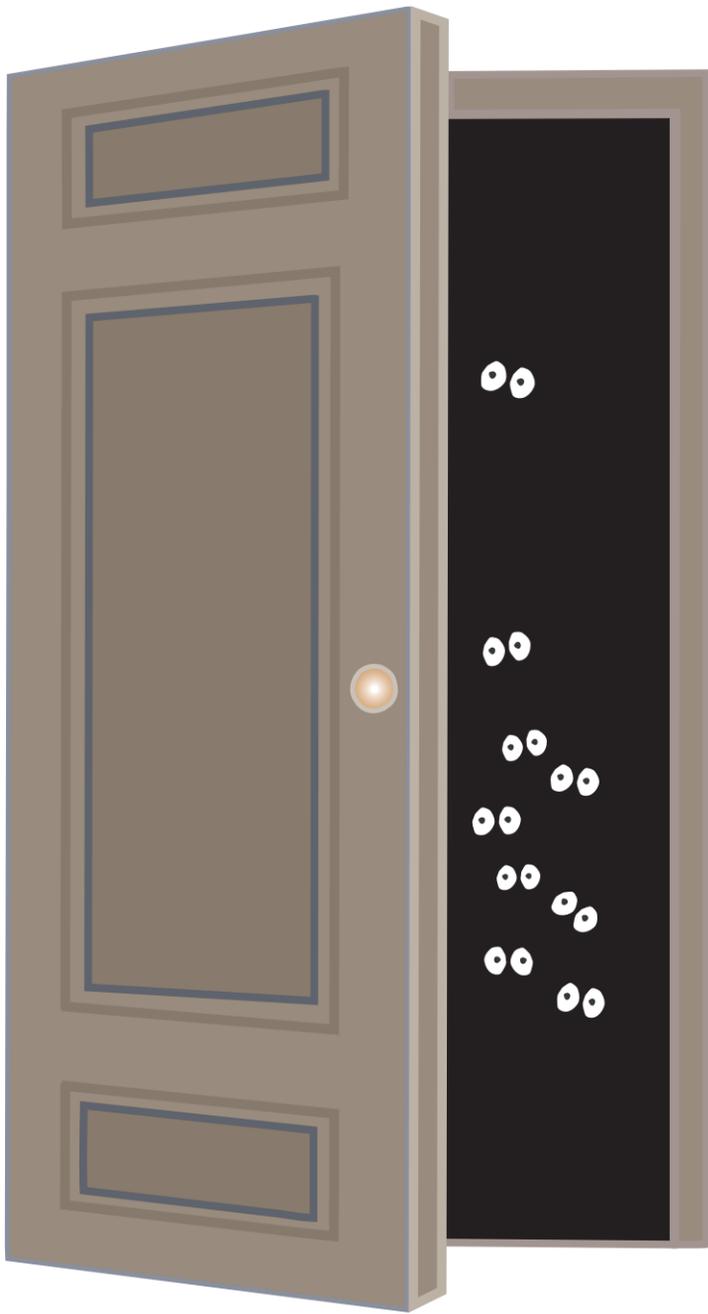
as well as, their classroom practices. What they need most is support from colleagues, administrators and allies. One respondent commented "attending a workshop made my taking action easier because the administrator and staff were there together. Policy decisions gave us the back-up we needed to deal with homophobic behaviour."

**Does teaching about homosexuality and homophobia make you nervous or uncomfortable?**

Some of your colleagues say it does. Common survey comments centred on teacher awkwardness in discussing LGBT issues. Some were reticent to even begin a dialogue while others saw the topic as "unimportant." The reluctance of colleagues to consider gay bashing and homophobia as serious issues helps perpetuate this "code of silence" within our profession. Just as bullying is perpetuated through a similar code of silence, so too is ignorance about LGBT issues. One workshop participant stated it had "called me on my moral laziness." Several commented on their own complicity with homophobia and heterosexism through their silence. It is natural to feel some level of

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personal discomfort when dealing with social justice issues in schools. However, it is our responsibility to step up to the plate and have these difficult conversations. As one educator said, "support from colleagues gives staffs the opportunity to freely and openly ask questions and make comments in a safe environment."

#### Are you concerned or worried about parents' reactions to anti-homophobia education?

Many of us naturally are. We want to protect our professional reputations as caring, trusted individuals. At the same time, we don't want to become immobilized by fear. One respondent stated, "I am scared of parents' homophobic beliefs. I'm scared of being accused of being a lesbian." This comment signifies the need for us all to challenge

#### Always remember we have a collective responsibility to be inclusive of everyone in our classroom and our community.

the negative stereotype that only LGBT teachers care or would be concerned about equality and the human rights of sexual minority students.

Always remember we have a collective responsibility to be inclusive of everyone in our classroom and our community. We need to teach all children to grow up to be respectful and responsible citizens. Even in communities that are considered "machismo" or socially conservative, support exists. When you take the time, to explain your curriculum to parents without engaging in moral or religious debates, you

will find many natural allies. When parents know you as a caring teacher, they will stand by you. Also many parents care deeply about social justice issues and are depending on educators to take leadership here.

#### Has your school broached this topic yet?

Teachers and administration have a key role to play in this area.

Merrifield's master's survey identified curricular change as a significant challenge for teachers. Over 95% of survey respondents acknowledged a lack of teaching strategies and skills for dealing with LGBT topics. Her research also showed the positive impact and benefits of BCTF antihomophobia workshops. One participant, stated "It was empowering to see straight allies take up the challenge of doing anti-homophobia work. Attending a BCTF workshop on this topic gave our staff permission to break the silence on LGBT issues."

The BCTF currently offers two antihomophobia workshops free to teachers. One is called "Breaking the Silence on LGBT Issues." The other is called "That's So Gay! Is Not Okay." These free workshops help participants to examine their own attitudes, disrupt homophobic slurs and learn concrete strategies for integrating LGBT issues into existing curriculum. The BCTF also has a web page devoted to antihomophobia education at [www.bctf.bc.ca/social/homophobia](http://www.bctf.bc.ca/social/homophobia). Gay and Lesbian Educators of B.C., [www.galebc.org](http://www.galebc.org), also has a plethora of teaching resources on LGBT issues including practical lesson plans for Kindergarten to Grade 12.

With the current Ministry of Education review of the K-12 curriculum in all subject areas,

now is the time for your school to consider action. Additionally, once the BC Safe Schools Act passes in the legislature, school districts will be expected to protect LGBT students and their families from harassment and discrimination.

Changes are imminent, so it's time for all of us to break out of our classroom closets.

