

TEACHER

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation

AGM 2007

By Yvonne Eamor

It had a jam-packed agenda but the condensed 91st Annual General Meeting of the BCTF managed to accomplish what was needed to conduct business for the next year and the Representative Assembly that was tacked on to the end of the AGM ensured that the BCTF is constitutionally sound.

More than 600 delegates attended the AGM, which saw the election of Irene Lanzinger as BCTF president, Susan Lambert as first vice-president, and Jim Iker as second vice-president (all are one-year positions). Elected for a two-year term to the Executive Committee were Rebecca Blair, Carole Gillis, Patricia Gudlaugson, and Jill McCaffrey; Robert Tarswell was elected for a one-year term. John Wadge and Val Windsor are currently completing their second year.

The AGM established the membership fee for the coming year at 1.45% of a member's salary. The fee is unchanged from last year.

The meeting set five priorities for 2007-08:

- collective agreement implementation and enforcement
- education underfunding and privatization
- professional autonomy and professional issues
- social justice
- teacher well-being and union renewal.

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A number of resolutions were passed to challenge the provincial government's new "Roaring 20s" legislation, Bills 20, 21, and 22. Delegates believe these destructive pieces of legislation will undermine the democratic governance of school boards, undermine teacher professional autonomy, and result in additional layers of bureaucracy. They have also served notice that the BCTF is firm in its commitment to inclusion of all students in a public education system, and is adamantly opposed to the re-segregation of students in demonstration or model schools. Delegates also passed resolutions to oppose a public discipline registry for teachers by identifying strategies—up to and including collective actions—to counter the establishment of such a registry.

Honorary life memberships to the BCTF were conferred on John Chisamore, Maureen MacDonald, Margaret McMaster, Peter Northcott, Rick Turner, and Jan Walling.

Other resolutions passed by delegates include teachers' refusal to participate or accept any award that is based solely on measures of accountability or Fraser Institute rankings, a directive that school boards work with locals to find new



2007-08 Executive Committee

L-R Back row: Members-at-large Jill McCaffrey (Mount Arrowsmith), John Wadge (Surrey), Val Windsor (Delta), Robert Tarswell (Princeton), Rebecca Blair (Creston), Carole Gillis (Kamloops), Patricia Gudlaugson (Vancouver). Front row: 1st Vice-president Susan Lambert (Burnaby), President Irene Lanzinger (Vancouver), 2nd Vice-president Jim Iker (Burns Lake), Past President Jinny Sims (Nanaimo).

and creative solutions to the problem of schools on the semester system where teachers have no scheduled prep time for an entire semester, and a demand for the immediate inclusion of teacher-librarians in all ministry curriculum and literacy committees as well as their inclusion to ministry staff to guide the building of strong school library programs.

Delegates also voted to improve working conditions in classrooms through such things as temperature control and dealing with noise levels. They also passed a

resolution to inform members and students of the negative health and environment effects of bottled water.

On the bargaining front, the AGM passed resolutions that the BCTF lobby the provincial government to establish firm class-size and composition limits in legislation and to provide funding to school districts to reinstate staffing ratios for specialist teachers.

Honorary life memberships to the BCTF were conferred on John Chisamore, Maureen MacDonald, Margaret McMaster, Peter

Northcott, Rick Turner, and Jan Walling.

In her final address as president, Jinny Sims focussed on the underfunding of public education, the government's betrayal of students through Bill 33, school closures, segregation, and the Learning Round Table. She talked about the BCTF's successful legal challenges of Translink's advertising policies and the government's position on school fees. Sims congratulated the Hospital Employees' Union and its huge

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Summer Conference 2007

Building a better future

It's not often the BCTF holds its Summer Conference outside Vancouver, so this year the conference provided something special for more than 400 activists who gave up four days of their summer vacation to attend.

The venue was outstanding and a fitting location to discuss the issues facing public education today—BC's newest jewel of higher learning, Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops.

A smorgasbord of workshops and plenaries dealing with issues from law to social justice to environmental issues to legislation met the theme of Summer Conference 2007, *Our Kids, Our Classrooms, Our World: Building a Better Future*.

The core session, "Bills, Bills, Bills," was an in-depth review and discussion of Bills 20, 21, and 22. Delegates discussed the bills' implications for members and locals; they talked about ways to

make members aware of the legislation and its fallout; and they offered suggestions for provincial strategies for dealing with the bills, which were passed into law in May.

Labour's Supreme Court of Canada victory was highlighted with a plenary by the man who led this legal charge, constitutional lawyer Joe Arvay. Arvay offered some personal and professional insight into the ruling that says workers' rights are protected under the *Charter of Rights*. This well-respected courtroom veteran said that this case, launched by the Hospital Employees' Union and aided by the BCTF, was "the hardest case I have ever done."

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Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops

YVONNE EAMOR

BCTF on YouTube

The BCTF arrived on YouTube August 22 with two videos. One video focusses on the underfunding of needed learning opportunities to students, the other on the newly created superintendents of achievement. Three teachers and a student volunteered to be the actors. Over 4,300 visits have been registered to date. To view, go to youtube.com and insert bctfvids in the search field.

AGM postponed

A five-week strike/lockout at the BCTF in April and May 2007 meant, among other things, that:

- The twice-postponed BCTF Annual General Meeting was held June 22-24.
- The May/June 2007 issue of *Teacher* was not published.

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President's message



Irene Lanzinger

Welcome back to school! These first few days and weeks are always so hectic and exciting. Hopefully, the summer provided you with the rest and regeneration you need to see you through the start of another school year.

During the week of August 20, 2007, over 400 teachers gathered in Kamloops for our annual summer conference. As a new president of the BCTF, it was inspiring for me to see so many of our members willing

to give up those precious last few days of summer holidays to work on behalf of their colleagues. They provided the BCTF leadership with invaluable assistance in developing strategies to take on the many critical issues facing teachers in the coming year. Fortunately, it wasn't all work, we had a lot of fun too!

This is the second year we will have legislative provisions on class size and composition in place. We took a courageous stand to pressure

the government to put that legislation in place. It certainly doesn't provide all the protection we need to guarantee quality learning conditions for every child. However, the legislation does offer us some small level of protection. Contact your staff representative or local president to make sure that your class is in compliance with the rules.

In any case, if you have a difficult teaching situation, contact your

local. Even if the legislation does not apply, the BCTF may be able to help and we need to collect data on working and learning conditions to press for significant improvements to the legislation.

I hope the beginning of the school year goes smoothly for you. Thank you for the wonderful work you do every day. Remind yourself often that you are making a valuable contribution to students and to public education.

Readers write

Return to sender

Like the thousands of other teachers in the province we recently received *I am the BCTF* publication. We are returning our magazines to the BCTF office.

This publication is unnecessary for many reasons.

1. It glorifies every step of an event that was a last resort and not a celebration. We are well aware of the reasons for the strike, that's why we voted to have it!

2. The BCTF has its own house to look after and is doing a poor job of dealing with its two small unions. We are embarrassed to hear of the problems within. The BCTF should be a model employer. Are our executive officers not highly skilled in diplomacy, conflict resolution, and the art of negotiation?

3. The cost of producing this glossy magazine is probably so great we will be appalled when the costs are disclosed. We can't afford this from every point of view—financial, environmental (ours landed in the recycling until we retrieved them when the idea of a letter occurred), and negative public perception (for the previously stated reasons).

4. Coverage of this strike could have been included in the *Teacher* newsmagazine as an insert, not as a separate magazine.

5. The executive officers of the BCTF do not appear to be in touch with their staff or the members they are representing. BCTF members are the BCTF.

Teaching staff at Don Christian Elementary School
Surrey

All students should be able to access all programs

I agree with Don Olds that an "obsession with (giving) homework" is wrong. Assignments should always be relevant and meaningful rather than just being given out in the belief that piling on homework somehow builds a good work ethic or motivates students to learn. Students should be given opportunities to complete work at school as

much as possible. Completing homework, especially for middle and elementary school students, should never become so onerous as to take away a child's freedom to delve into their own passions, spend time with their families, get involved with church and/or community groups, and just plain old play.

However, I must comment on Olds' statement that "Homework is discriminatory to students who have trouble finding a place and a time to sleep and enough to eat, never mind a place and time to do laid-on homework!" Taking this further, I would say that school itself is discriminatory to these students. Perhaps we should abolish school.

I believe the recently deceased Kurt Vonnegut had some interesting insights into this "everyone must be equal, no matter what" philosophy. In his story, *Harrison Bergeron*, a dystopian society based on forced equality reveals the logical outcome of this type of thinking. Olds (and John Young, for that matter) sounds like someone who would relish the idea of working for the "Handicapper General," ensuring that not a single person has an advantage over any other person, in any way. Real-life experiments in enforced equality (Pol Pot's Cambodia being the most "equal" and perhaps the most evil) have failed miserably.

People should be equal before the law. Other than that, there will be differences. If you want to abolish special courses or homework or good looks or high IQ's or anything else that smacks of "inequality" you too will fail miserably, and rightly so.

Craig Bresett
Langley

All children have rights

I have to take issue with Richard Peachey's argument that it is hypocrisy for the BCTF to not support "parents' rights to preserve their children from teaching they deem morally objectionable." To support diversity we may say that everyone has a right to their own

culture and opinion, but it doesn't require, and cannot require us to fully embrace plurality and say all those opinions are correct.

In particular, we do not accept that parents have the right to demand we teach that the Holocaust is a fraud, that the handicapped should be sterilized, that women are not really "persons" and can be considered property, that slavery of blacks is justified because they are inferior or that homosexuality is immoral—no matter what their own personal beliefs are on these issues.

Our country has laws and standards of human rights and it is the job of our public education system to teach and uphold those rights. Should a parent wish to take issue with any part of that code, they may do so, but as teachers our job is to open students' minds to new ideas and encourage them to critically examine all opinions (including our own). Our job is also to protect and nurture ALL students—and this is where the right to label certain teachings "morally objectionable" really breaks down.

The issue that opponents of teaching acceptance of homosexuals carefully skirt is that they want us to support their right to tell their kids that there is something seriously wrong with other kids. Anyone who has worked with children and teenagers knows the pain that being different can cause. Already homosexual teens suffer the highest rates of suicide, drug abuse, and other risky behaviour because they struggle to deal with the agony of constant persecution. In no way can we ever be a part of condoning the cultural stigmas that daily lacerate the self-worth of these children. *That* would be morally objectionable!

Maureen Maier
Coquitlam

Where will it end?

Upon reading Steven C. Faraher-Amidon's response to Murray Corran's article, "A censor? Who, me?" I had to ask myself, Where will

it end? Will teachers in this province rob our students of knowledge and the ability to think critically in order to appear politically correct? Yes, parents are taxpayers. Faraher-Amidon and these taxpayers have a right to the finest education we can offer their children. By censoring ourselves, we become like the poor people in Afghanistan under the Taliban, afraid to open our mouths and speak the truth for fear of reprisals. Teachers need to cherish their autonomy. Long live freedom of speech. I applaud Corran for his stand.

Amber Harvey
Retired, Mayne Island

Thank you

On behalf of the Poplar Glade Elementary School teaching staff in Williams Lake, I would like to thank all those teachers throughout the province who donated so generously to us after a fire destroyed our school.

That generosity certainly helped diminish our sense of loss. It should be noted that the fire erupted during the lunch hour and schools should be prepared for such events. Fortunately, three weeks prior, we had a 9:00 a.m. fire drill (before the students were settled in, and before attendance was taken).

The evacuation was conducted as if it was just another drill, and that's all it was thought to be, but within 10 minutes the school was engulfed in smoke. Firefighters, who had entered the school to see what the problem was, had to lay ladders on the floor to retreat as the linoleum suddenly began to buckle.

The evacuation was initiated by the custodian whose hours had recently been reduced. Had the fire started a couple of hours earlier, she wouldn't have been there. Evacuating students over buckling floors and thick smoke would have been another story.

We were very fortunate that only "things" were lost. Thanks again.

Stuart Westie, staff rep
Poplar Glade Elementary School,
Williams Lake

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Deadline
August 17, 2007
September 14, 2007
October 19, 2007
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January 25, 2008
March 28, 2008
April 25, 2008



New look for Teacher

In 1987-88, the BCTF amalgamated the bi-monthly *BCTF Newsletter* with the *BC Teacher* magazine and named the new publication *Teacher* Newsmagazine of the BCTF.

Over the last 20 years, *Teacher* has won many design awards and been copied many times by other organizations.

We hope you enjoy the new format and continue to find the newsmagazine interesting and informative. Send your comments to newsomag@bctf.ca.

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victory in the Supreme Court of Canada, which has ruled that collective bargaining rights are protected by the *Charter of Rights*. Armed with that precedent ruling, the BCTF will now proceed with its legal challenge of Bills 27 and 28.

Sims used her extensive travels as BCTF president to highlight the importance of social justice around the world and the need for the Federation to continue its activities and join other organizations in the fight for the rights of teachers everywhere.

Yvonne Eamor is the BCTF's media relations officer.

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Arvey suggested that Bill 28, which will be challenged by the BCTF, "is headed to the same garbage can as Bill 29." He also paid tribute to the Federation for excelling "in using its political muscle and legal process to affect change" and commended the BCTF for "its role in the legal process to affect social change in Canada."

At another plenary, activists heard the disturbing predictions of Chris Friesen, director of Settlement Services, Immigrant Services Society of BC. Those who have had other opportunities to hear Friesen, know how chilling it is to learn of the lack of government strategies to deal with BC's immigration issues and the serious impact that will have on teaching. Post-secondary institutions, says Friesen, are simply not equipped to teach what teachers need to know in the classrooms of tomorrow—and in some cases, the classrooms of today.

Friesen says in just a few years, one in three British Columbians will be foreign born. The implications for public education are huge as the system tries to deal with that expected influx of immigration.

Columnist and author, Linda McQuaig, offered a spirited address on inequality and social injustice. McQuaig says the neoconservative agenda has been very successful in "directing public anger" against what the far-right consider special interest groups—nurses, teachers, and civil servants. McQuaig says the neoconservatives have been very successful in "undermining the public's confidence in government and the public sector" through underfunding.

If we lived in a Scandinavian country, our kids would not go to school hungry. McQuaig says, "That's what social programs do, give equal opportunity to everyone."

She also tackled the unionization rates around the world: Scandinavia 80%, Canada 33%, and the US 13%. McQuaig says Scandinavian countries invest heavily in their workforce and their people and she points out, we don't need to model Canada after the US—why not look to a progressive country like Finland?

The author says she loves speaking to teachers, because she knows they care about equality and social justice.

— Yvonne Eamor

Inquiry into special education in Langley "back on track"

By Gail Chaddock-Costello and Susan Fonseca

The Langley Teachers' Association, CUPE Local 1260, and the Langley District Parent Advisory Council would like to thank the BCTF executive for its financial and staff support for our inquiry into the working and learning conditions of special education teachers and students in Langley. The motion to request BCTF support for this inquiry was passed unanimously by the LTA executive, a meeting of staff representatives, and a general LTA meeting last January. The BCTF executive approved our request following our presentation in February. Due to the BCTF labour dispute, the inquiry was postponed in May but is now "back on track" for this fall.

