

TEACHER

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation

Equity and inclusion BCTF Public education conference

"Inclusive education is concerned with the quest for equity, social justice, and participation. It is about the removal of all forms of barriers of discrimination and oppression and it is about the well-being of all learners."

— Professor Len Barton, Institute of Education, University of London

By **Moira Mackenzie**

Guided by the vision of a truly inclusive and equitable public education system, the BCTF brought together over 350 people at a public education conference, "Equity and Inclusion," on January 25 and 26, 2008. Teachers, parents, school support staff, student teachers, MLAs, trustees, representatives of education partner groups, and representatives of special-needs advocacy groups came together to examine the challenges, opportunities, and solutions in realizing equity and inclusion in our public schools. The conference opened with a moving performance by the Simon Fraser Peace Choir—

elementary students under the direction of teacher Marisa Orth-Pallavicini. The young children's excitement was contagious and the powerful messages in their songs set the stage for respectful collaboration, and the conference was off to a very good start.

Shelly Johnson, social worker, researcher, and doctoral education student provided the traditional welcome. In her remarks, she reminded delegates of the special challenges faced by the thousands of children in foster care and the need to keep their plight in mind when talking about inclusion.

"Every child needs to feel included, safe and respected. We can all be part of the solution. Thanks for providing a wonderful forum where we were able to learn and share information."

— Lorene Oikawa, BCGEU

The two keynote speakers, retired School Superintendent Doug Player and retired teacher leader Kit Krieger, both from West Vancouver, spoke of being on different sides of many arguments in their careers, but always standing together in their deep commitment to quality, inclusive public education. In a spirited address, Player spoke about the way in which increasing centralization, over-spending on administration, wrong-headed accountability plans, and a focus on narrow achievement measures were robbing schools of the ability to be truly inclusive. While he used the opportunity to provide specific advice to each education stakeholder group, he reminded all that the most important role for schools is to make every child feel significant every day.

In a thought-provoking address, Kit Krieger called on the participants to reflect on the principles and values of public education and the remarkable success of BC's school system. He went on to point out the ways in which current



Doug Player, retired superintendent, one of the conference keynote speakers, took the opportunity to provide specific advice to each education stakeholder group. He reminded all that the most important role for schools is to make every child feel significant every day.

education policies and funding decisions undermine those values and principles, and as a result work

"We need to fight for children who cannot fight for themselves. As a parent, I'm very grateful to have been invited to this conference."

— Christie Wheaton, SD 51 (Boundary)

against equity and inclusion. His conclusion was vested in the hope that all parties will try to come together to ensure a strong public education system that will lead to a cohesive, democratic society.

Once the keynote speakers concluded, it was the participants' turn to talk. Students from North Delta Secondary School ably facilitated lively group discussion at tables around the room. Their teacher, Alice McQuade, told the conference that although the Federation had requested 36

student facilitators, many more signed up to attend and on a Friday evening at that! The lively dialogue between conference delegates carried on during the social later in the evening, where the Vancouver Technical Secondary School Jazz Combo under the direction of their teacher, Mark Reid, provided wonderful musical entertainment for the delegates.

The panelists from the Langley Special Education Inquiry presented their report to the plenary session the following morning. Mike Suddaby, Shirley McBride, and Nadene Guiltner reviewed their comprehensive report and recommendations, stressing that, although they studied special education conditions in one district, they believe their conclusions are relevant throughout BC. They spoke of the tremendous challenges teachers and parents face in trying to ensure that students with special needs have the conditions they need in order to succeed and faced the underfunding, inequity, and barriers to inclusion head on.

Through a wide range of workshop choices, the Federation provided opportunities for participants to learn more about many aspects of inclusion and equity. Issues such as poverty and homelessness, homophobia and gender

"Every child has a dream. We need to work together to build the kind of community where all children are included, all children belong, and all children can realize their dreams."

— Charlene Hodgson, teacher, SD 59 (Peace River South)

discrimination, were addressed. Funding, policy decisions, historical perspectives, legal rulings, and contract implications were examined. Approaches such as universal design, understanding challenging behaviour, and joint parent-teacher advocacy were

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Simon Fraser Peace Choir opened the conference with a moving performance under the direction of teacher Marisa Orth-Pallavicini.