*Joan Merrifield teaches Grades 5/6 on Gabriola Island and James Chamberlain teaches Grade 3 in Surrey.*

#### The percentage of teenagers in BC who have attempted suicide and their sexual orientation

3.3% heterosexual boys  
8.8% homosexual boys  
2.8% bisexual boys  
8.2% heterosexual girls  
38.0% lesbian girls  
30.4% bisexual girls

Source: 2003 McCreary Centre Society Survey

The results were from a new analysis of a 2003 survey of 30,000 students between Grades 7 and 12 done by the BC-based McCreary Centre Society, which asked students if they had attempted suicide in the previous year.

#### A victory for LGBT issues

The province will be developing a new course for Grade 12 students that will explore the nature of a just and equitable society by focusing on social justice issues.

The new elective course will offer students opportunities to study the legal, political, ethical, and economic perspectives that inform Canadian concepts of justice and equality. Content will include issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, family structure, and sexual orientation. The course will be piloted in the 2007-08 school year, with full implementation in September 2008.

The province will also establish a process and schedule to review the BC educational curriculum to ensure that it reflects inclusion and respect for the diverse groups that today make up BC's population. Reviews will be conducted when each course or area of study comes up for regular revision by the Ministry of Education.

These measures result from an agreement between the province and Peter and Murray Corren of Vancouver, who were seeking, through the BC Human Rights Tribunal, the addition of sexual orientation issues to the curriculum for the British Columbia public school system.

— Murray Corren

## Teachers' tips Organizing for "grey area" students

by Ankie Carswell

Our classroom needs are becoming increasingly diverse. There may be designated support for some designated students but there is little for grey area students. Organization is one way to support these students, and the following strategies, although intended for elementary school students who have difficulty following the classroom routines, may benefit your entire class, regardless of grade level.

#### Colours

The use of colours for organization is extremely helpful. This visual categorization helps students who consistently rummage through their desks to find the appropriate books, sheets, or assignments or who struggle to organize information.

- *Use the same colour duo-tang or binder for a certain subject.*

Using the same colour provides students with clues to what is happening in the class, and at what time. This is helpful to students who return to class partway through a lesson. This also saves you time when looking for a book in a student's desk. If you keep all student work in a central location, this helps ensure that the correct subject notebook is stored in the right place. The colour verification will improve a student's organization within the classroom.

- *Use different colour paper for worksheets or other photocopied work.* While this is not always possible due to the higher cost of coloured paper, this type of colour coding helps students identify what it is they are bringing home, working on, or must locate. For example, all chapter review work could be photocopied on yellow paper, making it easier for the student to identify which materials are required for studying.



- *Use different colour pens and highlighters.* Highlighting with different colours is an effective technique for students to categorize information within the same piece of text. This also organizes the notetaking task that may follow. This strategy requires practice and over time, becomes easier and more efficient.

#### Consistency

Consistency and routine is infinitely beneficial to all students but particularly those who require attention to transition into different subjects or activities.

- *Structure of the day.* Keep the academics in the morning to help those students whose attention wanes by the afternoon. Try to keep the same subject on the same day.

Predictability makes it easier for students who have difficulty remembering homework to ensure they are organized for the day. If time permits, have a short five-minute review task on the board or overhead for the students to complete each morning while administrative is dealt with and late comers arrive. This will minimize the interruptions after you start teaching.

- *Structure of the work.*

Routines for certain subjects help students become more proficient at organizing their work. Ensure their workspace is clear and only the necessary supplies are ready. Enforcing simple concepts such as putting the date, title or subject as well as the page number will help students organize loose papers when they turn up.

#### Chunking and checking in

Breaking up assignments into manageable chunks of work helps to keep the student on task as well as make it easier for you to manage their progress.

- *Criteria checklist.* Providing students with an outline of an assignment with the specific criteria within each section assists the student to verify all components are there before proceeding to the next step. This type of chunking builds in "check-in with the teacher" opportunities. The checklist also helps the student ensure that all criteria have been met before submitting the assignment to you.

- *Regular conferencing time with students.* While not every student requires you to check-in with them, it definitely keeps some students on track. Set aside some time during the day to talk to these students. You may notice that the individual attention makes a difference.

*Ankie Carswell is a resource teacher, Rosser Elementary School, Burnaby.*

## Project Overseas, July-August 2007

Sponsored jointly by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and its member organizations

Each year Project Overseas sends about 50 Canadian teachers to work in partnership with teacher organizations in English- and French-speaking developing countries to provide professional-development in-service programs to teachers.

Projects are based on requests from CTF's partners in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, and take place during the summer. PO is a volunteer experience, but administrative, travel, and living expenses are covered.

Visit [bctf.ca/social/isp/TeachingOverseas.html](http://bctf.ca/social/isp/TeachingOverseas.html) for more details.

**REQUIREMENTS:** BCTF membership, an appropriate teacher's certificate, a minimum of five years' teaching experience in Canada, Canadian citizenship, excellent health, and evidence of flexibility and mature judgment.

**DEADLINE:** applications must be received at the BCTF by November 16, 2006

Information & applications: Anne Field, BC Teachers' Federation  
604-871-2251, toll-free 1-800-663-9163, fax 604-871-2294, [afield@bctf.ca](mailto:afield@bctf.ca)

## 10 New BCTF lesson aids

### 1 LA 9347—Children's Global Arts: Communicating The World We Want

Tim Hopper, Kathy Sanford, Nadine Cruickshanks, DVD, 33 p. Project Guide, ©2005. This DVD tells the story of the Children's Global Arts project, which started in 2003. The project is an exchange of artwork between children in Canada and children in war-torn Afghanistan and Iraq and is based on the theme "The World We Want." The DVD contains video footage of five lessons created and taught by teachers to develop arts-based exchanges with children. The children's artistic expressions impart images and impressions of the world we live in and visions for the world we want. The project web site has examples of children's expressions from around the world: [www.childrenglobalarts.ca](http://www.childrenglobalarts.ca). Grades K-6. \$18.95.

**2 LA7071—Home Economics Now: Transformative Practice, Ecology, and Everyday Life**, edited by Mary Leah de Zwart, 174 p. ©2004. This book is a collection of papers originally presented at the Vaines Symposium held at UBC in September 2003 to honour Dr. Eleanore Vaines. Each of the nine chapters demonstrates the deep influence Vaines' scholarship, theorizing, and research has had on the next generation of scholars in home economics, human ecology, family studies and education. The contributors highlight the recurring themes of Eleanore Vaines' work: transforming practice through reflection guided by a moral vision, re-imagining the world as our home, attending the common good and the ecological values for living in harmony with our world, and uncovering the wholeness and sacredness of everyday life. This book also includes a collection of maps/charts created by Eleanore Vaines to guide her theoretical inquiries. Grades 8-Adult. \$29.95.