What brought the LTA and our education partners to this point? During the previous two years, the LTA had made numerous presentations to our board on the many and varied issues facing staff and students in special education. We had repeatedly asked our board for a Joint Working and Learning Conditions Committee, modeled after our Joint Grievance Committee, to address the untenable working conditions of teachers who work with students with special needs, whether in a separate setting or in a regular classroom.

Last fall, we held a meeting of special education teachers to get a post-Bill 33 update. We were shocked to hear about their caseloads and it was evident that those present were all experiencing a high degree of burnout—and it was only October! We heard that special education teachers are unique in that their classes and caseloads appear to be beyond the scope of Bill 33. There are no caseload maximums, no caps on the numbers of identified students they should reasonably be able to assist in any one block, and no participation in the consent, consult process. They seem to exist in a carefully crafted niche where any

With contracts stripped, funding to the district cut, and caseloads rising as high as 80 students, we felt it was imperative to speak out on behalf of our staff and our students.

student with special needs who enters the school, regardless of their designation or the current size of the special education teacher's caseload, becomes their responsibility.

We renewed our commitment to special educators and created a video entitled "Langley Resource Teachers Speak Out" (available on our web site at www.langleyteachers.com) to spotlight their working conditions. With contracts stripped, funding to the district cut, and caseloads rising as high as 80 students, we felt it was imperative to speak out on behalf of our staff and our students.

The LTA showed the video and presented to our board citing the Moore case and legal obligations to students with special needs under the equality section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. We also pointed out that the graduation rate of students with special needs in Langley has declined by 11%, from 76% in 2000-01 to 65% in 2004-05.

With all arguments unsuccessful, we appealed to the BCTF executive for support to tackle these systemic issues on a broader scale.

We owe it to our members, our education partners, and our students to do a thorough accounting of their needs.

The design of the inquiry, as approved by the BCTF, includes a series of three public hearings, presided over by three independent external panelists; a review of current research into quality programming for students with special needs; and a series of case studies of special education teachers in their classrooms in Langley, to provide a triangulated approach.

Unfortunately, our board declined Jinny Sims' written invitation to participate on the steering committee and to help select panelists for the inquiry. The LTA, CUPE, and DPAC each then appointed members to the steering committee and each selected one external panelist. We were delighted that all three of our invited panelists immediately agreed to participate and that SFU Professor Maureen Hoskyn agreed to conduct the research component.

We have been extremely fortunate to maintain continuity from last spring to this fall by retaining the same LTA, CUPE, and DPAC members on the steering committee, as well as the same three external panelists:

- Mike Suddaby, retired superintendent of schools, Maple Ridge
- Nadine Guiltner, retired teacher/published author, Cariboo-Chilcotin SD 27
- Dr. Shirley McBride, retired director of Special Programs, BC Ministry of Education.

The public hearings are scheduled for Wednesday, October 24, Aldergrove Legion, 26607 Fraser Highway; Thursday, October 25, Fort Langley Community Hall, 9167 Glover Road; Monday, October 29, George Preston Arena, 20699 42nd Avenue. Sessions will run from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. each day.

Interested individuals are invited to make oral, written, or multimedia presentations and should either call 604-533-1618 or e-mail special@langleyteachers.com for more information or to reserve a time for their presentation. Staff and parents are encouraged to share personal anecdotes on positive experiences that have enriched their child's educational experience, as well as concerns regarding services that they believe should be enhanced to improve the quality of service available to students with special needs.

It is our hope and expectation that the professional manner in which this inquiry is conducted, coupled with the expertise of the panelists and a wide variety of submissions, will ensure that the final report will be well received not only by our teaching colleagues and parents, but by a broader public. We owe it to our members, our education partners, and our students to do a thorough accounting of their needs.

Gail Chaddock-Costello is 2nd vice-president, Langley Teachers' Association and Susan Fonseca is vice-president, Langley Teachers' Association.

Looking back

70 years ago

Few occupations provide advantages equal to those enjoyed by the teaching profession in the matter of vacations. We are lucky, in this connection at all events, and should candidly recognize the fact. All over British Columbia, however, are bright, ambitious young teachers who year after year devote almost the whole of their summer vacation to strenuous studies. The additional pedagogical training thus acquired should make them increasingly valuable to their employers. Unfortunately, every well-informed person could name promising young teachers who are aging at a rate far exceeding 12 months per annum. If it be in the public interest that teachers should continually be returning for refresher courses, due provision should be made for sabbatical years. It is bad policy to kill the goose that lays golden eggs, even if the unfortunate bird be ready to acquiesce in the sacrifice!

September 1937, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

A great deal has been written on the Bay City experiment regarding

the use of lay-teacher aides to assist teachers with larger classes. The final paragraph of the report states: "The staff of the Bay City Public Schools still feels that it would prefer to have smaller classes with regular teachers. It recognizes, however, that the teacher shortage is so severe that this may not always be possible." The evidence to date would warrant the following conclusion: Teachers prefer a normal size class without an aide to a larger class with an aide.

Sept./Oct. 1957, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

What we ought to be very concerned about is the domination of television programming by commercial interests. The old saying, "He who pays the piper calls the tune," applies as much to television as it does to any other commercial enterprise. Networks sell air time to advertisers. Obviously, if the Neilson ratings indicate that seven million Canadians are engrossed in the intricate sociological intrigues of *Gilligan's Island*, while only a mere two million are witnessing another murder in Hawaii, the company

with the product to sell will be pleased to bring us Gilligan and his moronic friends rather than *Hawaii Five-O*.

Sept./Oct. 1977, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Russian launch of Sputnik, an event that had profound implications for education. Critics charged that our very freedom depended upon shifting the balance from humanities to the sciences. The pendulum has swung too far. Our democracy depends as much upon our citizens being well versed in the humanities as it does in our capacity to graduate physicists and chemists. Enrolment in Grade 12 humanities courses (history, world civilization, economics, geography, and English literature) are in decline. Tolstoy said, "Science can tell us how to build a house, but not how to live in it." The humanities provide students with opportunities to consider how the lessons of our past help us chart our future.

September 1997, *Teacher*

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich

BCTF Advantage

October launch

By Laurence Greeff

On October 13, 2007, the BCTF launches an exciting and new program across the province. Members can look forward to our new member-benefits program called BCTF Advantage.

Many other organizations like ours have instituted this kind of program for their members. The Ontario teachers have a program called Edvantage, the National Union of Teachers in Britain have their Countdown program, and the American Federation of Teachers have their ATF Plus program. The group buying power of the BCTF allows teachers in great numbers to access savings. The Advantage program is voluntary of course, and is being made available to those who are interested. This notion is not new and has its roots in the co-operatives that were established early in our political history to strengthen support to people.

Over the past 12 months, the affinity subcommittee has been working to put all the components together for a custom affinity program to benefit our members. The first phase of the program will roll out this fall. We have been working with BCAA Group Services to bring this program together. This has been a great partnership and will serve us well over the next few years.

The BCTF Advantage Program will have offers in the areas of:

- Insurance (home, auto, life, pet, and travel)
- BCAA membership
- Exciting vacation travel for long and short holidays
- Retail discounts on everything from cell phones to vision care through our BCAA partner program.

The subcommittee has been working under the mandate of the

Executive Committee to ensure the components of the plan meet BCTF's standards for quality, social and ethical filters, and above all, serves the membership in a new way by offering benefits. We are also focussed on building a cost neutral program that is responsive to member needs.

October 13, 2007, is the "Go Live" target and BCTF members will be able to access the Advantage program. All the details will be available online through the BCTF web site. Registration will be free

and handled through our administrator and program carrier, BCAA Group Services.

Members have said they can hardly wait to check out the various offerings. Phase 1 will contain an initial suite of products, and, with member feedback, the committee will build more offers and components for the BCTF Advantage Program. The next phases will include a strong retail and financial services component that reflects our values.

Come down to the BCTF Building at 6th and Ash on October 13 and be a part of the BCTF Advantage Program launch. Bring your family and encourage your colleagues to drop by the building. It will be a positive membership-driven family affair to launch this fabulous program for teachers.

Watch bctf.ca for more information.

Laurence Greeff is chair of the BCTF Finance Committee and a member of the BCTF Affinity Subcommittee.

BENEFITS JUST FOR TEACHERS? I CAN HARDLY WAIT!



The benefits teachers have been waiting for are almost here. With BCTF's Advantage program you'll get group benefits designed around your unique needs and those of your family.

Enjoy great vacations and get-away packages. Get great value on insurance packages for your home, car, pet, travel medical and life. Plus, take advantage of incredible BCTF exclusive offers on BCAA membership.

BCTF Advantage

To join a program that deserves top marks watch www.bctf.ca for details.

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GROUP SERVICES

College elections

Are you interested in becoming a BCTF-endorsed candidate for the college council?

The next round of elections for the BC College of Teachers' Council under the new provisions of the *Teaching Profession Act* will take place in April/May 2008.

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

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

The role of a council member is to make policy decisions, to make quasi-judicial decisions concerning individuals and institutions, to represent the college on various external committees, and to communicate with members. Further information about the college can be found at www.bctc.ca.

Elections are held in 4 of the 12 geographic zones each year. This year, elections will be held in the following college election zones, Zone 1–North Coast, Zone 3–South Central, Zone 8–Lower Mainland East, and Zone 10–Lower Mainland West. The term of office is a three-year term, beginning August 1 and ending on July 31.

The BCTF has established a policy that provides for the zonal selection of a BCTF-endorsed candidate in each zone where an election is being held. Only active BCTF

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

members are eligible for BCTF endorsement as candidates in BC College of Teachers' elections.

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

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

If you are interested in being considered as your local nominee for the BCTF-endorsed candidate in one of the college zones where an election is being held, please contact your local president as soon as possible.

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

– Mike Lombardi

Roaring 20s legislation

Bill 20

School (Student Achievement Enabling) Amendment Act

By Diane MacDonald

The focus of Bill 20 is on student achievement. The ministry now provides direct oversight over achievement, whereas formerly it just had direct oversight over financial concerns of boards. And the preamble to the *School Act* is amended to include an emphasis on literacy. The bill also reinstates certain legal fees following from the BC Supreme Court ruling, in *Young vs. Ministry of Education* from 2006.

The bill starts by amending the *School Act* to remove the term "school boards" and replace it with "boards of education." School trustees remain.

Achievement contracts

The bill provides for achievement contracts, which replace the former accountability contracts, and boards must prepare achievement contracts setting specific goals with respect to student performance, early learning, and literacy programs in the district.

All boards have until October 31, to submit a transitional achievement contract this year. They will then be required to submit a formal achievement contract July 15, 2008.

The district superintendent is responsible to the board for improving student achievement. On or before December 15 of this school year, the superintendent must prepare and submit to the board a report on student achievement for the previous year.

The board must prepare an annual achievement report for the minister, which must also be available to members of the public.

Achievement contracts are enforceable through administrative directives.

Boards must now prepare annual district literacy plans on or before July 15, setting out the plan for improving literacy in the district. The board must provide an opportunity to persons in the district who have an interest in literacy to provide a comment on the proposed plan.

A transitional district literacy plan must be included with the transitional achievement contract on October 31, 2007.

Superintendents of achievement

The bill creates one or more superintendents of achievement to review student performance, early learning programs, and district literacy, and they must make recommendations for the improvement of each. The new superintendents allow for government oversight over the achievement contracts. Superintendents of achievement have broad powers of inspection—they may enter schools, inspect the records, interview employees and students, and attend any board meeting. Boards must cooperate and provide records for the superintendents.

The superintendents of achievement may make recommendations for improvements to the board and, on request from the minister, report his or her findings on achievement. The bill authorizes the minister to impose administrative directives on a board that fails to meet its obligations under an achievement contract, or if the minister believes

that a directive is in the public interest.

Special trustee

The bill also provides for the appointment of a special trustee if a board does not comply with an administrative directive.

Parental appeal

The bill provides for the ability for parents who are dissatisfied with the board ruling, such as the educational placement of a student or a suspension of a student, to appeal to the superintendent of achievement. This appeal constitutes a new hearing.

School fees, special academy

The bill also reinstates certain school fees. The general requirements for graduation must still be provided free of charge to all students; however, as long as a board adopts a policy to ensure that students who cannot pay the fees due to financial hardship are eligible to participate, a board may offer specialty academy programs if the school planning council, where the program is housed, approves the academy.

The school planning council must consult with the PAC before approving such an academy, and the board must also determine that there is sufficient demand for the academy. An academy is really a specialized educational program that emphasizes a particular sport, activity, or subject area. Cabinet may make regulations prescribing the precise criteria for specialty academies.

On or before July 1, a specialty academy must establish a schedule of fees to be charged. However, it must first obtain the approval of those fees from the school planning council. A board may only charge fees relating to the cost of the academy that are above and beyond the cost of providing a standard educational program.

As long as a board adopts a policy to ensure that students who cannot pay the fees are eligible to participate, a board may also charge fees for the purchase or rental of tools, equipment, and other materials necessary to participate in a trades program and, similarly, fees may be charged to purchase or rent musical equipment necessary to participate in a music class or program.

The proposed amendments do not change the BC Supreme Court ruling in *Young vs Ministry of Education*—that course fees and fees for most field trips, fees for required materials and supplies, and so forth, may not be charged. However, there are a number of questions regarding interpretation of these new school fees.

Lastly, this piece of legislation increases the capacity for the minister to create provincial resource programs in provincial schools. These programs will be operated directly by the ministry rather than the school district, and there is no longer the requirement that these programs or schools provide specialized types of education.

Diane MacDonald is a BCTF staff lawyer.

Bill 21

Teaching Profession (Teacher Registration) Amendment Act

By Gretchen Brown

Bill 21 amends the *Teaching Profession Act* and the *School Act* in relation to the College of Teachers.

Bill 21 makes six main changes.

Employers' registry

The first main change is the creation of a new employers' registry. This registry will include a list of all members of the college, and a list of all the school boards or education authorities those members have worked for. The information will be kept current for 10 years.

This registry will only be accessible to prospective employers at the time of hiring. It will not be available to the public. Employers must keep the information obtained from the list confidential. It is important to note that the legislation does not require the registry to include any disciplinary history.

Online registry

The second main change is the creation of an online registry which is accessible to the public. This registry will include the member's name, the current status of the member's teaching certificate, that is whether the certificate is valid or invalid, and whether the member is currently practicing or non-practicing. It will also include a record of any discipline action taken by the college including all suspensions and terminations. Reprimands will be included where matters involve significant emotional harm, physical harm, or sexual abuse of a student or minor. The registry will also include college discipline for breaches of college standards. Because the standards are so broad, this effectively means that all college discipline must be included on the registry.

Bill 21 also sets out how long the information must be kept in the registry. Reprimands may be removed from the registry after five years. There are no provisions for

Bill 21 amends the Teaching Profession Act and the School Act in relation to the College of Teachers.

the removal of suspensions or terminations. It appears that the intention of the legislation is that suspensions and terminations will remain on the registry for as long as the person is a member of the college.