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President's message



Irene Lanzinger

Teachers in this province have a meticulous, sometimes obsessive, commitment to democracy. That commitment is never more evident than it is at the BCTF Annual General Meeting, which takes place during spring break.

Almost 700 teachers give up four days of their spring break to make important decisions for teachers. They will set the fee for the next year and elect an Executive Committee. They will debate, discuss, amend, postpone, refer, defeat, and pass recommendations from the Executive Committee and resolu-

tions from locals. They will amend amendments, rise on points of privilege or order, and challenge the chair. For new delegates it is an immersion course in Robert's Rules of Order. Every year for some young teachers it is the beginning of being drawn into the vortex of BCTF politics and activism. Many of us love it—indeed sometimes I think we are almost addicted to it.

The long days of decision making are followed by hours of socializing and campaigning. It is exhausting. I often tell teachers they should go because it's like a holiday abroad.

When it is over, it feels so good to go home and you will have jet lag for days.

After a long winter in the classroom, what motivates teachers to give up spring break for this tiring experience? It is our commitment to our union and professional organization. We are proud to represent the teachers of the province and steer the direction of the BCTF on their behalf. We have so many important issues to take on to defend our members, our students, and public education. In our classrooms and beyond, we want to

make the world a better place.

Democracy is about more than voting. It is about engaging and involving members. It is about encouraging participation and taking the time to make decisions together democratically, as time consuming as it may be at times. We are fortunate that our members are willing to give so much time and energy to our democratic processes. Our deep and abiding commitment to democracy is critical to ensuring that we have the kind of Federation we want. ■

Readers write

Oldest school debate

I wish the organizers of the Britannia Secondary School 100th year birthday celebration in May a great time. They have lots to celebrate as they look back at the records of their school over the past century.

There is one error in the information provided in Diane Minichielo's letter however, when she writes "As the oldest secondary school in British Columbia..."

Victoria High School celebrated its 100th birthday in 1976 with an equally distinguished list of graduates. Indeed, we held a second celebration in 2001 on the occasion of our 125th birthday attended by thousands of former students. Vic High is the oldest high school west of the Great Lakes.

Bill Broadley

Victoria

Sale of Queen Elizabeth Annex controversy

As the controversy over the rushed closure and sale of Queen Elizabeth School Annex in Vancouver continues (in order to accommodate a bulging student population near UBC) the key underfunding role of the provincial Ministry of Education is finally coming under the microscope.

The proposed shutting down and sale of the successful and highly regarded Queen Elizabeth Annex in our city, to raise the \$25 million shortfall for the renovation of the vacant National Research building at UBC, to accommodate these students, is at the centre of this storm.

Given the urgent need for a decent secondary school building in the university area, the provincial offer of \$10 million for a \$35 million project is nothing short of disgraceful.

Not only that, but astoundingly, as was revealed at a recent public meeting, there are no provincial funds being made available for the projected doubling (in two separate construction phases) of the student population on the Endowment

Lands—from 500 secondary students to 1,100—over the next decade.

Up to now, the provincial Ministry of Education paid in full for the construction of all new schools, but the placing of Queen Elizabeth Annex on the chopping block marks a deeply troubling precedent in Victoria's capital-funding policy.

This shift in provincial policy is a total abdication of provincial responsibility and it is only equalled by its demand for a 95% student occupancy of all schools in this city before funding new or expanded schools.

Sadly, in BC we seem to have millions of dollars for new roads, highways, bridges, the Canada Line, the Olympics, and the Convention Centre.

Hardly a week goes by without some new multimillion-dollar megaproject being announced.

But when it comes to funding schools for our kids, well, that is another matter entirely.

Your readers should know that the current University Hill Secondary School in Vancouver, in the heart of the premier's riding, while an outstanding academic secondary school, is an overcrowded, aging, and dilapidated structure that is arguably one of the worst facilities of its kind in this province.