**3 LA 8007—Basic Phonics Skills, Level A, Grades PreK-K**, produced by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers, 290 p. ©2004. This book features 239 reproducible skill sheets and 26 reproducible Little Alphabet Readers. The book is organized into sections by phonetic or structural element, with each skill presented in the same consistent format. Worksheets for each skill progress in difficulty so that teachers may choose practice that meets individual student needs. Note that the book is published in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. \$29.95

**4 LA 8008—Basic Phonics Skills, Level B, Grades K-1**, Produced by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers, 290 p., ©2004. This book features 238 reproducible skill sheets and 20 reproducible Little Phonics Readers featuring stories that utilize the phonetic elements presented in that book. The book is organized into sections by phonetic or structural element, with each skill presented in the same consistent format. Worksheets for each skill progress in difficulty so that teachers may choose practice that meets individual student needs. Note that the book is published in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. \$29.95

**5 LA 9593—Experimenting with Physical Science: A Sourcebook for Elementary and Middle School Teachers**, Gordon Gore, 302 p. ©2006. This illustrated book is an updated version and collection of all of the author's previous "Experimenting With" series: Experimenting with Light and Colour, Experimenting with Forces, Experimenting with Simple Machines, Experimenting with Electricity, Experimenting with Air, Experimenting with Energy, and Experimenting with Physical and Chemical Changes. Teacher guides and chapter tests are included within the book for all topics. This book includes hands-on science activities for young people. The activities may be done in pairs or small groups of students. Many of the activities require only readily available materials. Grades 6-9. \$31.95

### 6 LA 9773—Any Kid Can Write Music!

Anne Spitzer Hill, 14 p. ©2005. This unit plan was written to assist teachers in guiding elementary students through a series of simple, fun and logical steps to create and perform a composition for either recorder or xylophone. Includes concepts to be learned, materials required, five lessons and a performance outline. Grades 4-5 \$3.95

**7 LA 3202—Legends and Teachings of Xeel's the Creator**, Pacific Educational Press, 112 p., ©2006. This book provides a rich source of Coast Salish history and teachings through the four traditional stories of Elder Ellen Rice White, handed down to her from her grandparents and their ancestors. The tales are ancient but their lessons are surprisingly modern: how a mother can help her baby survive and thrive, how a community can prevent preteens from becoming angry and rebellious, how people from different cultures can learn to respect one another and celebrate their differences, and how a young man can learn to take responsibility for the children he has fathered. The book fulfills many of the Prescribed Learning Outcomes listed in the BC Ministry of Education Integrated Resource Package (2000), and it is especially well suited as a learning resource for BC First Nations Studies students. Grades 4+ \$18.95.

**8 LA 3214—Timeline History of Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia**, BCTF, 28 cm x 170 cm poster, ©2006. This colourful poster includes selected times with a description of important historical events from pre-contact and 1492-2001, written from the perspective of the Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia. Grades 4+. \$4.50.

**9 LA F9408B—Math de tête ! 6e année**, Annie St-Amand, 60 p. ©2003. Un cahier d'activités reliées aux nombres et leur valeur, les quatre opérations, les fractions et les nombres décimaux, les mesures, la logique : stratégies, connaissances et applications. Les Éditions—À Reproduire. Niveau 6e et 7e. \$31.95. et LA F9408B—Math de tête ! 6e année, Corrigé de l'enseignant, 60 p. ©2003. \$12.95.

**10 LA F9906—Quand revient septembre Guide sur la gestion de classe participative (vol. 1)**, Jacqueline Caron, 450 p. ©1994. Un guide sur la gestion de classe participative à l'intention du personnel enseignant du pré-scolaire, du primaire et du secondaire. Les thèmes : comment développer une approche centrée sur l'élève, créer un climat motivant dans la classe, comment gérer les apprentissages avec l'élève, comment gérer sa classe pour gérer les différences, questionner son comment faire, comment actualiser la philosophie et le contenu des programmes. \$52.95. et LA F9907—Quand revient septembre Recueil d'outils organisationnels (vol. 2), Jacqueline Caron, 437 p. ©1997. Dans ce recueil d'outils organisationnels : raffiner son modèle participatif, la participation de l'apprenant, créer un climat propice à l'apprentissage, enrichir sa pratique, se réapproprier sa profession. Matériel reproducible inclus. \$52.95.

More curriculum resources and information are available at [www.bcalmer.ca](http://www.bcalmer.ca).

To order any of the above lesson aids, enclose a cheque payable to the BCTF or authorized purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service 100-550 West 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 or telephone 604-871-2180 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, Local 2180, with a Visa or Mastercard. GST and postage/handling are included in the prices. Orders are sent by return mail. Lesson Aids office and display room hours: 9:00-5:00 Mon. to Fri. from Sept. to June; 9:00-5:00 Tues. to Fri. during July and Aug.; 9:00-12:00 on Sat. during Sept., Oct., Jan., and Feb. [bctf.ca/LessonAids](http://bctf.ca/LessonAids).

## Teachers' Pension Plan

**NOTE:** This article was written before our agreement was negotiated; as part of the agreement the government will put \$20 million into the IAA account.

### Funding for your basic pension and other post-retirement benefits

Along with the basic pension benefit, the Teachers' Pension Plan also provides post-retirement group benefits (extended health and dental) and pension inflation protection. Unlike the basic benefit, these benefits are not guaranteed; they are provided only to the limit of available funding and may be reduced or eliminated at any time. This overview explains how the funding arrangements currently in place determine which benefits the plan can and cannot guarantee.

#### Basic Pension

Your basic pension (which provides the payment you receive each month) is a prefunded benefit. This means that it is managed to ensure that there is enough money to pay for current and future pensions. The Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees has the authority and obligation to increase the contribution rates for basic pensions when an actuarial valuation identifies a funding shortfall, as was the case in July of 2004. Because of this funding arrangement, the plan can ensure that your basic pension will be paid for as long as you live and, depending on the option you choose when you retire, may continue to be fully or partially paid to your surviving spouse or beneficiary. (Note: The December 31, 2005 actuarial valuation will be available to the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees late in 2006.)

#### Inflation Protection

Funding for inflation protection is limited to member

contributions of 2% of pensionable salary and employer contributions of 1.13% of pensionable salary, plus the investment income from these contributions. Some of the employer contribution is used to fund group benefits (EHB and dental plans) and therefore is not invested for future inflation protection.

As group benefit costs increase and use up a larger portion of the employer contributions (see group benefits), as the proportion of retired to active members increases, and if investment returns remain at the same levels, there are fewer funds available for inflation protection. At the same time, more funds are needed for inflation protection because there are more retirees and they are living longer. So while the plan can guarantee that inflation protection increases already added to pensions will continue to be paid (they become part of the prefunded basic pension), it cannot guarantee that these increases will be available in the future.

#### Group benefits

Group benefits are paid on a "current cash" basis from premiums paid by retirees, and from a portion of the employer contributions otherwise meant to fund inflation protection (to a

maximum of 71% of the employer contribution rate). The following chart shows how the increasing costs of group benefits will exceed this maximum by 2007 (see chart below).