It is important to note that the registry includes only formal discipline by the college. It does not include matters that are resolved informally. It also does not include any record of discipline by the employer.

Publication of names

The third main change made by Bill 21 is in the area of the publication of names of the disciplined members. Currently, this matter is governed by the college's own bylaws. Those bylaws allow the

college to exercise discretion in unusual cases to withhold the member's name from public discipline summaries. Under the new legislation, the college cannot do that. In all cases, the member's name must be published to the public even in cases where grievous harm would result from the publication.

Concurrent with grievances

The fourth main change is the removal of the requirement to wait until the grievance process is concluded. Prior to Bill 21, the *School Act* prevented the college from acting on any report of discipline if that report was currently the subject of an ongoing grievance. Bill 21 removes that. The college now does not have to wait until the grievance process is concluded.

The college has already implemented this change and has been proceeding on cases that are still at grievance.

Employer duty to report

The fifth main change is in the area of the employer's duty to report. Prior to Bill 21, boards were required to report all the discipline of members to the college. Under Bill 21, suspensions and terminations still must be reported; however, reprimands only have to be reported if they involved conduct that involved significant emotional harm, physical harm, or sexual abuse of a student or minor.

This new language makes reporting requirements consistent with the position of the BCTF in this matter. The value of this improvement, however, may be eroded by the creation of a new duty on superintendents to make reports. Superintendents are now obligated to report conduct concerns if that conduct involved a breach of college standards, and if the superintendent determines it is in the public interest to make a report to the college. College standards are so broad that almost any conduct could be considered in breach of them. The limiting factor here is that it has to be in the public interest to make the report. Clearly, it is not in the public interest for superintendents to report minor matters.

Special advisor

The sixth main change made by Bill 21 is in the area of the appointment of a special advisor. The *School Act* already provides for a special advisor to be appointed by the minister in a wide variety of circumstances. Bill 21 adds a new provision that allows a special advisor to be appointed by the minister if the minister feels that the school board or superintendent has failed in their duty to make reports to the college.

Gretchen Brown is a BCTF staff lawyer.

Bill 22

Education Statutes' Amendment Act

By Diane MacDonald

Identification numbers

Bill 22 amends the *School Act* to expand the category of students that the ministry may provide with personal education numbers (identification numbers). For example, it adds First Nations to the definitional section, so that schools operated by First Nations educational institution are included.

Bill 22 has many amendments designed to monitor and control the conduct of school business companies.

Bill 22 also expands the use of personal educational numbers, including their use in research and statistical analysis. The legislation makes it mandatory for boards to establish a code of conduct for its students and requires that these codes comply with provincial standards established by the minister. Now, those standards are not yet established but the minister may make orders to establish those standards in the future.

School district business companies

Bill 22 has many amendments designed to monitor and control the conduct of school business companies, and I'll provide some examples, although not all of them, as it just goes into detail about the types of provisions that govern companies.

Section 9 provides that the majority of directors of a company that is regulated under the *School Act* must be at arm's length from the board.

Section 11 adds provisions ensuring an annual general meeting of a company, provisions requiring proper notice of the meeting, and provisions requiring that annual general meetings be held in public so companies can no longer have such meetings behind closed doors. Consideration of the annual report and financial statements, the appointment of directors, and the appointment of the auditor, must also be done in public. The section also has requirements with respect to recording proceedings of a company's meeting, and making minutes available for inspection.

The legislation makes it mandatory for boards to establish a code of conduct for its students and requires that these codes comply with provincial standards established by the minister.

Section 11 permits the chair of a meeting, or a majority of trustees at the company meeting, to exclude individuals for improper conduct, and it provides that a person who disturbs, interrupts or disrupts the proceedings of a meeting, commits an offence. So even though the meetings are public, the company has the ability to exclude members of the public.

Private school fee reimbursement

Bill 22 also provides for the reimbursement of some private school fees, allowing private schools to enter into the public school system. It does this by having the minister designate certain educational activities as eligible allowing for expenses incurred for instruction, examination, or certification in those educational activities to be reimbursed.

Section 21 specifically authorizes the minister to establish the amount that a student may be reimbursed. The minister may place limits on the number of educational activities, or types of educational activities for which a student may be reimbursed. The student must be of school age, a resident in British Columbia, and must demonstrate a standard of achievement that is satisfactory to the minister in the designated educational activities. It is up to the minister to monitor these programs that are done through the private system, rather than boards or principals.

This section will allow students in the public school system to shop around in different private schools and institutions to put together a program presumably leading toward graduation, although graduation is not specifically stated. It is possible that students could take courses and later find out that they are not being credited towards graduation. The government is going to assist in paying for this increased choice—"choice" is the government's word—and it leaves much discretion to the ministry to determine the criteria for eligibility both in terms of students and educational programs. It obviously paves the way for privatization of education.

Changes for the college

Lastly, the act makes some changes to the *Teaching Profession Act*, which governs the College of

...this amendment really allows government to communicate directly with teachers as it promised in its Throne Speech.

Teachers. The college will be required to hold its AGM between September 1 and December 31 in each calendar year. It currently has its AGM in the spring. More importantly, Section 33 requires the college to distribute information to its members at the minister's request at the time and in the manner determined by the minister, and it requires the minister to reimburse the college for the expense in doing so. So this amendment really allows government to communicate directly with teachers as it promised in its Throne Speech. It gets around aspects of privacy legislation because the college cannot ask boards directly for teachers' home addresses and phone numbers. Instead it statutorily requires the college to send out government information to teachers.

—Diane MacDonald

Implications for teachers

"...they have the authority to stroll into our classrooms, to look around at what our students are doing, to ask parents what they think of us, to interview us, and to direct us."

Kate Noakes



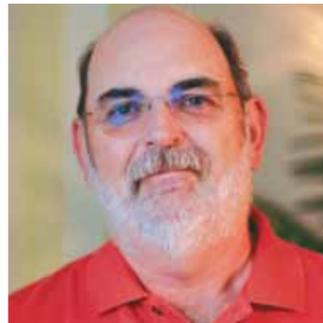
Kate Noakes (Fernie)

What strikes me as very typical of our education system is that when we want to communicate with the government, we have multi-echelons through which we have to speak to the point where our voice is muffled by the time it gets to the top, but if they want to know what we're up to, they have the authority to stroll into our classrooms, to look around at what our students are doing, to ask parents what they think of us, to interview us, and to direct us. I think that when they want to have direct contact—when they need to interfere with the learning process for whatever political agenda they might have—their access is immediate and complete. When we want to have some kind of impact on their political process, our access is virtually denied. So things that we really need help with, that we are asking them for are, again, like shouting into a sponge.



Glen Hansman (Vancouver)

The moment that the minister introduced those three bills, we were horrified because all these duties add more and more layers of bureaucracy and watch-dogging at the ministry level and does nothing to place tools into teachers' hands, and to put resources into classrooms.



Tom Potts (Kelowna)

Here we are, again, subject to some fairly significant legislative change in education in British Columbia. Although change is not necessarily a negative thing generally speaking, the thing that we find ourselves continuously immersed in is a constant process of change and often I don't think it gives us enough time to develop the necessary stability that fosters the thoughtful delivery of the syllabus in schools.



Holli Garvin (Quesnel)

When the teachers find out more about it, they will also be shocked, maybe a little surprised, or maybe not, but I believe that if the parents were really informed of the bills, if we were to ask them would you rather your children spend time doing tests in the classroom or would you rather have the learning—they would say the learning.



Chris Janzen (Langley)

Bills 20, 21, and 22 raised a lot of concerns for me. I'm worried about the amount of control being centralized by these bills—teachers no longer have as much say in the classroom when it comes to what's needed for children. You have people who are administrators trying to tell us how we should best do our work in the classrooms. That really concerns me.

Superintendents of achievement—well that strikes directly at the whole heart of the matter. What is being imposed by the government is the idea that testing, data-driven results from students, or what is important to them rather than the actual instruction in the classroom. That to me is of great concern because it shows which way this government is going, where they want public education to go, and how it really isn't going to help students at all.



Dave Wills (Van. Island West)

In order to act on Bills 20 to 22, teachers first of all need to have the information, how it is going to impact them, and how it is going to impact the kids. Once they have that information, we're really good at getting together in our locals and supporting one another and presenting a common front.

The rich and the rest of us

Canadian families are putting in more work time, yet most—80% of them—are getting a smaller share of Canada's growing economy, says a study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

The study finds Canada's income gap between the rich and poor is growing, largely because the lion's share of Canada's economic growth is going to the richest 10% of families. It's not going to the majority, the 80% of families earning under a \$100,000.

"Canada's gap is growing at a time when Canadian families are playing by all the rules—working harder, contributing to a growing economy—but most aren't getting payback," says study author Armine Yalnizyan, research fellow with the CCPA.

The study, "The Rich and the Rest of Us: The Changing Face of Canada's Growing Gap," looks at the earnings and after-tax incomes of Canadian families raising

children under 18, comparing families in the late 1970s and those in the early 2000s. The study finds:

- Canada's income gap is growing. In 2004, the richest 10% of families earned 82 times more than the poorest 10%—almost triple the ratio of 1976, when they earned 31 times more. In after-tax terms, the gap is at a 30-year high.

- Bottom half shut out. Between 1976–79, the bottom half earned 27% of total earnings. Between 2001–04 that dropped to 20.5%, though they worked more. Up to 80% of families lost ground or stayed put compared to the previous generation, in both earnings and after-tax terms. The poorest saw real incomes drop.

- Work is not enough. All but the richest 10% of families are working more weeks and hours in the paid workforce (200 hours more on average since 1996) yet only the richest 10% saw a significant increase in their earnings—30%.

To read the report, go to

www.growinggap.ca or visit www.policyalternatives.ca.

CCPA launches new web site

This resource, growinggap.ca, is for anyone looking to learn more about income inequality in Canada. The content is user-friendly and will be continuously updated as the CCPA releases a series of new studies and snapshots of the growing gap in the weeks and months to come.

The site also features regular blog posts about income inequality in Canada, linking readers to articles and studies related to the growing gap as they appear in publications through the nation. And it offers fact sheets, an online poll about the growing gap and a brand new interactive tool that helps Canadians see where they fit into the gap.

From the heart

By Charles Hou

In October 2005, I received a phone call from the Burnaby School Board. Would I be interested in sitting on a committee to prepare a documentary on the lives of five Burnaby veterans? They were looking for a teacher who could prepare an educational package of materials to accompany the film.

Since retiring, I have been trying to put the experiences I acquired in 34 years of teaching social studies to good use. My father was a veteran of the Second World War, and since his death I have regretted not asking him more about his experiences. Here was an opportunity I could not resist.

I was hooked after my first meeting with the committee. I was immediately struck by the professional competence and dedication of the committee members. They were committed to producing something of value. They respected my expertise as a teacher, and, most important of all, they promised me access to a colour photocopier and a research budget—neither of which I'd had as a teacher.

The focus of the project, ably set out by a Burnaby councillor, was to produce a documentary on the lives of five of Burnaby's Freeman (outstanding citizens) who were also veterans. The documentary was unique as far as I was concerned. It would focus not only on the war experiences of the veterans, but also on their early years and on what they did after they returned from the war. The councillor wanted to record the veterans' experiences before it was too late, and to create a documentary that would focus on citizenship. The latter objective intrigued me. I felt that I had never done a proper job of teaching citizenship. Here was an opportunity to make amends. During my career, I did my best to make Canadian history as interesting as possible to my students. Was it possible to make citizenship interesting and meaningful?

As a retired teacher, I now have the time to do the detailed research necessary to find interesting primary sources. I quickly focussed on the lives of the five veterans when they were close to the age of the students. I believed that students would relate to this period of their lives. I first set out to find out why over 750,000 young men volunteered for the hazardous work involved in the armed forces. I looked for clues and high-interest-level primary sources in the University of BC Library and Special Collections, the City of Vancouver archives, the Vancouver Public Library archives, and the City of Burnaby archives.

I also interviewed each of the five Freeman and their wives to find out why the five volunteered for service in the armed forces. I wanted the students to compare the reasons suggested by the primary sources with the personal experiences of the Freeman. Three of the Freeman had served in the army, one in the air force, and one in the navy.

Experts from Simon Fraser University's Learning and Instructional Development Centre searched archives for film that would illustrate and supplement the stories told by the Freeman, and spent over 100 hours filming the men themselves. They eventually produced a powerful documentary. It told the story of the Freeman as young men growing up in the Depression and becoming involved in the war, and of their experiences after they returned to Canada. All of the men were motivated by their experiences to become heavily involved in community affairs designed to make Burnaby a better place.

In my opinion, the documentary does a first class job of telling the story of five model citizens. The Freeman's prewar and postwar experiences make this war story unique. I am an avid watcher of the History Channel and the CBC, which tend to specialize in war stories around Remembrance Day. I do not remember seeing a documentary that went beyond the veterans' wartime experiences.



I am confident that students will enjoy the documentary. In my experience as a teacher the students always found a film about Burnaby citizens particularly interesting. However, I think the documentary will also work outside of Burnaby. Every community across Canada has veterans with similar stories to tell.

I enjoyed working with a highly motivated group of people on the project, but the best part of my experience was meeting the five Freeman and their families. I saw family photographs, heard their stories, and learned a lot about five

outstanding citizens. I hope that other communities across Canada take the time to preserve the experiences of veterans, both men and women, in their communities. It is a rewarding experience.

The Burnaby project resulted in documentaries, educational packages of memorabilia, a wonderful web site, www.burnaby.ca/fromtheheart, and a group of interactive games that are useable at both the elementary and secondary levels. The web site includes information on how to order, at cost, DVD or VHS copies of the documentary and hard copies of

the Education Kit and Teacher's Guide (the materials are also available from Lesson Aids). The project received support from the federal government, and everything was produced in both English and French. A post-release evaluation undertaken by SFU deemed the project a success as an educational resource, and SFU's Learning and Instructional Development Centre project was nominated for an Education Technology User Group Innovation Award in 2007.

Charles Hou is a retired Burnaby teacher.

100 years of change

From a place of racism to a place of integration

By Sarah Jimenez

100 years ago, Vancouver was rocked by anti-Asian riots. On the evening of September 7, 1907, a crowd of 5,000 to 6,000 people marched to city hall demanding a "White Canada." Speeches were announced, and the anti-Asian sentiment grew more aggressive. The sound of shattering glass triggered a chaos that would eventually cost \$35,000 in damages for the Chinese and Japanese merchants. These riots marked the rise of racism in Canada, and signalled the beginning of institutionalized racism through federal efforts to prohibit Asian immigration into Canada.

The history of Pacific Canada is a long history; it extends beyond Confederation, the railroad, and John A. MacDonald. The history of Pacific Canada is a migrant's history. Since Vancouver's founding 20 years earlier, the population had been a mix of Native peoples and migrants from Asia, Europe, and other parts of North America. One hundred years ago, Vancouver was a world of migrants living on Native land—Vancouver today is still a world of migrants, but in the past

century, Canada has transformed from a place of racism to a place of integration.