Noel Herron

Vancouver

Trusting those who represent us

As a Kindergarten teacher I devoted all my energy and time to my students and rarely attended local union meetings or BCTF events. I trusted that those who represented us would make sure that our salaries and benefits were the best they could be. Then cancer struck, I used up months of sick days and learned about short-term and long-term disability support. I don't know if I will be able to go back to the classroom, but I have learned that there is a process available to help me if that time comes.

I want to thank those teachers, many retired but still receiving this newsletter, for the many hours and effort that they spent to make sure that when illness or tragedy struck, those affected would not have money as their major concern. I did not realize at the time how important your role was or how dramatically it would affect my life.

Janie Goodwin

Delta

The need to measure

I found Janet Nicol's article on Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, BC's first representative for children and youth, fascinating. Turpel-Lafond is obviously a most accomplished First Nations lady, just the person to work with First Nations students. I was struck by the fact that she insisted "You need to measure." I've always been appalled by the BCTF's opposition to any form of standardized tests instead of getting out there and working to improve them. They certainly need improving, but the only way to know how well children are learning is by measuring their progress. Certainly, standardized testing can, like any powerful tool, be misused by misguided teachers, administrators, parents and others, e.g., the Fraser Institute, but to actively oppose them, in my humble estimation, is sinful.

Harry Cullis

Vancouver

Responses to "Down with homework"

The article on homework was excellent.

I began my teaching career at the elementary school level in 1962. It didn't take long for me to ask myself "why am I assigning arithmetic and reading worksheets for homework?" Either the child already knows how to complete them, in which case isn't this a waste of the youngster's time or, how can the child do the work if he doesn't know how? Doesn't this place a burden on the parents? Can those parents, in fact, teach that which their child needs to

learn, and do so in a calm and understanding manner? And is it not my job that I am asking them to do? (Also, please keep in mind that, in those days, most children had two parents at home.)

However, I believe that there is home study that is useful—even necessary—in the elementary grades.

In order to be successful in arithmetic, students must memorize the basic facts. Those children who don't are doomed to counting on their fingers, or using other equally slow procedures during which errors can easily be made. So my weekly "homework" assignment included the mastery of a block of related basic facts (e.g., all the 9-facts), and these were tested each Friday morning, in random order and with not enough time given to "figure them out." In order to motivate the children, I would say, "Don't spend more than 15 to 20 minutes each day on homework. And try to make this fun. Perhaps you could go to your room and sing them out loud, as if they were words to a song, and dance around while you do it." Then I would demonstrate. Inevitably the class would laugh, bounce around, and really get into the spirit of what was happening. At the end of the school year, I was proud of them. Almost all the students could flash back the answer to any basic fact: addition and multiplication. Yes, even those in Grade 2!

The second assignment was to learn the spellings of 10 to 20 words, the number depending on the grade level. We all know that, among other factors, instant recognition of commonly used vocabulary is crucial to improvement in reading comprehension.

I sincerely hope that all teachers will scrutinize their attitudes and practices toward homework and will then make their future decisions regarding this topic based only on what they believe to be in the best interests of their students.

Gary Redgate

Victoria

I congratulate *Teacher* magazine for publishing the article entitled "Down with Homework" by Alfie Kohn. I agree with much that was contained in the article.

As a retired math teacher, I look back at my teaching days with a clear memory about my policies on giving homework. I always felt that the work my students (particularly for those below Grade 10) did in my classroom was like a job. It was their job to complete the work assigned for that particular class. If they worked well, the assignments could be completed in class. If they wasted time, then they should be completed at home. For those students who had genuine difficulty, extra help would be offered in class or sometimes after school.

For the more senior students (Grades 10–12) I would often assign homework exercises testing the day's objectives and then in class the next day the students would often be given a short quiz based on the previous assignment and sometimes containing exactly the same questions. A second type of

test was the "take-home test" that could be completed in less than 30 minutes. This would often be given on a Friday so that a student had the weekend to complete it.

Another strategy I used and that seemed to work quite well was the giving of a test ahead of time with the instructions: "This will be your test at the end of the week." The students couldn't believe it when it was indeed the same test! This strategy could be also used for such skills as spelling, map of Canada, or multiplication facts. The result was that students did NOT ace the identical test as many might have thought.