If this funding shortfall occurs, the plan will not be able to continue to provide the current level of group benefits coverage.

The Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees is looking at what kind of inflation protection/group benefits package the plan can continue to provide, given the limited funding available for these benefits.

### Responsible investing

bcIMC, the investment agent of the Teachers' Pension Plan, has recently enhanced its public web site by adding a section dedicated to responsible investing. This new section highlights corporate governance and proxy voting, as well as environmental, social, and engagement issues. The responsible investing section of the web site also contains a new quarterly *Responsible Investing Highlights* publication, which summarizes bcIMC's key corporate governance and responsible investing initiatives for the quarter. Visit the site at [www.bcimc.com/ResponsibleInvesting/Default.asp](http://www.bcimc.com/ResponsibleInvesting/Default.asp).

Percentage of Available Employer IAA Contributions Used by Group Benefits



## Pension seminars 2006-07

Venues are still to be confirmed in specified locations. Members who register for a particular seminar will receive an e-mail confirming specific time and location.

Contact information for registration and more information about the TPP Member Seminars is:

Telephone 250-356-2466, or toll-free at 1-877-558-5574.  
 Fax 250-953-0436  
 E-mail [TPPseminars@pensionsbc.ca](mailto:TPPseminars@pensionsbc.ca)  
 Web site [www.tpp.pensionsbc.ca](http://www.tpp.pensionsbc.ca)

|                 |             |                |   |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|---|
| Richmond        | October 12  | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | TBA                                       |
| Richmond        | October 14  | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | TBA                                       |
| Victoria        | October 26  | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | UVic (Michele Pujol Room)                 |
| Victoria        | October 28  | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | UVic (Michele Pujol Room)                 |
| Delta           | October 26  | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | TBA                                       |
| Delta           | October 28  | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | TBA                                       |
| Kamloops        | November 18 | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Executive Inn                             |
| Abbotsford      | November 25 | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Abbotsford District Teachers' Association |
| Coquitlam       | January 11  | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | TBA                                       |
| Coquitlam       | January 13  | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | TBA                                       |
| Surrey          | January 25  | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | Kwantlen University College               |
| Surrey          | January 27  | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Kwantlen University College               |
| Nanaimo         | February 10 | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Coast Bastion Inn                         |
| Vancouver       | February 15 | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | Best Western Chateau Granville            |
| Vancouver       | February 17 | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Best Western Chateau Granville            |
| Prince George   | March 1     | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | Days Inn                                  |
| Prince George   | March 3     | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Days Inn                                  |
| Williams Lake   | March 10    | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Overlander                                |
| Kelowna         | March 31    | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | UBC Okanagan Conferences & Accommodations |
| Terrace         | April 14    | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Best Western Terrace Inn                  |
| Campbell River  | April 21    | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | TBA                                       |
| Burnaby         | April 26    | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | BCIT Burnaby                              |
| Burnaby         | April 28    | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | BCIT Burnaby                              |
| Cranbrook       | May 5       | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | College of the Rockies                    |
| North Vancouver | May 10      | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  | TBA                                       |
| North Vancouver | May 12      | 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | TBA                                       |

## College fees for SIP recipients

The BC College of teachers has clarified its revised policy P7.B.01.2, concerning the waiver of college fees for members who are in receipt of benefits from the Salary Indemnity Plan.

- Members who are in receipt of long-term disability in June of 2006 and who are working a 39% or smaller accommodated assignment are eligible to have their BC College of Teachers' fee waived for the 2006-07 year.
- Members who are in receipt of long-term disability in June 2006 and who are working a 40% or greater accommodated assignment are responsible for paying their own BC College of Teacher fee for the 2006-07 year.

The BCTF will inform the BC College of Teachers of those who are eligible for this waiver.

If you have already paid your college fee, and are eligible for the waiver, you may call the College of Teachers, directly 604-731-8170 to arrange for a refund.

- Patti McLaughlin

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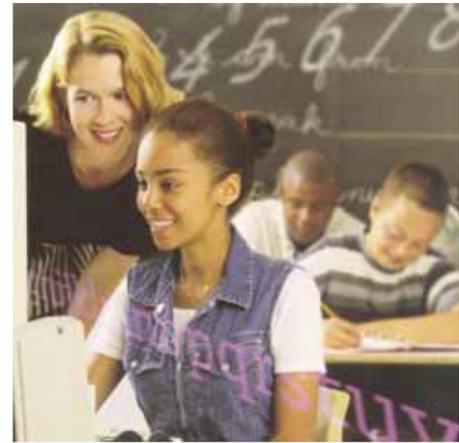


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Deadline: **November 9th, 2006**

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Embassy of the Republic of Korea  
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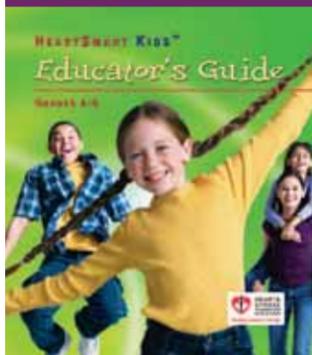
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[www.victoriapolice.ca](http://www.victoriapolice.ca)

## CLASSIFIED

### TRAVEL/VACATION

**EAST COAST COTTAGES** Beach House at the Cape, sleeps 10, 4 bd., 2 bath, sunroom, 2 sundecks, bbq, private, treed property. The Ocean Breeze Cottage, sleeps 5, 2 bd., 1 bath, wraparound deck, bbq. Both properties are next to each other and can be rented together, fresh seafood market nearby, beautiful sandy beaches. Centrally located along the NB coast, 1 hr. to PEI or NS. Wkly or mthly rates. Visit our website: [www.seatosearentals.com](http://www.seatosearentals.com)

**CHEMAINUS**, Vancouver Island. Tide's Inn, sleeps 2, gas F/P, Tide's Table, sleeps 5, quiet with beautiful gardens, both properties have panoramic ocean views, covered decks and are beautifully decorated. Enjoy kayaking, golfing, beautiful beaches and Salt Spring Ferry nearby. Wkly and mthly rates. Visit our website: [www.seatosearentals.com](http://www.seatosearentals.com)

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

**Old PUERTO VALLARTA** large 1 bd. condo, 2 blks from Los Muertos Beach, 604-879-7673, [www.vrbo.com/56182](http://www.vrbo.com/56182)

**QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS/HAIDA GWAII** Fabulous "mothership" kayaking, wilderness adventure, unforgettable experiences. 1-888-559-8317, [www.island.net/~archipel](http://www.island.net/~archipel)

**WHISTLER** Condo. Sleeps 4, views, close to village, all amen. 604-943-9423.

**GRANADA, NICARAGUA.** Discover this beautiful Spanish colonial city and little known country. B&B run by retired BC teacher. For information contact [carolannrea@hotmail.com](mailto:carolannrea@hotmail.com)

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

**BLACKCOMB** Luxury 2 bd/loft, 3 bath, sleeps 8, ski-in, ski-out, 604-940-0156.

**WHISTLER CREEK** townhouse for rent. View of Alta Lake. 2 bath., 3 bd., sleeps 6. 604-535-3447.

**WHISTLER** 1 bd. condo (Whistler Creekside) sleeps 4, F/P, hot tub, swimming pool, sauna, kitchen fully equipped, u/ground parking, close to lift and stores. Call Jan or John at 604-530-0958.