The *Anniversaries of Change* network is a broad-based consortium of institutions and organizations that have come together to commemorate 2007 as an anniversary year in the quest for justice and a multicultural Canada. The years 1907, 1947, 1967, and 1997 each mark a watershed

moment in the history of Asian migrants in Canada and in their struggles to fight discrimination and to create the society of today.

1907 saw the physical manifestation of hostility and racism during the anti-Asian riots. The government systematically intervened; it imposed quotas on Japanese immigration, "continuous voyage" regulations and a \$200 landing fee to exclude those from

India, and enforced the "head tax" laws against the Chinese. When the taxes later proved ineffective, the government passed the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 1923. This period in Canadian history was marked by escalating injustices, including the infamous *Komagata Maru* incident in 1914, and the uprooting and dispersal of Japanese Canadians during and after World War II.

In 1947, Canadians of Chinese and Indian descent won voting rights in British Columbia, and the Japanese Canadian community established what would later become the National Association of Japanese Canadians. Although citizenship was achieved for Chinese and South-Asian Canadians, Japanese Canadians and First Nations were severely restricted from exercising full citizenship rights. While this was a period of recovery and rebuilding for most Asian communities, the legacy of discrimination from the previous era remained embedded in the social and economic fabric of the country.

Forty years ago, the 1967 *Immigration Act* came into effect. The revised legislation opened Canada to trans-Pacific migration from Asia. The points-based system eliminated country of origin as a pre-determining factor for entry into Canada. New waves of migrants from Asia and other developing countries transformed the social landscape of the country. Canada's policies evolved to promote nationhood, and include multi-

culturalism—the first country to ever incorporate cultural pluralism into its legislation.

1997 marked the globalization of Canadian cities. The return of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China triggered the aspirations of BC and Canada to engage with the rising economic prowess of the Asia-Pacific region. New waves of Chinese people emigrated from Hong Kong to Vancouver. Elite migrants from all around the Asia-Pacific area invested in Canada, and brought about remarkable changes. The influx of Asian entrepreneurs and investors remade cities such as Vancouver and Toronto, but also presented new challenges in terms of social justice and equality.

The neglected Canadian history contained within these milestone years comes together in 2007. The refracting, recording, and reconciling of this migrant history can chart a new course for justice and equality in Canada. The *Anniversaries of Change* network is dedicated to claiming these transformative markers of struggle and triumph. The network invites you to recognize these past 100 years of change, and join in the effort for writing the next chapter in the evolving story of Pacific Canada.

For further information about the *Anniversaries of Change* network, please visit the web site, or contact admin@anniversaries07.ca.

Sarah Jimenez, *Anniversaries '07 Curriculum project co-ordinator*, is a UBC student currently enrolled in the education faculty.



Homelessness Action Week October 15–21, 2007

People who are homeless are a visible and tragic presence in most Canadian cities and towns. Their increasing numbers can make homelessness seem like a problem that can't be solved. But both in Canada and around the world, solutions are possible and concerted efforts to get people into safe, stable, and supportive housing are paying off.

October 15 to 21 is Homelessness Action Week. The majority of municipalities in the Lower Mainland, as well as in Nelson, Nanaimo, Kelowna, Victoria, Kamloops, Prince George, and Prince Rupert are preparing to participate. Depending on the community, there will be events and activities including open houses, panel discussions, and information displays. In addition, there will be special efforts made to reach out to people who are homeless and connect them to local services.

People who are homeless are a visible and tragic presence in most Canadian cities and towns.

Last October, many of the same municipalities held a similarly focused week; during the week and in the weeks following, a number of elementary school teachers in Vancouver invited Homelessness Awareness Week organizers into their classrooms to talk about homelessness. An on-line video game called *Homelessness—It's No Game* helped students gain a sense of the kinds of daily challenges faced by people who are homeless. Feedback from the game and classroom discussions was very positive and sparked an interest in creating a more general guide for teachers about homelessness.

The result is *A Teacher's Guide to Homelessness* containing background material, a lesson plan, and a broad array of activities. Grades 6 and 7 classrooms are the focus of the guide. This is due in part to the clear linkages to the Ministry of

Education's prescribed learning outcomes for both social studies and health and career, and in part because the video game works well for that age group. Other activities in the guide include art projects, math exercises, music, writing projects, novel study, health, and wellness. Teachers in other grades may also find elements of the guide useful for their classrooms.

The materials and activities in the teacher's guide are the product of a collaborative effort by representatives from the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, the BCTF, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. The guide is available as a free download on the web site stophomelessness.ca. The web site also has a link to *Homelessness—It's No Game* under the "Learn More—Research" tab.

More information about Homelessness Action Week including a calendar of events can be viewed at www.stophomelessness.ca.

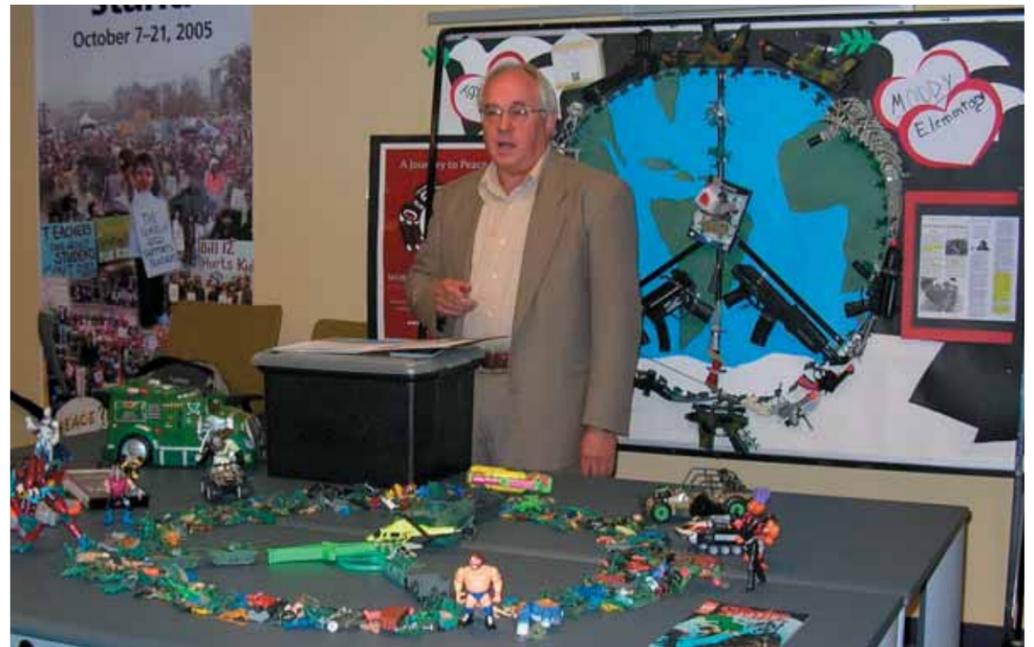
"The students in the two Grade 7 classes at our school were very eager to talk about homelessness. They were full of questions and ideas about why people are homeless and what should be done about it. The boys particularly enjoyed the video game and found it a useful way to explore some aspects of what daily life can be like for a person who is homeless. The game certainly did a good job of dispelling any idea that it might be fun to live on the street."

—Julia Clarke, Mount Pleasant Elementary School, Vancouver

"After learning about homelessness, my class of Grades 4 to 6 were inspired to lead a sock drive for the entire school. They collected more than 500 pairs of socks and delivered them to a health agency serving people who are homeless. They received a lovely note of thanks and were very proud to know they were doing something that was really appreciated."

—Sharon Ghuman, Tyece Elementary School, Vancouver

United Nations International Day of Peace, September 21, 2007



Retired teacher Sam Fillipoff speaks at a news conference to kick off the Toys for Amnesty project leading up to the 2006 World Peace Forum in Vancouver. Children donated their war toys and worked with local artists to transform them into peace art.

By Sam Fillipoff

All United Nations (UN) countries have agreed that September 21, the International Day of Peace (IDP), should be observed as a global cease-fire and a day of peace and non-violence. The IDP was established by a UN resolution in 1981 to promote the ideals of peace and to give positive evidence of the UN's commitment to peace in all viable ways. The International Day of Peace provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations, cities, and nations to create practical acts of peace.

Experience has shown us that during our lives, unique opportunities present themselves to make a fundamental difference for positive peaceful change. We only need to recognize them and then have the courage to act. Here are a few examples from the City of Vancouver:

- Green Peace originated in Vancouver in the early 1970s with the sole intent of stopping nuclear atmospheric testing in the Pacific Ocean by the United States, France, and Britain. *The Phyllis Cormack*, a refitted fish boat, sailed from Vancouver on September 15, 1971, with a crew of visionaries and dreamers to confront US nuclear tests on Amchitka Island in the Alaskan panhandle. They succeeded!
- In the 1980s, David Suzuki, a geneticist, began writing and leading the discourse for environmental protection and conservation. He went on to host the TV series *The Nature of Things*. Today, the David Suzuki Foundation is globally recognized as a beacon of hope for a world threatened by environmental problems, climate change, and looking for solutions for a sustainable future.
- Also in the 1980s, Vancouver City Council encouraged citizens to Walk for Peace and voted to declare Vancouver a "Nuclear Weapons Free Zone"—earning the city the United Nations designation of Peace Messenger City in 1986.

Vancouver and British Columbia have a rich history and tradition for peace and social justice activism.

The first World Peace Forum (WPF) assembled in Vancouver from June 23 to 28, 2006, to discuss: "Cities and Communities: Working together to end war and build a peaceful, just, and sustainable world." The 5,000 participants from

across the world and from all walks of life concluded that a world without war is achievable. They issued the 2006 Vancouver Appeal for Peace that outlined eight major themes that would bring an end to war. One of those themes stated: "We will educate our children and youth to cultivate cultures of peace and non-violence."

Allowing children to play with war toys suggests to them that adults approve of violent play.

The Winter 2007 issue of *Our Schools, Our Selves* dedicated the volume to "Teaching for a Culture of Peace." A feature story described a peace education project titled "Acts of Transformation: from War Toys to Peace Art" and called it the media star of the show in the buildup to the World Peace Forum. Children turning in their war toys captured symbolically the whole idea of transformation that is necessary for peace. The Museum of Anthropology at the University of BC organized workshops for students, teachers, and artists, and exhibited their War Toys to Peace Art along with children's Peace Art from Uganda and schools in BC. The War Toys to Peace Art project left a lasting physical legacy for a culture of peace for the children who participated.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2001 to 2010 an International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the children of the world, 2001 to 2010. All of the Nobel Peace prize Laureates have signed a declaration of support for actions that will achieve success for this decade and its objectives. They stated:

Experience has shown us that during our lives unique opportunities present themselves for us to make a fundamental difference for positive peaceful change.

"Together we can transform the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and non-violence. This demands the participation of everyone. It gives young people and future generations values that can inspire them to shape a world of dignity and harmony, a world of justice, solidarity, liberty, and

prosperity." This decade ends in 2010, the year the Winter Olympics are in Vancouver. This presents a wonderful opportunity to graft Acts of Transformation: from War Toys to Peace Art as a participatory peace education activity for children in BC, Canada, and perhaps even the world, onto the stalk of the Olympic truce. This would be a wonderful legacy for the Olympic Games and the International Decade for Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the children of the world.

Please consider starting to organize, participate, and cultivate a culture of peace and non-violence for the children in your school, community, or city on September 21, 2007, the UN International Day of Peace. A teaching resource guide, *Acts of Transformation: from War Toys to Peace Art*, is available from the BC Teachers' Federation Lesson Aids to assist you. A DVD is also available to show children's involvement in the War Toys to Peace Art Project.

Allowing children to play with war toys suggests to them that adults approve of violent play. War toys imply that war is an exciting game and that killing is okay, even fun. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International report that more than 500,000 children under 18 years of age have been recruited into government armed forces, para-militaries, civil militia, and a variety of non-state armed groups in more than 85 countries. At any one time, more than 300,000 of these children are actively fighting as soldiers. Whether recruited or abducted to join armies, many of these children have witnessed, or taken part in, unbelievable acts of violence, often against their own families or communities. The Canadian Army is recruiting children 16 years of age in our schools. They are offering secondary school credits and salaries for children to enlist. Let's help put an end to child soldiers on this planet. Ask your children and students to surrender their war toys to be transformed into peace art. Consider concluding the project on November 11. That was the date that was supposed to end all wars.

Recall the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

Sam Fillipoff is a retired Vancouver teacher.

Have you ever met
**a person who
was homeless?**



At 19, John was homeless and living in a tent. An outreach worker connected him to a job program. There, John found a place to live and received training, life skills counseling and work boots donated by a local employer. Now working, John has enough income to rent an apartment.

For John, support services, an adequate income and affordable housing made the difference between homelessness and a home.

Fact: Nearly half the youth living on the street in Canada were once in foster care.

Homelessness, together we can solve it.
Visit: stophomelessness.ca



Teachers working on call and seniority callout

By Kendra Litke

The duty of a union is to advocate equally for all of its members. The BCTF is working to ensure that all of its members have seniority rights that provide security. There are more than 6,000 teachers working on call who do not have the same degree of seniority as do teachers working on contract.

Why seniority callout?

Objectivity—Seniority is the backbone of any union. TOCs now accumulate seniority. With a teacher-request callout system, individual teachers have the power to decide which of their colleagues will or will not be earning seniority. This is clearly contrary to union principles.

Contract teachers rely upon seniority to supply some degree of fairness in filling vacant positions. Seniority attempts to remove favouritism and nepotism in a process where a teacher's livelihood is at stake. When a contract teacher expresses a preference for one TOC over another, there is none of the transparency, accountability, and due process for the non-requested TOC that contract teachers have come to expect. Contract teachers rightly demand a seniority-based process for filling vacant positions; so too, do TOCs.

Professionalism—Teachers working on call are hired on the basis of qualifications and experience in the same manner as contract teachers. Research done in 2005 clearly shows that TOCs in BC have the same level of education and

experience as contract teachers. For contract teachers to express a preference among TOCs undermines the professionalism of all. For, if TOCs, with equivalent experience and qualifications, can be placed in classroom positions without adequate rationale, why can't contract teachers be hired and replaced in the same manner?

Ethics—Contract teachers do not have their teaching performance openly ranked or evaluated by their colleagues. The selection of one TOC over another implies that a

Seniority attempts to remove favouritism and nepotism in a process where a teacher's livelihood is at stake.

contract teacher has evaluated the performance of a TOC and either approves or disapproves of their methodology. The practice of selecting one TOC over another raises ethical concerns.

Union solidarity—Under a teacher-request system, TOCs must compete with each other on a daily basis in order to make a living. This actively undermines union solidarity. The teacher-request or preferential system sets up an informal, yet powerful, employer/employee relationship between colleagues. In a local where contract teachers pick "the best" TOCs, and where TOCs are forced to compete with each other to be the chosen, there is no incentive for those TOCs who are successfully competitive and focussed on their own survival to

ally themselves with colleagues.