Another form of homework is the term paper, which requires research. I would place this in a different category since the student must apply research, writing, and time-management skills in order to write the paper. However, I believe that the requirements for term papers should not be overly demanding of the students' spare time.

I firmly believe that when a youngster arrives home after a hard day at school that the evening should allow time for social time, exploration, reading, music, hobbies, etc. To clutter a youngster's life with busy work is not fair and is perhaps a form of control. The article states that usually little benefit is achieved from this kind of homework and I would agree. Homework should in fact be voluntary—an activity that a child chooses to do out of interest or because she or he wishes to catch up after an absence.

Brian Tetlow

Victoria

Child poverty is an important issue

Thank you for your article highlighting child poverty in the recent edition of *Teacher*. We are thrilled to see ongoing coverage of this important issue, particularly coverage that includes solutions and actions that individuals can take to advocate for systemic change. Teachers play such an important role in supporting children and families, and we are grateful for the ongoing advocacy of the BCTF on this issue.

Andrina Perry

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition

Where does the BCTF stand?

I just got around to reading the article on the back page of the Nov./Dec. 2007 *Teacher*, "Songs for peace, making the world a better place."

While I can find no fault whatsoever with the article or its message, I do find it hypocritical in the extreme when the BCTF publicizes social justice activities while at the same time failing to take a stand against the Teachers' Pension Fund investments in the world's biggest arms manufacturers. I think the BCTF should fish or cut bait—then we would all know exactly where it stands.

Paul Hutcheson

Pender Island

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CEPA Canadian Environmental Press Association

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presented. The Federation was fortunate to be able to draw on so many talented and knowledgeable presenters.

The workshop sessions were followed by another opportunity for dialogue, but this time the atmosphere was quite different. The lights were dimmed, candles were on the tables and the songs of Edith Piaf were playing in the plenary ballroom as everyone joined in the World Café, an effective and unique process for collaborative dialogue. Structured questions guided the discussion and participants changed

groups a number of times in the course of the session, building on the perspectives of others and

"My immediate goal will be to rebuild relationships with all those who have an interest in public education in order to meet the needs of children living in poverty."

—Victor Tracy, School Trustees, District 85 (Vancouver Island North)

sharing new ideas. Discussion on the last question, "If there were a single voice in the room, what

might it be saying?" underscored the tremendous unity among participants.

The conference wrapped up with closing speaker, Kristina Scott, a graduate from the Langley school system. In a very moving address, Kristina spoke of the challenges she faced in secondary school and the support and learning conditions that made a difference for her. She ended by reminding everyone that, although the cost of providing students with the support they need is high, the cost of not doing so is far higher.

While the conference provided a dynamic provincial forum for the

issues, the best possible outcome will be that coalition building on behalf of all students and equitable, inclusive public schools carries on at the community level.

Go to bctf.ca/publicedconference2008.aspx or www.tinyurl.com/28u4m9 for the webcasts of the conference plenary sessions.

Go to bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=14812 (or www.tinyurl.com/2gmr8) for more information about the Langley Special Education Inquiry.

Moirra Mackenzie is director of the BCTF's Communications and Campaigns Division.



Keynote speaker, Kit Krieger, called on the participants to reflect on the principles and values of public education.

Canada's mission discredited

The recent article by Derrick O'keefe, "Bravest Woman in Afghanistan," minimizes and discredits Canada's humanitarian and military mission in Afghanistan. It is the product of the same misinformation campaign that so much public opinion around the Afghan mission is developed. My son recently returned from a tour of duty in Kandahar province and as a combat soldier in the field he faced the Taliban in battle over 40 times. The most vivid memory he has of his tour of duty is how vicious, cruel, and oppressive the Taliban are to their own people. We do not follow American policy in the field. Canadian military, PRT, CIDA, and attached NGOs have a distinctly Canadian presence and Canadian way of doing our job.

We can be proud of Canada's humanitarian efforts so far. In the south, 80% of Afghans have access to healthcare—up from only 6% five years ago. During my son's tour of duty his combat company (C-COY 1PPCLI 2 Platoon) escorted medics, doctors, and nurses on village outreaches so that medical professionals could safely examine the population. For most Afghans it was the first time they had ever seen a dentist or received eye glasses from an optometrist. For many women it was the first time they had seen a doctor in over five years.