**WHISTLER** Weekend ski group. Emerald Estates. 4+ bd., 2+ bath, rustic log cabin, F/P, hot tub, 6 appliances, bbq, deck. Phone for email photos. 604-980-1904, 604-935-9635.

**MAZATLAN, MEXICO** 2 bd., 2 bath condo. Sleeps 4. Pool, tennis, 3 blks to beach. Teacher owned \$1000 US/mo. Tel. 604-733-6184, e-mail: [leilade@shaw.ca](mailto:leilade@shaw.ca)

**SUN PEAKS RESORT** Stone's Throw, Unit 49, luxurious brand new condo, 2 bd/2 bath, sleeps 5, ski-in/ski-out, mountain views, private hot tub, F/P, bbq, 6 appliances, plasma TVs. All amenities. NS/NP. 1-800-585-8834, reservation code: Teacher

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

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

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

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

**ACAPULCO** time share condo available (Spring Break '07) sleeps 4, 1 wk. \$750 CDN. More info at [www.RAVC.com](http://www.RAVC.com), Phone Jackie 604-594-6207.

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Kelowna BC

# CLASSIFIED

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

**FRANCE HOLIDAY RENTALS** Medieval house/ studio, 16C village, Montagnac, S France. 1/2 hr. Montpellier, 15 min. Med. [sjevent@shaw.ca](mailto:sjevent@shaw.ca)

**WHISTLER BLACKCOMB** Ski-in/ski-out, luxury condo, sleeps 5, pool, hot tubs, 3 night min. [www.at\\_blackcomb.com](http://www.at_blackcomb.com), Sheila 604-929-6589.

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

## FOR RENT

**VANCOUVER** Clean, bright, quiet, centrally located condos at Robson & Bute. 1 bd. \$85/single. Daily/weekly/monthly rates. 604-608-4268, [dbemc@hotmail.com](mailto:dbemc@hotmail.com)

**WANTED TO RENT** Two female working students seeking clean, quiet affordable daylight suite or ? in safe neighbourhood toward UBC. On bus route. Will housesit. Reliable. [pkereeluk@sd23.bc.ca](mailto:pkereeluk@sd23.bc.ca)

**KASLO.** 2 quaint lakefront cottages avail. Sept 06-June 07. Fully furn., clean, close to town, great view. N/S, N/P, \$400 & \$500/mo. plus util. Call 250-828-9967 or e-mail [kaslocottage@shaw.ca](mailto:kaslocottage@shaw.ca)

**BRENTWOOD BAY** lovely Vancouver Island house for rent in beautiful Brentwood Bay (short drive to Victoria). 3 bd. rancher, 2 1/2 bath, parklike yard near ocean walks, schools, and parks. From Oct. 1/06 to July 1/07. \$1500/mo. Ph: 250-652-8896.

**PORT COQUITLAM** Large 1 bd., main floor, new kitchen, 1 1/2 baths. Quiet, parklike setting. Shared laundry, utilities. N/S, No dogs. References. \$750. 604-944-9575.

**PET LOVERS:** Quiet vacation retreat at CUITUS LAKE for rent starting November 1 for 6 to 8 wks. Beautiful new executive home [furnished] with spectacular view of lake. Rent REDUCED from \$2500 to \$1000/mo. in EXCHANGE for care of older dog and cat. Excellent references required. N/S. Email [cultusretreat@telus.net](mailto:cultusretreat@telus.net).

## MISCELLANEOUS

**MASTER OF EDUCATION** (Special Education) by coursework offered by Flinders University in S. Australia is recognized by the B.C. TQS. Degree available entirely in distance mode. Apply now for commencement of study semester one (late February) or semester two (late July). More information at: [ehit.flinders.edu.au/northamerica](http://ehit.flinders.edu.au/northamerica) or from the program coordinator, [Bernice.Burnip@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Bernice.Burnip@flinders.edu.au)

**SEARCH ASSOCIATES** International Job Fair, Toronto, Feb. 2-4, where over 50 schools from around the world will be recruiting teachers for the upcoming school year. Workshop for interested teachers will be held in Vancouver in November. Visit our website for date & locations. For more information, contact Ray Sparks, [raysparks@eastlink.ca](mailto:raysparks@eastlink.ca) or visit our website [www.searchassociates.com](http://www.searchassociates.com)

**GAY/LESBIAN** If you are a gay or lesbian teacher, I have some questions for you. My M.A. thesis asks what reasons some people have for keeping their sexual orientation private while others are quite open. If you would be willing to talk to me about your reasons for keeping your sexual orientation private, please do one of the following: contact me, Duane Lecky at 250-514-5445, [dlecky@uvic.ca](mailto:dlecky@uvic.ca) or complete the form at <http://www.techaware.ca/thesis/survey.php> with your contact information. Then we will arrange a time for an interview either in person or by telephone. Allow at least two hours for the interview. The interview will consist of your telling your stories about influences on your decision to keep your sexual orientation private. All information collected will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic research. This thesis, supervised by Dr. Carol Harris (phone 250-721-7823) is in partial fulfillment of a Masters in Arts in Leadership Studies, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, Faculty of Education, UVic, Victoria BC <http://www.educ.uvic.ca/epl/>

**VARIETY-THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY** Working with children is your special passion. Leaving a legacy in your will for BC's special kids will be your gift of a lifetime. There are estate planning benefits too. Contact Peter Chipman to confirm. Toll free 1-800-381-2040, direct 604-268-3887 or email [peter.chipman@variety.bc.ca](mailto:peter.chipman@variety.bc.ca)

**TEACHING POSITIONS** in International Schools through the 19th annual Teachers' Overseas Recruiting Fair at Queen's University, Feb. 9-11, 2007. Hundreds of positions K-12 in dozens of countries. Most contracts for 2 years. Pre-registration required. [educ.queensu.ca/placement](http://educ.queensu.ca/placement)

**CERTIFIED TEACHERS** needed for in-home tutoring (all subjects and grades) 604-439-1790, [www.schooliseasy.com](http://www.schooliseasy.com)

**FOR SALE** Lovely country estate with 2 homes on 20 acres. 10 min. to Parksville and Qualicum Beach. Main residence 3200 sq.ft. with in-law 1 bd. suite. Economical heat pump. Panoramic mountain views. Established garden area for your vegetables, flowers and fruit. Second home provides steady rental income. Pasture for horses or hobby farm and forested areas. \$895,000. Contact Neil Callander 1-250-248-6587, e-mail [randall@mala.bc.ca](mailto:randall@mala.bc.ca)

## RESOURCES

**KOZMIC VISUAL CONNECTIONS** visual boards, charts, guides, kits, picture cues, and routines for children and adults who require visual supports to enhance their daily life. These products may be of particular interest for special education teachers or teaching assistants. Check our web site at <http://members.shaw.ca/kvcweb/default.htm>, e-mail [kozmicvc@shaw.ca](mailto:kozmicvc@shaw.ca), or call us at 306-978-3362.