Social justice—In order to get work, TOCs are forced to "market" themselves to their peers. The necessity of selling oneself to ones own colleagues undermines the dignity of the individual as well as the profession. Contract teachers expect objective evaluation and fair treatment from their employer. What teachers demand from their employer, teachers should practise themselves.

Why not a preferential callout system?

Is "teacher-request" callout necessary to provide continuity of service to our students?

Seniority callout does not mean TOCs are assigned regardless of experience and qualifications. As with contract teachers, TOCs fill vacancies according to both seniority and qualifications. TOCs in the classroom must have the necessary qualifications to do the job. A seniority/qualification-based callout system may even result in a more consistent quality of teaching than a teacher-request/preferential callout system as with the latter individual teachers may make a subjective judgment on qualifications that include nepotism and friendship networks.

Continuity of service to students is a responsibility shared by the TOC, the principal, and the contract teacher. It is the responsibility of administration to ensure that all TOCs called into a classroom are qualified to be there. The contract teacher ensures continuity by providing adequate day plans and

notes on daily procedures and individual students. TOCs ensure continuity of service by using professional judgment and integrity in following the day plan. Although it may take a little longer for the contract teacher to supply adequate instruction for an unknown TOC, the time spent is a small price to pay for an investment in professionalism.

Numerous days away from a position does not necessarily mean that different TOCs are called. If a teacher is aware of a number of days that they will be absent, all the absences can be booked at the same time to ensure the same TOC. If the contract teacher is consistently absent a part-time assignment should be posted.

Why not an objective rotational callout system?

Although a rotational-callout system may address some of the concerns that arise with a teacher-request system, TOCs still have no assurance of an objective seniority accumulation process.

By extension, if the BCTF accepts that 15% if its members, teachers working on call, are assigned rotationally, so then should contract teachers be re-assigned each month or term.

Kendra Litke is the chair of the BCTF Teacher On Call and Underemployed Teacher Advisory Committee.

Special education policy and guidelines BCTF Research

A team of three PSA members (SEA President Saima Fewster, LATA President Janice Neden, SEA member Marilyn Miller) and BCTF Researcher Charlie Naylor, have produced a new publication. Access the guide, *Special Education Policy and Guidelines—the BCTF Guide*, on the BCTF's "Teaching to Diversity" web page at: bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Issues/Inclusive_education/Teaching_to_diversity/DiscussionGuideSpecEdManual.pdf

This BCTF guide shows the changes made to the special education manual and provides our analysis of some of the changes. The document provides more information about many changes that are not listed in the ministry's two-page summary of the new policy and guidelines document, which is attached (with permission) as an appendix to the BCTF guide.

There are some positives in the new ministry policy and guidelines document (on the ministry web site at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg/toc.htm). As well as the specific changes to policy and guidelines that are identified in the BCTF guide, a brief discussion of implications is included. Issues and concerns are also stated.

One thing to bear in mind is that the ministry has planned future changes will be made on-line. We aim to monitor these and keep the BCTF guide current.

We have also obtained copies of the Ministry of Education's (January 2007) "Special Education Services Category Checklists." These lists are used as criteria when audits are carried out on special education services in school districts.

A hard copy of both the BCTF guide and the ministry category checklists will be mailed to local offices. Please share this information and the web address to access the BCTF guide, with your members working in special education and learning assistance.

— Charlie Naylor

Teacher induction, retention, and mentoring

Conference
October 26–27

October 26–27, 2007 conference *Joining hands: Network for building collaborative cultures and practices—Teacher induction, retention, and mentoring* is presented by the UBC School Leadership Centre.

Jane Miles and Tom Howe from The New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz and Richard Lange and Scott Scarfidi from ASCD's Mentoring, Leadership, and Resource Network will join BC educators on October 26 and 27, 2007, in exploring the importance of induction and mentoring programs for teachers. (<http://slc.educ.ubc.ca>)

The next five years will see enormous demographic changes in the classrooms of British Columbia. As experienced teachers leave the profession, BC will likely lose a vast bank of teacher expertise.

- Each year for the past five years approximately 1,500 teachers have retired. This past year the figure was 1,805. With about 35% of the teaching workforce between the ages of 50 and 59, and an average retirement age of 59, we can expect retirements to remain close to 2005 levels for at least the next five years. This means we can expect approximately 10,000 retirements over the next five years.

- The universities and university-colleges in the province graduate approximately 1,800 to 2,000 from teacher education programs per year. Ten thousand teachers with many years of experience will therefore be replaced by a cohort of new teachers. Together with recent retirements, this will change the demographics of the teacher population in BC.

- There are approximately 6,400 teachers with five or fewer years teaching experience. This represents about 19% of the teacher workforce.
- There are currently about 6,536 teachers on call. This number is about 900 more than recorded in the January 2006 snapshot.

Considerable work is under way to cope with the transition of positional leadership (principals, vice-principals, superintendents). However, there is an urgent need to ensure that the accumulated knowledge and experience of teachers is captured and passed on to those entering the profession, so the potential for teacher leadership can also be recognized and developed. This might happen through a number of approaches, including teacher inquiry and mentoring. Some school districts (Burnaby, Coquitlam, Vancouver), universities, and the BCTF have already embarked upon initiatives to begin addressing this issue. The BCTF, for instance, currently supports teacher inquiry and mentoring in several school districts. UBC has developed a number of courses and projects with school districts to assist teachers in developing their research and leadership skills. We need to find ways to build on those initiatives, develop others, form networks, and to disseminate knowledge and processes throughout BC.

Registration information for this conference is available at: <http://slc.educ.ubc.ca/JoiningHands/October2007Conference/JoiningHands-ConferenceProgram.htm>. For more information contact: Dr. John C. Moss, t: 604-827-5350, f: 604-822-8234, e-mail: slc.edu@ubc.ca, web: www.slc.educ.ubc.ca.



A letter to the premier

Congratulations for having a \$4 billion budget surplus for the coming fiscal year—representing first-rate budgeting practice.

This surplus provides your government with a golden opportunity to become the first province in Canada to provide a free educational program for all our children in the public school system—at an estimated cost of only \$45 million.

This modest sum, representing a 1% increase in the operating budgets for all Boards of Education, allocated on a per-student enrolment basis, would permit boards to offer a first-rate educational program to all school-age children,

completely free of charges or fees, as envisioned in the *School Act*, Section 82.

This very modest operating budget increase would no doubt provoke other provinces to emulate this practice—thus making Canada the first nation in the Western world to offer free public school education to all its school-age children.

You, personally, would acquire huge public support, Canada-wide, for making our public school system truly equal and responsive to the educational needs of all our children—the rich and poor alike, which unfortunately is not now the case.

Again, I urge you, in the interest

of treating all our children alike in the public school system, to allocate a 1% increase in the operating funds of every school district—in order to enable schools to offer "fee-free" educational programs for every child.

Were you to stage a media event to announce this proposed, unique policy aimed at making BC the first public school system in Canada to offer a truly "free of charge" educational program for every child, you would receive very wide commendation, support, and gratitude from every citizen in the province.

John Young, president and trustee, Greater Victoria Board of Education #61

Students making healthy food choices at school

Strategy, challenge, and lessons learned

By Patrice White

The prospect of influencing students to make healthier food choices from vending machines, in part, inspired me to see if I could make a difference in one Surrey secondary school by completing an action research project. In November 2005, the BC Ministry of

By pointing out the many ways schools can influence health and setting a goal to eliminate the sale of unhealthy foods and beverages in BC schools by 2009, the report and guidelines challenge schools to increase efforts to assist students in making informed choices about nutrition.

Education and Ministry of Health jointly issued two documents. *The School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report* identified the food and beverages sold in our schools and reviewed the policies of BC school boards. *The Guidelines for Food and Beverages Sales in British Columbia Schools* provided criteria and information for implementing healthier food choices for students from school-based vending machines, cafeterias, and stores. Both documents are part of the increasing commitment to an education and health plan focussed primarily on schools. By pointing out the many ways schools can influence health and setting a goal to eliminate the sale of unhealthy foods and beverages in BC schools by 2009, the report and guidelines challenge schools to increase efforts to assist students in making informed choices about nutrition. The goal is to maximize students' access to Choose Most and Choose Sometimes options, minimize

access to Choose Least options, and phase out Not Recommended items. I employed some practical steps in my strategy, faced a few familiar challenges, and learned several important lessons on how to maximize the impact of a school-based initiative to improve students' food choices from vending machines.

I used the experiences of a variety of projects and research, from the flamboyant Jamie Oliver and British schools' experiment to the meticulous Aleck Ostry's *ActNowBC* school surveys (the basis for the *The Guidelines for Food and Beverages Sales in British Columbia Schools*), to implement a three-step strategy for improving students' food choices. First, I formed a student-led group called the Students' Nutrition Advocacy Committee or SNAC to launch a promotion and introduction of the healthier food choices. The SNAC group added the important elements of "kids helping kids" and student leadership to my action research. The second step was to revamp the food offerings. The students understood the requirement that the new offerings had to meet the specific nutrition standards in *The Guidelines for Food and Beverages Sales in British Columbia Schools*. The real coup here was having the SNAC members actually identify, sample, and select the healthier options that were to be offered in school vending machines. The third step was the accommodation of the SNAC-member-selected healthier choices. In the school where this project was conducted, the flexibility and co-operation of the vending machine contractor was not an issue. Moreover, *The School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report* states that "the Canadian Merchandising Association is encouraging its members to work within their contracts to provide healthier food choices for schools." However, what really clinched the marketing change was ensuring the

involvement of students as the ultimate consumers.

Interestingly, even with highly committed individuals, several challenges were encountered during the course of the project. Some healthier food options simply could not be implemented without additional resources. For example, the accommodation of yogurt and cheese snacks required changing to cold vending machines, and the addition of fresh fruits and other expiration-sensitive items created the need for more highly trained stockers. At the same time, some of the healthier food choices tended to be more expensive. This meant the price differences could potentially either discourage students from buying the healthier food choices, or risk the school's vending economic viability. In my action research project as well as in reports from provinces where similar no-junk-food-in-schools policies have been implemented, even the short term indicate that schools can raise funds without undermining students' diets and health. The primary challenge was to ensure that key stakeholders were involved in developing and implementing new programs and practices. Support and acceptance of the nutrition policy among administrators, teachers, parents,

...it is clear that changes have to happen in many places in the BC school "village" to raise healthy students.

and students has been consistently found to be essential for the programs and practices to be successful.

Overcoming these challenges led to some important lessons for my school and for other schools on how to maximize the impact of school-based initiatives to improve students' food choices. One was to gather information from students



about their insights, perceptions, and opinions regarding the healthier food choices. Next, it was advantageous to use promotions and samplings to get students' attention and to identify popular options while familiarizing students with healthier foods. Another lesson was "information is power." By giving students the nutrition facts on both junk food and healthier food choices, the students not only

gain knowledge, they are encouraged to do some critical thinking.

So, with the looming deadline for the elimination of all junk food from BC school-based food outlets, it is clear that changes have to happen in many places in the BC school "village" to raise healthy students.

Patrice White is a registered dietitian and teaches home economics at Guilford Park Secondary, Surrey.

Teacher-librarians in BC

BCTF research on staffing

Teacher-librarians in BC are certified teachers typically with further education beyond a bachelor degree in teacher-librarianship. The role of the teacher-librarian has been described as involving two main areas. One is to provide instruction for all grade levels in research skills and reading, and to enhance information and technological literacy. The second area is the development, maintenance, and management of a well-stocked school library. This includes selecting appropriate reading material in a variety of media (books, CD-ROM, interactive computer technology, for example), as well as ensuring the school library materials are current and complement curricula.

According to The United Nations (UNESCO, 2000), "the school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's society, which is increasingly information- and knowledge-based. The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens." Further, a strong relationship between the presence of a teacher-librarian in an accessible, well-stocked school library, and student success has been well documented (see Haycock, 2003).

Despite the demonstrated importance of teacher-librarians and

libraries, library services was one of the areas hardest hit by funding cutbacks and teacher lay-offs resulting from removal of staffing formulas from teacher collective agreements, implemented by the provincial government in 2002.

Since that time, funding for K-12 public education has been partially restored and teacher-librarian staffing levels have slowly begun to improve. Table 1 shows the changes in library services (program area 1.07) staffing levels since 1997. For example, in 1997, there were 778 teacher-librarians and 20 administrators assigned to the library services program area.

Between 2001 and 2003, teacher-librarian staffing levels were cut by over 23%. It was not until the government removed a funding freeze and began to put money

back into public education in 2005 that staffing levels began to recover. 2004-05 was the last year of a five-year decline in staffing levels and the 2005-06 school year saw an increase of 7% in teacher-librarian staffing. However, by 2006-07 there were still 175 fewer (19%) full-time-equivalent teacher-librarians compared to 2001.

Table 1 also shows that the number of administrators assigned to the library area has increased steadily over the 10-year period shown. Since 1997-98, FTE administrators working in the library services area have increased by over 50%.

— Colleen Hawkey

The full report is on the bctf web site: bctf.ca/publications.aspx?id=5630.

Table 1: Library Services staffing, 1997-98 to 2006-07

Year	Teachers	Administrators	Educational Assistants	Other Professionals	Clerical
1997-98	778.4	19.8	157.5	6.3	332.1
1998-99	886.3	27.1	150.9	5.2	371.3
1999-00	946.6	23.8	140.0	3.9	351.9
2000-01	939.0	22.2	127.3	4.0	336.2
2001-02	921.8	20.6	111.1	4.9	318.2
2002-03	759.4	24.6	125.5	4.4	292.3
2003-04	704.6	27.4	119.5	2.9	267.2
2004-05	692.6	28.5	111.2	2.2	272.3
2005-06	741.3	25.9	123.5	2.9	303.4
2006-07	746.6	29.9	137.9	5.2	292.5

Thank you!

BCTF members are instrumental in mentoring the next generation of teaching professionals. Thank you for supporting pre-service teachers and our teacher education programs.

For more information about our programs please contact:

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Health and safety

New WorkSafeBC rules apply to you

By Mark Keelan

During the summer, while BCTF members were enjoying a much needed holiday, or taking courses, or teaching summer school, or participating in some of the many other activities that occupy their time, new provisions in the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* came into force. Often new regulations have little impact on the education sector, but in the case of this summer's new regulations, many BCTF members will be affected.

The new rules apply to the orientation and training of young or new workers. Section 3.22 defines a young worker as any worker who is under the age of 25. Some BCTF members meet that criterion. However, it is the definition of new worker that includes a large portion of the membership. Section 3.22 defines a new worker as "any worker who is:

- new to the workplace,
- returning to a workplace where the hazards in that workplace have changed during the worker's absence,
- affected by a change in the hazards of a workplace, or
- relocated to a new workplace if the hazards in that workplace are different from the hazards in the worker's previous workplace."

Often new regulations have little impact on the education sector, but in the case of this summer's new regulations, many BCTF members will be affected.