As a teacher, I am pleased to see that Canada has helped to set up and establish schools and teacher training programs that will benefit thousands of children—the majority being girls. Adult literacy has reached thousands of Afghans through Canadian outreach programs. People are free to make choices in the manner of their dress. In 2002, women in full burka was the rule; today it is the exception.

The greatest challenge facing Canada at present is battling the Taliban while trying to make progress on the reconstruction front. Afghans are becoming frustrated by what they see as a lack of real improvement in their daily lives at the street level. In Canada, people want to see more progress on reconstruction and less emphasis on the military aspects of Task Force Afghanistan. However, we need to get people to see that there will be no meaningful progress on development without a corresponding improvement in the security environment. With respect to the security environment, Canada is making NATO look better than it is. In order for this situation to improve the US needs to re-engage in Afghanistan and Spain, Germany, France, and Italy need to remove the restrictions that affect the operability of their troops in the southern region.

Guyle Coon
Surrey

Langley special education inquiry report released



Steering Committee of the Langley Special Education Inquiry (L-R) back row: Linda Cadieux (CUPE), Laurence Greeff (LTA), Donna Mason (CUPE), Bob Bowles (Community), Barb Chu (DPAC); Diana MacNeil (DPAC); front row: Kelly Dussin, (CUPE 1260), Susan Fonseca (LTA), Gail Chaddock-Costello (LTA).

By Gail Chaddock-Costello

On January 17, 2008, the historic community hall in Fort Langley, birthplace of British Columbia, was host to the unveiling of the *Langley Special Education Inquiry Report*. It was a fitting location for the public release of the report, as the building itself exists as the result of the formation in 1924 of the Ft. Langley Community Improvement Society by the Fort Langley Women's Institute. The community saw a need, and a coalition of dedicated individuals worked to address the problem. We are all still experiencing the benefits of their collaborative effort today.

The Langley Special Education Inquiry Report is also the result of a collaborative effort, in this instance by the Langley Teachers' Association, CUPE 1260 and our DPAC (District Parent Advisory Council), who together created the Special Education Steering Committee. The report is evidence of what true collaboration can produce.

There was a feeling that finally the proof needed to seek adequate levels of service, was going to be revealed.

When guests arrived they were presented with a copy of the report and invited to enjoy the feast organized by our indispensable staff at the LTA office. What struck many who came that night was the sense of excitement and eager anticipation. It was readily apparent in the audience, many of whom were the same parents, teachers, support staff, and community members who had made public presentations to the panelists. There was a feeling that finally the proof needed to seek adequate levels of service, was going to be revealed. Our opportunity to feel vindicated and supported, while also being led toward a path

of resolution, was upon us—and we were ready.

The tone for the evening was set by Lekeyton, who welcomed us to the traditional territory of the Kwantlen people with a moving speech and song. He called for a "full and frank discussion...between the board of education and other stakeholders around issues involving special education in the district" and his thoughts were echoed by everyone who spoke that evening.

The audience, which included the BCTF Executive, were reminded of why we were there as we were touched by the words of the song, *Never Surrender*, performed by Dion Todd. His incredible performance was made all the more poignant by his introductory remarks. A native of Newfoundland, he spoke of the harsh realities of being a child of poverty, a child with learning difficulties, moving from shelter to shelter after his mother left an abusive situation. He also spoke of the support he finally found in school, where his talent for singing was discovered and nurtured. Now a successful singer and business executive, toward the end of the evening he sang his original composition, *One Time Round on the Pony*—a reminder that our students only get one chance to be a student and we need to be there for them, in whatever way they need us, whenever we are privileged to touch their lives.

If we needed to be primed to receive the report, Todd's words certainly set the stage, and our highly credentialed blue-ribbon panelists did not disappoint us. Nadene Gilter, Dr. Shirley McBride, and Mike Suddaby were introduced by our master of ceremonies for the evening, Donna Mason, president of Cupe 1260 and a member of the Special Education Steering Committee. Together they revealed their findings, which reinforced and supported the concerns that have been voiced by the staff in our schools and the parents in our

community, for the past several years.