**BRAIN BASED LEARNING** Know how the brain learns best? Teaching in a brain compatible way? Stuck kids? LA teacher, 30 yrs experience plus 9 yrs facilitating Pro-D in over 25 BC districts. Demonstrates practical, effective, easy to use teaching strategies to boost student learning and rejuvenate your own brain. High energy, uplifting, optimistic, presentations. It's the future. No brain, no gain. [www.braincoach.ca](http://www.braincoach.ca)

**www.bcfieldtrips.ca** Search our field-trip data base or attend the 4th Annual Field Trip Fair, Sept. 25 at the Richmond Museum. Meet educators from 50 community groups that offer field trip opportunities in the Lower Mainland and beyond. Snacks, door prizes and giveaways for pre-registered guests. Detailed information and free registration on our web site, [www.bcfieldtrips.ca](http://www.bcfieldtrips.ca)

**PRO-D WORKSHOPS** that deliver the tools to improve low written output. Julie Ferguson has changed the way over 2000 teachers approach creative writing by harmonizing brain- and evidence-based research with professional writing tips. Visit [www.beaconlit.com/teacherworkshops.htm](http://www.beaconlit.com/teacherworkshops.htm), then call 604-469-1319 or email [info@beaconlit.com](mailto:info@beaconlit.com) to book Julie for your next event.

**TEACHING WEATHER?** Finally! A cohesive, well-planned package of lessons and resources for teaching the foundations of weather science. Designed for BC's science curriculum. Purchase "Destination Discovery: The Weather Zone" for \$22.95 at: [www.discoverysciencelearning.com](http://www.discoverysciencelearning.com)

**CUBA TOUR FOR TEACHERS** An 8-day program for educators and their spouses to learn about the island's education and social system, meet its people and engage in its culture, arts and history. The tour is focused on teachers planning to take their students to the island in the future. Dates: Wed 27 Dec 2006 - Wed 03 Jan 2007. See [www.hellocuba.ca/teachers](http://www.hellocuba.ca/teachers) for itinerary and costs.

**BC-WIDE CUBA STUDENTS TOUR** A 10-day tour program led by BCTF educators. The tour is open to all BC high school students over spring break 2007. Program focus is music, dance, culture and volunteerism. We encourage teachers to invite your students to join this program. Travel dates: Thr 15 Mar - Sat 24 Mar 2006. See [www.hellocuba.ca/bc](http://www.hellocuba.ca/bc) for itinerary and costs.

**ORGANIZE A STUDENT CUBA TOUR** Cuba is the preferred choice for educators seeking culturally rewarding study abroad experiences for their students. It is safe and economical. Your students return having enjoyed an experience-of-a-lifetime. As a result they become more engaged academically and civically. Our notforprofit organization assists teachers with every step of planning and organization. Teacher leaders travel free. See our website at [www.hellocuba.ca](http://www.hellocuba.ca)

**VENEZUELA FOR STUDENTS** Cuba Education Tours offers short-term study abroad programs for BC high school students to Venezuela. See our programs at [www.hellovenezuela.ca](http://www.hellovenezuela.ca)

**MEXICO FOR STUDENTS** Cuba Education Tours provides short term study abroad programs for BC high school students to learn from and volunteer with their indigenous peers in the Oaxaca region of Mexico. See our programs at [www.hellomexico.ca](http://www.hellomexico.ca)

**TERRY FOX RUN IN CUBA** Students go to Cuba from Fri 16 Mar-Fri 23 Mar, 2007 (spring break). Join cuban youth in the world's largest Terry Fox run after Canada. Participate in sporting events, visit Cuba's cultural venues and historic sites for one week. Educators: please announce to your students, and teachers are welcome too! See [www.hellocuba.ca/fox](http://www.hellocuba.ca/fox) for more info.

# PD CALENDAR

## OCTOBER 2006

**5-6** Whitehorse, Yukon. Stikine Teachers' Association Annual Fall Conference "Pathways to Literacy" at the Westmark. Presenters are Susan Augustyn and Faye Brownlie. Contact Monique Pharand, [mpharand@sd87.bc.ca](mailto:mpharand@sd87.bc.ca) or Cathy Bouman, [cbouman@sd87.bc.ca](mailto:cbouman@sd87.bc.ca)

**5-7** Vancouver. Childhood and Adolescent Obesity 2006: 1st Conference on Recent Advances in the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood and Adolescent Obesity. The Coast Plaza Hotel & Suites at Stanley Park. This conference brings together an interdisciplinary group of professionals who work in the field of childhood and adolescent obesity or are confronted with this growing problem. Information at [www.interprofessional.ubc.ca](http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca). Contact Joanne Nam at [ipad@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:ipad@interchange.ubc.ca) or 604-822-7524.

**19-20** Victoria. BC Teacher-Librarians' Association (BCTLA) Conference, Explore Our Island Treasures 2006 will take place at Parkland Secondary School. Keynote speeches by Patrick Lane, Lorna Crozier and Roy Henry Vickers. Includes 45 workshops on a wide variety of topics: Vancouver Island authors, illustrators, storytellers, literacy, library, book clubs, critical thinking, how to create web pages, and web searching. Early bird registration prizes, vendor displays and much more. Visit [bctf.ca/bctla/2006/Conference.html](http://bctf.ca/bctla/2006/Conference.html) or contact Bonnie McComb, [Bonnie\\_McComb@sd63.bc.ca](mailto:Bonnie_McComb@sd63.bc.ca)

**19-20** Richmond. Association provincial des professeurs d'Immersion ed du programme francophone. 20 ans—ça tombe APPIPC. Venez fêter nos 20 ans ensemble. Radisson President Hotel and Suites Vancouver Airport. Information: [bctf.ca/appipc](http://bctf.ca/appipc) and [almcfarland@shaw.ca](mailto:almcfarland@shaw.ca)