How do the definitions of a new worker apply to BCTF members? The following are some examples of how the new definitions apply. The list is certainly not exhaustive.

Subsection a:

- anyone who is newly hired
- a teacher on call who has not been at the workplace before

Subsection b:

- a teacher returning to school in September who has a potentially violent student enrolled in her class
- a teacher returning from a leave of absence

Subsection c:

- anyone who is working in a school that is undergoing renovations
- anyone working in a new classroom or a new wing in the school

Subsection d:

- an English teacher who is now teaching Science
- anyone who has transferred to a new school.

Section 3.23 states that *before a new or young worker begins work in a workplace*, she or he must be given health and safety orientation and training specific to the workplace (emphasis added). The list of topics that must be covered in the orientation and training is comprehensive and includes, among other things, information about the employer's and the worker's rights and responsibilities, violence in the workplace, first aid, WHMIS, workplace health and safety rules, and hazards to which the worker may be exposed.

Each year in British Columbia an average of 15,000 teacher workdays are lost due to workplace injury or occupational disease costing school districts millions of dollars.

By the time you read this it could be a month or more since the employer should have provided orientation and training. It is probable that many new and young workers have begun work but have not had the required training. It is not too late! Section 3.24 states that the employer must provide a young or new worker with additional orientation and training if it is clear by observation that the worker is not able to perform work tasks safely or *if requested by the young or new worker* (emphasis added).

The obligation on employers to provide health and safety instruction and training is not new. Various provisions of the *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* require that all workers receive appropriate instruction and training. What is different about the new regulations is that all of the topics that must be covered are listed in one place and that employers must be able to provide documentation that proves young and new workers have had their orientation and training.

Each year in British Columbia an average of 15,000 teacher workdays are lost due to workplace injury or occupational disease costing school districts millions of dollars. Virtually all of these injuries are preventable. Orientation and training have been proven to reduce injury and disease. BCTF members should insist that they receive the orientation and training to which they are entitled.

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

Leadership succession challenges for the BCTF

By Royce Shook

Over the last few years, there has been a number of concerns expressed by the BCTF about the upcoming shortage of teachers at the same time as there has been a growing concern by the Ministry of Education, the Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, and other groups about the lack of teachers who are willing to move into administration. In 2006, the government launched an initiative in response to the "succession challenges" faced by districts, by providing funding to start up a non-profit society with the mandate to develop leadership in the public education sector (Emery Dodsall, June 2007). This growing challenge in leadership succession should be a concern to teachers and to the leadership of the BCTF.

The BCTF should be actively promoting and providing teachers who aspire to leadership in education an alternative to becoming administrators. The alternative that should be promoted is being active in the BCTF at the provincial or the local level. The teaching profession needs strong teacher-leaders in schools to advocate for members, children, and parents, to protect our hard won union rights, and to speak for education when the government and school boards are putting more emphasis on the bottom line.

Usually leadership is seen to be the mandate of the principal, head teacher, or department head. However, research has shown that teachers can lead in a variety of ways, including committee work, grade, and school levels, and union activity. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) defined teacher-leaders as: "teachers who are leaders within and beyond the classroom, who identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and

leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice."

Many teachers think of union activists as the union representative in the school. However, there are many teachers in schools who are union activists and leaders who may not see themselves as such. Teachers who are active on the school safety committee, the professional development committee, the staff committee, the social committee, and other school-based committees are all union activists. These committees play a vital role in the life of a school, but many teachers do not seem to understand that the right for teachers to be on these committees was won through bargaining by the BCTF and was not given by the employer easily. These important union committees play a role in the welfare of teachers and ultimately in student achievement.

As leadership in schools in BC is becoming less centralized, teacher-leaders are assuming increased responsibility for leading improvements in teaching and learning. An important element in teacher leadership is the ability to influence the practice of others. Through union committees teacher-leaders influence the practice of others.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) identified a number of studies that directly examined the effects of teacher leadership on students. One, a qualitative study of three elementary schools, reported a positive effect on students' learning because of the influence teacher-leaders had on the instructional practices of their colleagues.

By working with other like-minded professionals, teachers build their own understanding of their pedagogy. In addition, working on union committees gives teachers the opportunity to provide leadership while building and strengthen-

ing personal and professional qualities such as:

- enthusiasm, commitment, and passion
- communication skills
- reflective, reflexive practices
- leadership capabilities and collaborative skills
- in-depth specialized knowledge.

Developing teacher leadership is an important role of the BCTF. Leadership is not just for the administrative team; leadership can be shown by a variety of members of a school community. When teachers think of leaders they may think about positional leaders who are given their leadership and influence through formal authority. However, other types of leaders within the school are personal leaders who are informal leaders and who lead by nature of their personal or professional position. Teacher-leaders usually are personal leaders.

Teacher-leaders primarily focus on leading and improving teaching and learning practices. If we are to continue to have a strong and teacher-centred union, the BCTF should be considering its own programs on how to develop future teacher-leaders. The opportunity to develop and show leadership, in the classroom and on union committees, helps build teachers' morale, self-esteem, self-efficacy, work satisfaction, and retention.

I encourage young teachers to become union activists and leaders through involvement in school-based committees, and I encourage the leadership of the BCTF to consider building programs that help our teachers become better leaders. The need for continuing strong leadership in the BCTF is too important to be ignored.

Royce Shook, a retired Surrey teacher, is currently a Surrey TOC.

Vancouver teachers' contract first to include support for transgender employees

"We are very proud to have the first teachers' collective agreement in the province to include anti-discrimination language that recognizes discrimination on the basis of gender identity," says Glen Hansman, president of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association (VESTA). "There may not even be another one in Canada."

VESTA and its secondary counterpart, Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association (VSTA), bargain collectively as the Vancouver Teachers' Federation. They signed a memorandum of agreement with the Vancouver School Board recently that was ratified by teachers on April 12, 2007. No other teachers' contract in

BC mentions gender identity.

"As teachers, we have been very active for the past five years working with management and trustees of the Vancouver School Board to make schools welcoming for all members of our school community," says Hansman. "Having this new language is a significant step in protecting transidentified and gender non-conforming employees against transphobia and other forms of harassment."

Significantly, the new contract language states that nothing "requires the affected employee to actually possess a characteristic that is the basis for discrimination."

"Because of the *Azmi Jubran vs North Vancouver School Board* case,

we thought it was important for this point to be specifically stated in our collective agreement," says Hansman. "Thanks to Jubran's persistence, it is absolutely clear now that one does not have to be a person of colour to be affected by racism; that one does not have to be gay to be a victim of homophobia, and our new collective-agreement language reflects that."

"Collective bargaining is an important form of social justice work" says Hansman, "and we are very happy to have achieved this at the local level for our teachers."

For more information, contact Glen Hansman at 604-873-8378 (Monday-Friday), 604-813-5318 (cell), or glen@vesta.ca.

Canadians, bilingualism, and education

By Pierre Blouin

In July 1963, the government of Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to "inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups."

This year, 40 years after the recommendations of the commission, also known as the Laurendeau-Dunton commission, Radio-Canada contracted the firm CROP to survey Canadians on the

state of bilingualism in our country. The results represent the views of francophones and anglophones in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Here are the main findings of the survey.

- Eight out of 10 Canadians are in favor of bilingualism. 93% of francophones and 77% of anglophones support it. The support is strongest among students (96%), bilingual people (95%), and people who completed university (85%).
- In the same proportion, Canadians think that the probability of getting a better job is a legitimate reason to become bilingual. Just over 75% of Canadians think that travel and personal cultural enhancement is a good reason to support

bilingualism. Moreover, half the respondents consider the desire to be a good Canadian citizen can motivate people to learn both languages.

- 50% agree with the opinion that not enough courses are offered to learn "the other language."
- 71% of Canadians outside Quebec favour the teaching of French in all primary schools and 68% in all secondary schools.
- 16% of Canadians, outside Quebec, affirm that they are bilingual; 56% of Quebecois say that they are bilingual.
- 91% of Canadians think that the prime minister should speak both languages.

These findings seem to support the direction taken by the federal government in adopting the Action

Plan for Official Languages in March 2003. The bilingualism action plan sets the following objectives for education in Canada:

- Increase the proportion of eligible students enrolled in French schools outside Quebec from 68% to 80% in 10 years.
- Double the number of young Canadians who know the other official language from 24% to 50% in 10 years. One-out-of-every-two young Canadians should be able to speak both English and French in 10 years.
- Increase the quality of language instruction, including making it more accessible.
- Increase the number of language instructors.
- Provide more exchange programs and bursaries.

To achieve these goals in BC, where the large majority of teachers providing French instruction don't speak the language, the key players in education should take some steps to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to learn French and the pedagogy of teaching a second language. They should also look at the challenges encountered in recruiting French teachers. In immersion, where the number of registrations is climbing very rapidly (in September 2006, there were 4,030 Grade 1 students registered in French Immersion compared to 2,779 in Grade 5—a 45% increase), recruitment of French teachers will become critical to the survival of this program.

Pierre Blouin, *Syndicat enseignant.e.s programme francophone (SEPF)*.

Yours for the asking

Food force

Food Force is an educational video game about the problem of global hunger and the importance of humanitarian aid work. Presented by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) in 2005, it has enjoyed international success and is now available in 10 languages, including French.

The game is divided into six minigames or "missions," each representing a step in the process of delivering and using food aid. The missions range from flying a helicopter to assembling nutritious emergency rations on a budget, to using food aid in order to rebuild a community in the long term. It's a game to be used in the computer lab where everyone can have a go—and preferably with headphones.

Food Force is a so-called *serious game*—a video game with a purpose that goes beyond entertainment. However, it's still fun, action-packed, and varied as its international popularity testifies.

Food Force is a free Internet download from the web site www.food-force.com. It's available both for Mac and PC, but it's a big file (about 200MB), so only attempt download with a non-dial-up connection. If you cannot download, send an e-mail to silke.buhr@wfp.org; please bear in mind that WFP is a humanitarian aid organization and can only send out limited complimentary copies. Bulk orders (minimum 50 CD Roms) can be purchased at www.fighthunger.org/en/store/14.

The web site also features a teachers' section with lesson plans on hunger, the so-called "Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger" partnership. The colourful teaching materials all about hunger can be downloaded as PDF files for different learning levels.

Learning resources for sustainable communities

Visit www.resources4rethinking.ca and discover tools for active, relevant, and interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

This web site is a new online database where educators and the general public can search for the highest quality, peer-reviewed, curriculum-aligned teaching resources on issues related to the development of an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable society.

In the past 10 years alone, non-profit organizations, government agencies and departments, business leaders, and teachers' associations have created thousands of resources to help teachers integrate sustainability education into their classrooms.

The web site allows teachers to search by sustainability issue or keyword, subject and grade, or language (English/French).

Send us your favourite resources for review and possible posting on the web site.

For more information, contact Natalie Gibb, ngibb@lsf-ist.ca or call toll-free 1-877-250-8202.

Disponible en français | www.ressourcespourrepenser.ca.

Reading adventure series

The *Joe Rock and Friends* reading adventures series is a collection of interactive books created by a team of Okanagan teachers. Aimed at emerging readers, ages three to nine, this supplementary literacy resource currently has nine titles, each available in English, French, or Spanish. An "Our Choice 2007"

selection from the Canadian Children's Book Centre, the series includes outstanding 3D graphics, original music, and unique technology features.

Readers can select one of three reading levels for each story and choose to read silently or to have a page or the whole story read to them by professional readers. The read-to-me mode highlights words as they are read; a mouse-over of any word pronounces it. Language learners can also choose instant translation mode to toggle between any two languages and click on any word for a pop-up translation.

Combined with a video projector, the stories can also be used as a digital "big book" for modeled reading. A bonus DVD is included with each CD. Each set retails for \$24.99. Activity books and print books are also available.

The team is also using their distinctive technology capabilities to assist First Nations groups in the preservation of indigenous languages. Incorporating original native artwork, traditional stories are being re-created as interactive books. Language learners can toggle between languages or mouse over any word to hear it repeated. The graphic look of these CD-ROMs has been designed to enhance original story illustrations for a seamless integration of culture and technology. To date, projects have been completed in Dogrib and a related dialect.

The "Joe Rock" team will be at *Word on the Street*, Sunday, September 30, 2007, in Vancouver. A 20% discount will be available at *Word on the Street* for all "Joe Rock" purchases made by BCTF members. Visit the web site to read the reviews: www.joerockstories.com.

Contact Christine Petkau, BoggleNoggin Media, 250-404-4272.

Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

This fall, the VHEC is announcing a new exhibit, school program, and teachers' guide that link the Holocaust to contemporary social justice issues and BC's social studies curriculum.

Nuremberg: Justice in the Aftermath of the Holocaust explores the history and present-day implications of the Nuremberg trials, at which prominent Nazi leaders were tried for their roles in the murder of millions of people during the Holocaust. The exhibit investigates the role of the Holocaust in shaping contemporary concepts of genocide and international justice, from its precedent-setting impact on International Tribunals in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, to its effect on human-rights law today.

Visiting schools will participate in *Judgement on Nuremberg: A Student Mock Trial of Julius Streicher*, a program developed by the VHEC for senior secondary students. The Nuremberg exhibit will serve as a backdrop to invoke the courtroom atmosphere of the Nuremberg tribunals. This will set the stage for the student mock trial of Julius Streicher, the editor and owner of *Der Stürmer*, a virulently anti-Semitic Nazi newspaper. Students will use primary source documents, speeches, and photographs to consider whether Streicher, who through his writings and speeches incited others to persecute Jews, would be found guilty today. A comprehensive teachers' guide for the mock trial will be available for download from www.vhec.org.

Sponsored by The Law Foundation of BC. Program dates: October 15, 2007 through to Spring 2008. For info and school bookings contact 604-264-0499, info@vhec.org, or visit www.vhec.org.

10 New BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 9350—What Would Gandhi Do? K.I.S.S.: Keep it Simple Solutions to Global Problems by Pummy Kaur, 195 p. ©2006. This book contains unique insights and perspectives, and offers simple, highly effective, individual solutions to global problems; solutions that are congruent with Gandhian principles such as simplicity, seva (service), self-sufficiency, courage and compassion. This book clearly and succinctly demonstrates current global problems are immediately reversible, without government, business, industry, or financial-sector assistance. The author, a teacher and mother of three, provides rational, concrete, easy solutions to very complex global problems. The book challenges the western-minded of all ages, races, genders, nationalities, and faiths to examine their own individual complicity in global problems, and it inspires educated, selfless, future conscious, and compassionate individual actions. Recommended by David Suzuki, the Honorable Iona Campagnolo, and Al Gore. Elementary and secondary. \$21.95.