**19-21** Victoria. 45th Annual Northwest Mathematics Conference presents Math in Bloom. Victoria Conference Centre. Keynote speakers are David McKillop, Arthur Benjamin, and David Surfin. [bctf.bc.ca/bcaml/nw2006](http://bctf.bc.ca/bcaml/nw2006)

**19-21** Whistler. BC Business Education Conference 2006 presented by BC Business Education Association (BCBEA): Quality Education for the Next Generation, TELUS Whistler Conference Centre. Included are sessions and workshops to assist Portfolio, Planning, Tourism, Accounting, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, and general teachers. Door prizes, wine & cheese, 2010 Olympic site tours, and much more. Information at [www.bcbea.ca](http://www.bcbea.ca)

**19-21** Surrey. BC Technology Education Association Conference 2006, Inspiration for Innovation—Breathing New Life into Teaching Technology, with keynote speaker Chris Johnson, Fraser Heights Secondary School. Contact Brad Purves, [purves\\_b@sd36.bc.ca](mailto:purves_b@sd36.bc.ca) or Martin Lim, [lim\\_m@sd36.bc.ca](mailto:lim_m@sd36.bc.ca)

**20** Vancouver. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Conference. Inclusionary Practices: Building a Community of Learners in our Classrooms with Vianne Timmons, PhD, University of PEI. Contact Alan Peterson, fax 250-554-9358, or email [lataconference@hotmail.com](mailto:lataconference@hotmail.com)

**20** Prince Rupert. From the City of Rainbows—Educators Against Racism (EAR PSA). Venue to be announced. Sessions on teaching, practical workshops, and activities that are community focussed. Contact Louisa Sanchez at [lsanchez@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:lsanchez@sd52.bc.ca) or Carl Beach at [carlhbeach@hotmail.com](mailto:carlhbeach@hotmail.com)

**20** Richmond. BC Association of Modern Language Teachers Conference, "Opening your Parachute." Best Western Richmond Hotel & Convention Centre. Sally Rehorick, Cynthia Lewis, Wendy Maxwell, and many others will present sessions for French, Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin, German teachers at all levels.

Special student rates. Conference and registration information: [psas.bctf.ca/BCATML](mailto:psas.bctf.ca/BCATML)

**20** Vancouver. Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children of BC presents Gifted Ed '06, with Dr. Marcia Imbeau in an all-day session on "Diverse Learners: A look at differentiation." Middle school educators are encouraged to take advantage of the early bird team discounts. Holiday Inn Vancouver Centre, West Broadway. Contact Linnea Lanstrom, 250-847-2192, or [llanstrom@hotmail.com](mailto:llanstrom@hotmail.com)

**20** Richmond. BC Teachers of English Language Arts present "Literacy without Borders," featuring Carl Leggo, Kathleen Gregory, Jill McClay, and John Terpening. Door prizes, publishers displays, wine and cheese on October 19. Contact Dauvery MacDonald, [dmacdonald@richmond.sd38.bc.ca](mailto:dmacdonald@richmond.sd38.bc.ca), or Nicole Widdess, [nwiddess@richmond.sd38.bc.ca](mailto:nwiddess@richmond.sd38.bc.ca)

**20** Surrey. Dance Conference 2006, Fleetwood Park Secondary School. Jazz, hip-hop, modern, interdisciplinary, and more—session TBA for teachers of Grades 3 to 12. Information [bctf.ca/bcdea](http://bctf.ca/bcdea). Contact: Linda Medland, 604-986-0644, [lindamedland@shaw.ca](mailto:lindamedland@shaw.ca), Judy Herridge, 604-541-8170, [judy\\_g@shaw.ca](mailto:judy_g@shaw.ca), or Cheryl Johnson, 250-954-1489, [cheryljazz@shaw.ca](mailto:cheryljazz@shaw.ca) (Please do not contact Fleetwood Park school directly.)

**20** Vancouver. Weaving the Tapestry: Take 2. Annual ESL PSA Conference, Gladstone Secondary School. Celebrate new ways to weave together learning experiences for students, tried and true strategies that support learning in diverse classrooms, and ways to renew and strengthen professional connections. More details in BCTF mailouts at the start of the school year. Information: [bctf.ca/eslpsa](http://bctf.ca/eslpsa)

**20** Port Moody. PAGE Conference, Creating a Culture of Peace, Carrying on the Conversation, will feature dialogues and workshops following from the momentum of the World Peace Forum, at the Port Moody Inlet Theatre and Moody Middle School. Information: [www.pagebc.ca](http://www.pagebc.ca)

**20-21** Port Moody. BCPTA Primary Leadership Conference, Heritage Woods Secondary. Keynote speakers: Marc Kielburger, "Me to We: Educating Creative, Compassionate, and Committed Young Leaders," and Dr. Marvin Marshall, "Four Practices of Superior Teachers," plus cross-curricular presentations by popular BC presenters and primary teachers featuring motivational, practical and innovative ideas for new and experienced primary educators. All conference details and registration information on the BCPTA website: [bc.ca/bcpta](http://bc.ca/bcpta)

**20-21** Vancouver. BC Music Educators' Association (BCMEA) Conference, Pulse 2006 will take place at Lord Byng Secondary School. Keynote speech by Jurgen Gothe, plus educational workshops, industry displays, and inspiring concerts. Visit [pulse2006.ca](http://pulse2006.ca) or contact Scott MacLennan, [smaclennan@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:smaclennan@vsb.bc.ca)

**20-21** Port Coquitlam. Computer Using Educators of BC (CUEBC) Conference, "Teaching to the Multiple Literacies" will take place at Lord Riverside Secondary School. Keynote speech by Alan November and Dr. Sharon Jeroski, plus workshops to assist educators from all curricular areas integrate technology into their classroom. Visit [www.cuebc.ca/2006/](http://www.cuebc.ca/2006/) or contact James McConville, [jmconville@sd43.bc.ca](mailto:jmconville@sd43.bc.ca)

**20-21** West Vancouver. Coastal Connections—New directions in Home Economics 2006 will be held at Rockridge Secondary School. There are over 60 workshops planned for the two days. Info: [www.thesaconference.ca](http://www.thesaconference.ca)

**20-21** Victoria. Association of BC Drama Educators (ABCDE) presents "Something for Everyone: Drama in the Classroom," at Victoria High School, with keynote speaker Ian Middler. Contact Alan Penty, [apenty@shaw.ca](mailto:apenty@shaw.ca)

**20-21** Parksville. PITA (Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association) Fall Conference '06, A Harvest of Pro-D, at Ballenas Secondary School. Attend more than 50 workshops in almost all curriculum areas. Special sessions on students in the Grey Area, and for early career teachers. Information and registration at the PITA web site: [www.pita.bc.ca](http://www.pita.bc.ca)

**20-22** Vancouver. BC Social Studies Teachers' Association and the Association for Canadian Studies presents Canada West to East: Teaching History in a Time of Change, a national conference on teaching and communication the history of Canada. At the Empire Landmark Hotel, Robson Street. Information and online registration: [www.bcssta.ca](http://www.bcssta.ca) Contact: Ellen Ellis, [ellenellis@shaw.ca](mailto:ellenellis@shaw.ca)

**27-29** Edmonton. The Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism (CATT) Western Regional Forum is an opportunity for students, educators and industry partners to share best practices and to build on the momentum of training and certification in the travel and tourism sector. It is also an invitation for interested, non-member organizations to get involved and learn more about CATT. Details and registration information about the event and partners are available on Edmonton Public Schools' Centre High Campus' website: [www.centrehigh.epsb.ca](http://www.centrehigh.epsb.ca). E-mail: [glenn.iriye@epsb.ca](mailto:glenn.iriye@epsb.ca) or [keith.gilroyed@epsb.ca](mailto:keith.gilroyed@epsb.ca).

## NOVEMBER 2006

**1-2** Huntsville. 2nd Annual National Character Education Conference, Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, Ontario. Pre-Conference: Barbara Coloroso. Information: [www.nceec.ca](http://www.nceec.ca)

**8-10** Calgary. The 10th Annual Online Learning Symposium is a national conference directed at K-12 and post-secondary instructors from across North America who have an interest in online learning. The conference is an opportunity for teachers, faculty members, and administrators to discuss innovative practices, existing programs, the development of new programs/courses and current research into online teaching and learning. Visit [www.ataoc.ca](http://www.ataoc.ca) or call (403)241-6045 for info.

## DECEMBER 2006

**7-9** Vancouver. The 12th Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education, Literature & Literacy will be happening at the Westin Bayshore Vancouver. The conference is an opportunity for educators and administrators to discuss innovative practices. Visit [fnesc.ca/conferences/index.php#conf](http://fnesc.ca/conferences/index.php#conf) (registration kits available by September 1) or call (604)925-6087 for details.

## FEBRUARY 2007

**15-17** Kamloops. BC Art Teachers' Association Annual Conference, About Face 2007. Art can make one look at an image, a person, an object, the world in a different way. It can change one's perspective and it can bring one's attention to what has previously been overlooked. Delegates will do an "about face" in Kamloops, an exciting, vibrant city where the arts thrive. Further information TBA. [bctf.ca/bcata](http://bctf.ca/bcata)

## PSA PD Day October 19, 2007

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

Additions/changes? Contact Elizabeth Lambert, [elambert@bctf.ca](mailto:elambert@bctf.ca)

# It takes a whole village

by Carollyne Sinclair

We scrambled down the steep staircase, to Semiahmoo Bay. White Rock is Canada's piece of California, a sunny stretch that captures the atmosphere of beach paradise complete with shops and restaurants. We head down the pier and the tide is almost full, but not quite. It is that transition time of day when the fishers still work the end of the pier, usually with crab traps and poles.

"There must be a boat in," Peter muses as a large crowd, perhaps 100 people, hang over the rails at the end of the pier. Seagulls swoop and flap in the winds. I peer through the gaps in the crowd for the object of their interest.

"It's children, they're diving off the pier," Peter says.

"But there's no diving. There's a sign right here," I say. The pier is over two stories above the water at this point in the day.

A boy of about 13 or 14 stands on the protruding beam on the edge of the pier as a girl just a little younger, perhaps a sister, scrambles under the railing to join him on the next protruding beam, a couple of

feet away. The crowd has pressed in to look and see what will happen. The boy swells with bravado, enjoying the attention of the crowd. Surefooted and confident, but lacking in style, he calls over to the girl, "You're next, right after me" before he hurls himself into the water.

The crowd is enjoying this cheap but crude form of entertainment. I am reminded of the Acapulco divers who, for coins, dive from perilous heights for a mesmerized crowd. But these are children. Children who haven't read the signs or do not take heed of them. No adult in the crowd stops to intervene, to chastise, or to warn them. Where are their parents? Did they come to the beach alone? Are they off the docked boat? A tightness overcomes my chest. This is wrong and I am part of it.

The sister, about 12, is not to be outshone. She calls over to a younger child who is just stepping out onto the next beam. "Okay, I'm going to jump. You're next." The 12-year-old studies the water with diligence for a second before she jumps. She too displays confidence but no elegance. The crowd loves the big splash. Once surfaced, treading water, she calls up to the youngest, "Hurry up. I can't wait all day."

The little sister, about 9, calls down, "But I'm scared."

"It's fine. Just do it," the girl in the water shouts to her slight sister, perched on the beam, seven or eight meters above.

Quickly, and with force, I leave Peter's side and make from the end of the pier to the railing where the child is standing, gently pushing my way through the crowd. I am two-and-a-half feet from the jumper now, behind the rail. The child is shivering as she balances on the beam. Her weight shifts from one foot to another.

"Hurry up. I'm waiting. I can't wait much longer," her older sister calls up from the waters below.

A male voice from the crowd urges her on, shouting, "You'll like it when you get used to it!" The crowd hushes, waiting for the jump.

I bend down and through the slates in the railing, I say softly to the child, "You don't have to do this. Not if you're scared. Just reach out and take my hand."

She does not move. Oh, no, what if she jumps and she's scared. She may not clear the pilings. Her little arm reaches back behind her and I take her hand and fasten it in mine. She turns her little body, and steps lithely under the railing onto the pier. I look into her scared and sorrowful eyes, and try to

console her for her choice, "There are signs. No diving. You shouldn't jump here. It's not safe." Quickly, she skitters away.

Immediately the crowd disseminates, the event is over, the crowd scatters itself along the length of the pier to leisurely stroll back to the beach. Lovers arm in arm, young families with small children in buggies, mothers and dads with toddlers in hand, older couples dressed to dine out. Peter stands beside me. We are still together as the crowd moves past us. What were they thinking? Why didn't they respond to the child's fear? Other than egging her on for their own entertainment? What would the people in the crowd have done if those children had been hurt? Would they have borne any sense of responsibility?

As Peter and I turn to head back from the pier I see the little girl slumped under the No Diving sign. Is she ashamed that she did not jump? Is she feeling that she let her older brother and sister down? By placing herself under the sign, is she announcing to the crowd that it was the right thing to do for her not to choose to jump? Or is it just a coincidence that she chooses to sit there. I am stunned by the crowd, angered by their callousness, shocked by

their unwillingness to be a parent to a child.

What more should I have done? Should I have lingered to speak to the child, and assure her that she made a good choice, to help her with her feelings? Would she have accepted my words?

There used to be a proverb often seen on t-shirts that said, *It takes a whole village to raise a child*. Was that proverb only acrylic ink on cotton? Was that a true sentiment at the time? Has that duty of care left us or did we ever assume that responsibility? Do we only care about our own children? Have I lost track of humanity? Has society changed?

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