2 LA 2235—Smoke Screen 2: Through the Eyes of New Canadians produced by Access to Media Education Society, 25-minute DVD, ©2006. *Smoke Screen 2* is a youth-driven tobacco prevention/cessation resource to help classroom teachers and community leaders keep youth from smoking or to help them stop smoking. The package contains two documentaries and two facilitator's manuals—one for ESL classes/teachers and one for general use. The documentaries tell the story of a group of newcomer youth who are given the opportunity to learn about the dangers of tobacco use and develop antitobacco advertisements aimed at other youth. The guides (25-35 pages) contain five formal lesson plans for teachers desiring to use the material in their classrooms to meet the prescribed learning outcomes of Health and Career Education 8 and 9 or Planning 10. The ESL documentary and guide are primarily designed for advanced ESL students, but the DVD also includes a version that includes plain language English subtitles, a version of the ESL documentary that includes simple Chinese subtitles, and a version of the ESL documentary that includes Punjabi subtitles. In addition the CD contains a glossary of terms, worksheets/graphic organizers to go with many of the lessons, full transcripts of the documentary in five languages (Simple Chinese, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish). Recommended by the BC Ministry of Education. Grades 8-12. \$35.

3 LA 9349—Our Home and Native Land: British Columbia Geography produced by LearnSmart Publishing Co., 50 p. ©2006. This workbook provides a fun way for students to learn the basics of BC's geography—borders, rivers, lakes, islands, land regions, cities, mountain ranges, highways, and parks. The workbook is based on the political and physical colour map of BC and the two reference sheets—BC at a Glance and BC Facts, included at the beginning of the workbook. The book contains 37 worksheets and 17 maps, project evaluation form, and answer key for the worksheets. Grades 3-7. \$19.95.

4 LA 8210—Communities: A Cross-Curricular Unit by D. & N. Hughes, 56 p. ©2007. This illustrated activity book, with reproducible pages, explores the concept of community by examining the structures and elements specific to family, classroom, neighbourhood, and city communities. The book is thematic and cross-curricular in approach, and encourages students to explore community issues through critical-thinking and discussion activities, reading and writing activities, and art and puzzle activities. Fun activities include creating a neighbourhood collage, building a family tree, and sketching school and neighbourhood maps. Students learn about the importance of mutual reciprocity within community structures, and through the story of Wilbur Wibble Spoon they learn the value of commitment and responsibility in the classroom setting. Activities promote critical-thinking skills and related written-language skills. Grades 1-3. \$17.95.

5 LA 8022—Take It To Your Seat Phonics Centres: Grades K-1 produced by Evan-Moor, 194 p. ©2004. This book includes full-colour materials to construct the centres with full-colour reproducible student task cards and step-by-step teacher directions for making and using each center, reproducible student activity sheets or answer forms and answer key. The 13 self-contained centers are easy to make and phonics topics include visual discrimination, rhyming words, upper- and lower-case letters, initial and final consonant sounds, short-vowel sounds, counting syllables, word families, and more. Produced in the United States and may contain some US-based standards. \$21.95.

6 LA 9438—Middle-Grade Math Minutes: One Hundred Minutes to Better Basic Skills by Creative Teaching Press, 112 p. ©2000. The math problems on each reproducible sheet can be done in one or two minutes. Each minute consists of 10 classroom-tested problems of varying degrees of difficulty, integrating problem solving, and basic math skills. This format offers students an opportunity to improve their own fluency in a manageable, non-threatening format. The quick, one-minute format combined with instant feedback makes this a challenging and motivational assignment students will look forward to each day. Students become active learners as they discover mathematical relationships and apply acquired understanding to complex situations and to the solution of realistic problems in each minute. An answer key is included. Produced in the United States and may contain some US-based standards. Grades 6-8. \$14.95.

7 LA 9439—Eighth-Grade Math Minutes: One Hundred Minutes to Better Basic Skills by Creative Teaching Press, 114 p. ©2007. Take just one minute a day to quickly assess student progress in basic math skills. This book features 100 quick reproducible drill sheets to help students increase speed in math operations and strengthen problem-solving skills. The 10 problems on each sheet can be done in one or two minutes and are a great warm-up to the daily math lesson. The format

combined with instant feedback makes this a challenging and motivational assignment students will look forward to each day. Students become active learners as they discover mathematical relationships and apply acquired understanding to complex situations and to the solution of realistic problems in each minute. An answer key is included. Produced in the United States and may contain some US-based standards. \$14.95.

8 LA 9440—Algebra Puzzles: Build Pre-Algebra and Algebra Skills Through Puzzles and Problems by Creative Teaching Press, 82 p. ©2007. *Algebra Puzzles* uses games, puzzles, and other problem-solving activities to give students fresh, new ways of exploring learned concepts. While reviewing essential concepts and vocabulary for pre-algebra and algebra, the book helps students visualize and think more deeply about these abstract ideas. The perfect antidote to algebra anxiety. An answer key is included. Produced in the United States and may contain some US-based standards. Grades 6-8. \$13.95.

9 LA 9441—Percents: Reproducible Activities for Targeted Practice by Creative Teaching Press, 50 p. ©2007. The activity pages provide problem-solving activities that allow students to apply what they have learned and practise critical-thinking skills. Students receive reinforcement in: identifying and naming percents, finding and ordering equivalent fractions, decimals and percents, determining the percent of a number, finding a variable that involves a percent, using percents in real-world activities, and solving equations involving percents. Answer key included for quick reference and student self-check. Produced in the United States and may contain some US-based standards. Grades 5-6. \$4.95.

10 LA 9183—Parts of Speech and Punctuation: Reproducible Activities for Targeted Practice by Creative Teaching Press, 50 p. ©2007. The activities approach the skills in a variety of ways to provide multiple perspectives on the concept. They are designed to cover different aspects of the topic, including using proper sentence structure, identifying parts of speech, using parts of speech, using capitalization rules, and using proper punctuation. Answer key included. Produced in the United States and may contain some US-based standards. Grades 5-6. \$4.95.

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

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

Project Overseas

July-August 2008

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.

For more details, visit bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6298

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

Deadline: CTF application plus BCTF forms must be received at the BCTF by **November 14, 2007**. For information and to request an application and forms, contact Anne Field or Amber Vint 604-871-2283, toll-free 1-800-663-9163, afield@bctf.ca, avint@bctf.ca

Teachers' Pension Plan

Purchasing service

The deadline to purchase historical service (i.e., leaves that ended before April 1, 2002) has now come and gone. What are the conditions and deadlines to purchase service now? This article is intended to give a brief summary and update on purchasing service.

When you take an approved full-time leave of absence from your school district, you do not accumulate either pensionable service or contributory service. If you take a part-time leave, then you do not accumulate pensionable service.

If you purchase a leave period, you will receive the pensionable service, and if applicable, the contributory service, that you would have received had you not taken the leave.

What can be purchased?

In order to maximize your pension benefit, the following types of employer-approved leaves of absence can be purchased through the Teachers' Pension Plan:

- **General Leave** (up to 5 cumulative years)—taken for any reason other than those listed below.
- **Maternity Leave** (up to 17 weeks)—may only be purchased by birth mother.
- **Parental Leave** (up to 35 weeks)—may be purchased by birth mothers, fathers, and adoptive parents.
- **Compassionate Care Leave** (up to 8 weeks, considered part of general leave accumulation)—taken to provide care and support to a family member in situations where the family member is gravely ill with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.
- **Non-contributory time** (considered part of general leave accumulation)—time while on recall list, with application to purchase made before recall rights expire.

Conditions and deadline for purchase

- You were an active member when you took the leave.
- The leave ended on or after April 1, 2002.
- You must apply to purchase your leave within five years of the date the leave ended.
- You must apply to purchase the entire leave period, unless the purchase makes your service exceed 35 years in total or 10 months in a calendar year, in which case you may be able to purchase a portion of the leave.
- You must apply to purchase before you end your employment with your current employer. If you do not plan to return to work after the leave (e.g., you may be heading straight into retirement or going to another school district to live/work), you can purchase the time, providing you apply while you are still on the leave.
- Your employer must certify your leave by signing the Purchase of Service Application form, which can be downloaded from the "Forms" area on the Teachers' Pension Plan home page at tpp.pensionsbc.ca.

Cost of purchase

Calculating the cost of purchasing a leave of absence has been simplified, as follows: your current full-time-equivalent salary times the applicable contribution rate times the number of months of service being purchased.

The current employee contribution rate is 9.16%. The current employer contribution rate is 12.29%.

The member only has to pay her or his share when purchasing maternity, parental, and/or compassionate care leaves. The member has to pay *both* the current employee and the current employer rates for a combined total of 21.45% on salary that is under the YMPE when purchasing general leaves and time on the layoff/recall list.

- **Example 1:** full-time general leave, taken September 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005; monthly salary \$6,500. The cost is \$6,500 x 21.45% x 10 months = \$13,943.
- **Example 2:** full-time maternity and parental leave, taken September 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005, monthly salary \$6,500. The cost is \$6,500 x 9.16% x 10 months = \$5,954. The employer is billed its share of the cost to purchase.

The Teachers' Pension Plan online Purchase Cost Estimator is available to help you determine the cost of purchasing service. The cost estimate can be printed and used as your purchase of service application form. Your employer must sign this form.

Calculating the cost benefit

Use the Teachers' Pension Plan online "My Account" Personalized Pension Estimator and calculate your pension for a specific retirement date. Then go back and increase the pensionable service and contributory service by the additional amount being purchased and recalculate your pension for the same retirement date. This will give you the increase in your monthly pension due to the purchase. Divide the cost of the purchase by the increase in the monthly pension to determine the number of months of increased pension it will take to recover your purchase cost. If the time is 10 years or less, the purchase may be to your benefit.

Further information

Check out the information on Purchase of Service on the "Pensions" page on the BCTF web site at bctf.ca.

You may also contact BCTF Income Security staff for assistance. Telephone: 1-800-663-9163 (toll-free), 604-871-1921 (Vancouver). E-mail: alambert@bctf.ca or cprellwitz@bctf.ca.

Join the RTA

Some of the most valued benefits of membership in the BC Retired Teachers' Association are its insurance plans. Competitive, affordable, and comprehensive, they are designed to meet the needs of retired educators, and include home insurance, long-term care insurance, life insurance and legacy planning, and travel insurance. All feature group rates based on a population of preferred clientele.

The travel insurance, MEDOC, is especially attractive to people in their new-found freedom to travel—off-season, when the price is right. A "golden umbrella" that accompanies members worry-free around the world, it provides out-of-province emergency medical coverage and trip cancellation/interruption/delay insurance. Applicants are not restricted because of age or pre-existing medical conditions, and those who subscribe to MEDOC attest to its excellent service.

Joining the BCRTA means belonging to an organization that exists to "guard the interests and to promote the welfare" of retired educators throughout BC.

Call the office 604-871-2260 or toll free 1-877-683-2243, and check the web site for more information: www.bctf.ca/rtat.

Retirement seminars

Two seminars—"Your Pension, Your Future" and "Thinking About Retiring" are being offered in these areas for 2007-08.

Preregistration is required; the time and location will be confirmed by e-mail or by mail. The forms are available at tpp.pensionsbc.ca.

Thursday and Friday seminars are 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Saturday seminars are 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Date	City
October 11	Richmond
October 13	Richmond
October 25	Williams Lake
October 26	Prince George
October 27	Prince George
November 8	Victoria
November 15	Kamloops
November 17	Kamloops
November 24	Coquitlam
December 1	Kelowna
January 10	Abbotsford
January 12	Abbotsford
January 17	Surrey
January 18	Surrey
January 19	Surrey
January 24	Campbell River
January 26	Victoria
February 7	Vancouver
February 8	Vancouver
February 9	Vancouver
February 14	Vernon
February 16	Penticton
March 6	Burnaby
March 8	Burnaby
March 29	Fort St. John
April 3	Nanaimo
April 5	Nanaimo
April 19	Prince Rupert
May 3	Castlegar
May 8	Delta
May 10	North Vancouver

For more information, contact: Teachers' Pension Plan, Seminar Services, Box 9460, Victoria, BC V8W 9V8, Toll free 1-877-558-5574, Fax: 250-953-0436, E-mail TPPseminars@pensionsbc.ca

There's more to it than money

The BC Retired Teachers' Association is offering workshops for those about to retire. These workshops will follow and complement those presented by the BCTF/Pension Plan held around the province, but will be limited to fewer than 30 participants.

After you attend a pension seminar, you will realize there is more to it than money, and who better to share their expertise with you than retired teachers?

Retirement living brings with life-altering situations and a wide variety of choices, some financial, some legal, and all to do with lifestyle. Achieving a workable balance when teaching days are over, and making retirement fulfill dreams doesn't just happen.

A pension seminar is coming to your area. Ask your local to contact the BCRTA (604-871-2260/2) to book the free follow-up workshop.

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Parent presentations a big hit

Need a workshop for parents on a school or district professional development day? Working with your Parent Advisory Council on ways to engage parents in supporting student learning? Do you know about the Federation's parent presentation program?

Every year, more than 2,000 parents in BC attend a BCTF parent presentation. Over 100 workshops were presented last year. These presentations are developed and presented by teachers, who answer requests from Parent Advisory Councils wishing to book the topics as part of their parent education program.

Topics range from antibullying to supporting student learning. They also include a look at commercial-

ism in schools, target marketing of students, and overall student and school health and safety. Last year, a series of three presentations was developed for Aboriginal parents. Several of the workshops are now available in French for Francophone parents. This year, translation into other languages is being considered.

Think about booking a presentation and inviting parents to your school or district professional day. In September, a brochure is sent to every PAC chair in BC. You might check with your PAC to see if they have received it and encourage them to book a presentation.

The Federation is always looking for teachers who can volunteer their time as parent presenters. If you are interested in becoming a parent presenter, please contact sbishop@bctf.ca. Materials, online support, and training are available. Download the brochure at bctf.ca/parents.aspx?id=4798.

— Sylvia Bishop

EXCHANGE TEACHING

ARE YOU SEEKING A UNIQUE CAREER OPPORTUNITY?

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ORIENTATION MEETINGS

OCTOBER 13, 2007	OCTOBER 14, 2007
9:30 am-12:30 pm	9:00 am-11:00 am
North Ridge Elementary	Frances Kelsey Sec.
13460 62nd Ave	953 Shawnigan/Mill
Surrey	Bay Road
Mel Caldwell	Jo-Ann Gatherum
bcxchangeteacher@yahoo.ca	jgatheru@shaw.ca

Carol Wilkins, from the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, will be presenting information about exchange opportunities.

For further information, guidelines, and application forms, visit www.ceef.ca

Canadian Educators' Exchange Foundation

TEACHER SPEED DATING SERVICES

Highlights:

- 6 min. speed dates for all cultures
- 20-25 speed dates
- meet other single teachers
- light appetizers
- cost: \$69.55

The majority of teachers would say that it is very difficult to meet that special person when working in an elem. school where it is usually female dominated while sec. is usually male dominated. With a high no. of single males teaching sec. and a high no. of single females teaching elem., it is no wonder they don't get a chance to meet. The purpose of this speed dating service is to allow elem. and sec. teachers to meet to find a life partner.

For more detailed info, visit us at:

www.Teacher-Speed-Dating.com



JOIN THE 2007 TRICK-OR-TREAT FOR UNICEF CAMPAIGN AND MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CLASSROOM.

Take part this fall in the Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign and help build a brighter future for children in Africa, while engaging your students in fun and educational activities.

Each registration kit includes:

- A CD-ROM full of curriculum-linked lesson plans and activities (K to 8);
- An inspiring and educational DVD about the Schools for Africa programme; and
- Easy-to-follow instructions, posters to track your progress and much more!

Time is running out so sign up today to receive all the materials you'll need in October. Visit www.unicef.ca/tot to order your free kit today!



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www.tourismbc.com/superhost



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This project was made possible – in part or entirely – through the Canadian Culture Online Strategy of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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PD Calendar

October 2007

4–5 Whitehorse, Yukon. SD#87 Annual Fall Conference. "Designs for Learning" with Dawn Reithaug on adapting and modifying programs and Tanya Helton on intro to attachment theory, attachment and at-risk children and strategies to deal with challenging behaviour. Designed for new and experienced teachers, SERTs, support staff, and TOCs so that everybody is following the same protocol. Contact Nita Connolly at nconnolly@atlin.net

18–19 Chilliwack. BC Technology Education Association Conference "Dream it, Design it, Make it!" Sardin Secondary School, 45460 Stevenson Road, Chilliwack, BC. Keynote: Harv McCullough, Dean of Trades & Technology, University College of Fraser Valley. Conference Co-chair: Eric Munshaw, eric_munshaw@sd33.bc.ca. Check for details at www.bctea.org.

18–19 Maple Ridge. AEGTCCBC (Association of the Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children in BC) bctf.ca/aegtccbc, President Charlene Watts, psac63@bctf.ca; Computer Using Educators of BC, cuebc.ca, President James McConville, jmconville@sd43.bc.ca; and BC Educators for Distributed Learning PSA, bctf.ca/bcedlpsa, President David Comrie, dcomrie@sd73.bc.ca, will host a joint conference "Teaching to the Multiple Literacies." This conference will feature Jim Delisle on the social, emotional needs of gifted learners and focus with keynote speaker Will Richardson on using educational technology as an instructional tool to improve student learning across the multiple literacies. Thomas Haney Secondary, Maple Ridge. For more information, contact Matt Rosati, mrosatisd42@gmail.com.

18–19 Surrey. The BC Teacher-Librarians' Association conference, "Cultivate the 'I' in Library: Information, Ideas, Inspiration." Guildford Park Secondary, Surrey. psas.bctf.ca/bctla/conferences.html

18–19 Vancouver. The BC School Counsellors' Association, "Agents of Change." Coast Plaza Hotel, Vancouver's West End. Welcome Reception, October 17 (evening). Keynote speakers Justin Trudeau and Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (BC's first rep for children and youth), more than 35 workshops and special events every day of the conference. www.agentsofchange2007.com/index.html

18–19 Vancouver. BC Teachers of English Language Arts (BCTELA) conference "Reading the World, Writing Ourselves." Fay Brownlie, Thursday evening at the Holiday Inn on Broadway—wine & cheese. Friday conference at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary in Vancouver features BC novelist Gail Anderson-Dargatz. Over 30 conference sessions organized into educational strands aligned with the structure of the new English Language Arts IRP. Presenters include eminent writers, scholars and teachers, such as Dr. Carl Leggo, Dr. Theresa Rogers, Luanne Armstrong, and Karen Hume. Registration info at www.bctf.ca/bctela/

18–19 Vancouver. BC Business Education Association fall conference, Wosk Center for Dialogue, 580 West Hastings Street, Vancouver. "Teaching Business with Technology" invites participation from intermediate, middle school, and secondary teachers in all curricular areas. Register at bctea.ca.

18–20 Langley. The BC Music Educators' Association (BCMEA) celebrates its 50th anniversary at OPUS 50, the annual conference of the BCMEA will take place at Langley Secondary School. Celebrations begin at 8:00 p.m. with live entertainment, cash bar, and a

chance to reconnect with colleagues in the Summit Theatre at the Coast Hotel & Convention Centre. For more information, contact 778-896-7343 or visit www.opus50.ca

18–20 North Vancouver. The BC Art Teachers' Association 52nd annual conference will be held at Carson Graham Secondary School. There will be workshops, art tours, and keynote speakers Duane Sabiston, Dr. Roger Lee, and Joe Fafard. For information, contact Diane Fairey at dfairey@nvsd44.bc.ca

18–20 Richmond. Association Provinciale des Professeurs de l'Immersion et Programme-Francophone, Congrès APPIC-ACPI. Entre mers et montagnes, le français nous unit Executive Airport Plaza, Richmond contact: Sophie Bergeron sbergeron@sd43.bc.ca

18–21 Burnaby. Association of BC Drama Educators (ABCDE) 40th anniversary fall conference, Enchantment 2007. Burnaby South Secondary School. For more information contact, Larry Bauer, lbauer13@hotmail.com or visit bctf.ca/psas/abcde/

19 Burnaby. BC Social Studies Teachers' Association, "Things are Heating Up! Global Warming & Climate Change." Byrne Creek Secondary, 7777 18th St., Burnaby. Contact: Raquel Chin, Raquelchin1@hotmail.com, Riverside Secondary, 604-941-6053, ext. 124, Registration: www.bcssta.org or bctf.ca/bcssta and go to our conference page link to register online or to print.

19 Richmond. BC Association of Math Teachers' Fall Conference, "Diversity in Math: Thinking, Learning and Teaching." Cambie Secondary School, 4151 Jacombs Drive, Richmond, BC. Co-chairs: Janice Novakowski, jnovakowski@richmond.sd38.bc.ca and Carole Saundry, csaundry@richmond.sd38.bc.ca. For information and on-line registration: bcamt.ca.

19 Surrey. BC Dance Educators' Association (BCDEA) Dance Conference 2007, Fleetwood Park Secondary School. Jazz, hip-hop, modern, interdisciplinary, and more. Sessions TBA, for teachers of dance Grades 3 to 12. For more information visit bctf.ca/bcdea. Contact: Linda Medland 604-986-0644, lindamedland@shaw.ca, Judy Herridge 604-541-8170, judy_g@shaw.ca. Do not contact Fleetwood Park Secondary directly.

19 Surrey. BC Teachers for Peace and Global Education's PSA Day conference "Authentic Social Responsibility: Teaching for a Culture of Justice and Peace." Fraser Heights Secondary School, Surrey, BC. For more information, contact: Donald Wilson, Donald.Wilson@sd41.bc.ca.

19 Vancouver. Environmental Educators' Provincial Specialist Association (EPPSA) Fall Conference in partnership with the Robert Bateman Foundation and GVRD; Nature and the Outdoor Classroom: Inspiring Sustainability in BC Schools, with keynote speaker: Robert Bateman; Stanley Park Pavilion. Contact Bruce Ford at programs@gvrd.bc.ca or call (604) 432-6359. For information at www.bctf.ca/eepsa.

19 Vancouver. Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Conference. "Rethinking Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder" with Dr. Rosemary Tannock, Head Research Scientist, Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto). Dr. Tannock is a renowned Canadian specialist in the field of ADHD. She will discuss ADHD as a learning and cognitive disorder rather than a behavioral disorder and the implications involved in teaching children having this disorder. All educators are invited to attend this conference.

Contact Alan Peterson, Conference chair: lataconference@hotmail.com

19 Vancouver. The ESL PSA annual conference, "The World in Our Classrooms" will be held at Magee Secondary School, Vancouver. Keynote speaker is Chris Friesen of Immigrant Services Society. For more information, contact Sydney Dean at sdean@sd40.bc.ca.

19 Vancouver. BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages conference, "Celebrating Language Learning" will be held at the Delta Airport Vancouver. For more information visit www.bcatml.org

19 Vancouver. The BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association (BCCASA) fall conference will be held at the Art Institute of Vancouver Culinary Arts School. Cooking demos by instructors from the Art Institute and local chefs, guest speakers, including Scott Jaeger, chef owner of The Pear Tree restaurant and competitor in the Bocuse d'Or in France this past year. Breakfast and lunch to be provided by the students of The Art Institute, dinner to be provided at a few local Vancouver landmark restaurants. Contact info. to come.

19–20 Abbotsford. PITA Fall Conference. Abbotsford Traditional Middle School. "Learning for All" Learn how to teach all students with less stress. Learn new strategies in most curriculum areas. Great workshops with presenters such as Dawn Reithaug, Mary Moody, Diana Cruchley and Brian Herrin. Contact Ray Myrtle PITA President, rmyrtle@canada.com. Registration SPORG ID 86244. Information at www.pita.ca

19–20 Port Moody. BCPTA Primary Leadership Conference celebrating 50 years of primary leadership as the first PSA of the BCTF. Heritage Secondary School, 1300 David Avenue, Port Moody. October 19 keynote Pam Quigg (Ten Lessons Children Will Teach You) plus breakout sessions. October 20 mini-conference (The Power of Learning), in-depth presentations in literacy and math featuring Adrienne Gear and Trevor Calkins. Contact: Sandra Huggett 250-564-4147, shuggett@sd57.bc.ca. For conference details and registration, go to bctf.ca/bcpta.

19–20 Vernon. The Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association (THESA) Conference, Okanagan's Harvest II, will be held at WL Seaton Secondary School, Vernon. For more information visit www.thesaconference.ca.

26–27 Whistler. BC Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists annual conference. Fairmont Chateau. For more information visit www.bcaspa.ca.

26–27 Richmond. Network for Building Collaborative Cultures and Practices—Teacher Induction and Mentoring. Pre-conference institute, keynote speakers, poster sessions, concurrent workshops, and networking opportunities. For information about the conference contact: John Moss at slc.edu@ubc.ca or telephone 604-827-5350. Conference information and registration visit www.slc.educ.ubc.ca/JoiningHands/October2007Conference/JoiningHands-ConferenceProgram.htm

PSA PD Day October 19, 2007

PD Calendar web site:
bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx

Additions/changes:
msteele@bctf.ca

By Julia Johnson

Vanity Fair (VF) magazine, with guest editor Bono of U2 fame, created a special issue on Africa (July 2007) for the purpose of raising public awareness about the efforts made by many people who have created organizations and foundations that are helping to find solutions to the African problems of debt, AIDS, unfair trade practices, and lack of immunizations. The magazine abounds with stories of hope from business people, entertainers, politicians, and public figures that have some active connection to Africa, which is a welcomed perspective from the gloom and doom that is portrayed by most media coverage regarding the poorest continent on earth (Guest, 2004). To be sure, the fact that 25 million people have died from AIDS since 1981 is not something to be taken lightly; nor is the fact that many of the African countries, because of their colonial past and their historically corruptive and abusive governments, have suffered horrific civil wars something to be forgotten; nor the fact that 12 million children orphaned because of AIDS to be neglected.

As a newly retired teacher concerned about social responsibility, I could not ignore the call to become better informed and involved in African issues, especially with my newly acquired freedom and my interest in humanitarian pursuits. Elizabeth Taylor on www.keepachildalive.org said "It is bad enough that people are dying of AIDS, but no one should die of ignorance." As a result, I joined a crew of 27 from my community, who travelled to Uganda (June 1-16) to build a house for eight orphaned children and their house mother, to see firsthand the reality of these statistics.

Our story began two years previous to our departure date, when the Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda came to Quesnel. The choir consists of children aged 7-13 years and is an outreach ministry of

It is the mission of the Watoto Foundation to build villages of 150 brick homes, constructed by local tradesmen and building teams from around the world.

the Watoto Childcare Ministries, funded by the Pentecostal Church in Kampala Uganda and the Watoto Foundation. The Watoto Foundation supports projects that correspond to the UN Millennium Goals and the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) five priority sectors, which are health-care, education, creating healthy family environments, post-secondary education, and job training. It is the mission of the Watoto Foundation to build villages of 150 brick homes, constructed by local tradesmen and building teams from around the world. These brick homes consist of three bedrooms, a kitchen, living area, and bathroom with running water. Eight homes are built in circular clusters creating a strong sense of community and support among families for the 1,200 children who will live in the village. The cost of building this home, complete with infrastructure, is \$30,000, which the visiting building team is required to raise. Each village also includes a medical clinic and an educational complex made of square buildings that house four classrooms.

Seeing the link between the statistics and the reality of our venture made a significant impact on each of us. Each child in the village comes traumatized with a horrific tale of emotional or physical abuse, resulting from experiences



AFRICA

A continent of stories



related to dying parents, poverty, hunger, abandonment, or civil war. I was told that older children within a household comfort the younger ones through their nightmares when they first arrive and within six months the nightmares diminish. As I watched children playing with

each other I was in awe over the sense of joy, peace, and gratitude these children feel in the safe environment of their home and school.

A Grade 1 teacher told me a story about a new boy she received earlier in the year. His black face

pink from burns, his yellow eyeballs, his white tongue, and his distended belly were improved by the medical attention he had been receiving. Surrounded by his classmates looking at the suitcase filled with school supplies we brought, he was visibly like all the rest.

In the school setting, it is evident the children are grateful to have a safe place to be and are eager to learn. They work on their chalkboard or curriculum text assignments in notebooks with quiet diligence; they patiently wait for assistance from their teacher when confused; without disturbing those around them, they respectfully help each other. There is no question that their primary purpose for being there is to learn; they know that learning is the journey they take to fulfill their dream of becoming like the role models who care for them.

In the playground unsupervised, they run, play ballgames, skip, and gather in small groups—all without incident. As I walked around the grounds during recess, I spotted a group of six girls all lying down on their bellies in a circle facing inward, their elbows firmly planted on the ground as their hands held their heads. Curious, I approached them and found that one of the girls was reading a chapter book while the others attentively listened. Their pleasure at being entertained by one of their peers was a sight that needed to be seen to be fully appreciated.

At the end of the day they linger to continue their play before they walk the tree-lined paths to their homes. It is here that the African saying, "It takes a village to raise a child," becomes crystallized. Each person involved in this Watoto

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project is connected to each other as brothers and sisters, all looking after and caring for each other, all learning the significance of what it means to be socially responsible.

While the Watoto projects are solely funded by evangelical churches worldwide, there are many non-political, non-religious groups that do receive financial support from the African governments with whom they are partnered. In particular, I would like to draw your attention to the very personal stories shared in the first three web sites listed below.

Truly, the work of people making a difference by transforming the lives of children without hope for a future is a commitment of humanitarian love. The African term for this is *Ubuntu*, described by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to Brad Pitt in *Vanity Fair* in this way; "Ubuntu is the essence of being human... We say a person is a person through other persons. You can't be human in isolation. You are human only in relationships... We are interconnected... I need you to be all of who you are in order for me to be all that I am." Within the concept of *Ubuntu* is the miracle of salvation and peace for us all.

If you are interested in other stories about Africa where Canadians are making a difference or if you are considering a class project, go to:

- www.ubuntuedmonton.org
- www.widowshand.com
- www.freethechildren.com
- www.warchild.ca
- www.acces.ca
- www.millenniumpromise.org
- www.soschildrensvillages.ca
- www.bctf.ca, follow the links—Social Justice—Webliography of Internet Resources for Global Education

• Google "Kids Who Care Canada" and "Stephen Lewis Foundation"

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