Their conclusions and recommendations were divided between those they determined could be addressed locally by our board and those that could not be achieved without changes at the provincial and ministerial level. Not surprisingly, they noted the fact that "special needs are, by definition, a minority" and when resources are being allocated at the district or

It appears the ministry has an interest in the report. They have invited our three panelists to meet... with the deputy minister of education, the deputy minister of finance, and the four superintendents of achievement for BC.

school level, McBride stated "minorities often get short shift." That has certainly been the perception of special education staff working in the Langley school system. The panelists reported on the rise in the overwhelming paperwork required by the district and the ministry, and the need for increased training for special education staff and regular classroom teachers.

They called for a mechanism to be put in place to ensure a results-based, full and frank discussion between the board of education and the other stakeholders around issues involving special education in the district. This is something the LTA has been requesting, in the form of a Joint Working and Learning Conditions Committee, for the past two years. Not only have we been unsuccessful in our bid for the formation of this committee, but at the time of writing, we have not been successful in getting our board to sit down at the table and discuss the inquiry report with the steering committee or the Langley Teachers' Association.

The panelists noted what special education teachers around the province have noticed: the underfunding of special education; the change in funding formulas that has led to a decrease in services for high-incidence students who no longer generate additional funding for districts; the tremendous increase in the work load of secondary resource teachers as a result of adjudication requirements for provincial exams at the Grade 10 and 11 levels; and the negative consequences of Bill 33, which has served to further segregate and under-serve students with special needs.

Our closing speaker, Kristina Scott, a former Langley student identified with special needs, eloquently portrayed the tragedy of time lost and lives potentially wasted, when supports are not in place. She spoke of her own experiences, the shock of the transition from the comfort and support she had known in elementary school to the unfathomable maze of secondary services. After moving from school to school and spiralling downward toward illegal and harmful activities, she eventually found Apex, an alternate school in Langley. She credits Apex, and the supportive staff she found there, a staff who refused to give up on her, with her eventual success. "Apex gave me the confidence to believe in myself."

Scott is honest when she speaks of how much support she required to achieve her current success. She openly questions what will become of the students at Apex today where class sizes have doubled and support staff have been cut. Making a statement that indicates wisdom beyond her years, she says, "I know there is a cost to running these programs with the higher staffing level, but what is the cost to society of not running the program?"

Please visit the BCTF website to view the podcasts of the release event and to read the report with its detailed recommendations. It provides findings and recommendations relevant not only to Langley, but, as the panelists note, to districts across British Columbia. It appears the ministry has an interest in the report. They have invited our three panelists to meet on February 11 at 3:30 p.m. with the deputy minister of education, the deputy minister of finance, and the four superintendents of achievement for BC. Finally, there are people who are prepared to talk about the tragedy of underfunding services to students with special needs. Perhaps the courage and conviction with which parents, educators, and community members spoke at our focus groups and public hearings will begin to have an impact.

Gail Chaddock-Costello is 2nd vice-president of the Langley Teachers' Association and is a member of the Special Education Steering Committee.

Winter rep assembly highlights

By Catherine Alpha

Local reps and presidents from locals across the province gathered at the Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel for the winter session of the BCTF's Rep Assembly, held February 1 and 2, 2008.

In the president's report, Irene Lanzinger spoke of our successes and of the work still to be done. Our Public Education Conference on Equity and Inclusion saw parents, school board trustees, and other partner groups gather with teachers and make a strong commitment to work together to address the learning conditions for our students with special needs. At the Learning Round Table, we continue to reiterate that the focus of the work there must remain on the issues of class size and composition.

Several teachers made presentations about the strategies their locals used in raising awareness about FSA concerns. The ad campaigns around the FSAs and other inappropriate testing and ranking have earned us media time to discuss the issues undermining our students' learning. Public awareness continues to grow.

The Langley Special Education Inquiry Report was presented and appreciation for the hard work and dedication that went into this inquiry was expressed by the Executive and the Rep Assembly. The findings from the panel and the focus groups clearly underline the inadequacy of funding and services for students with special needs in Langley, as is the case province-wide.

Basilus Haingura, NANTU



Basilus Haingura

general secretary and Bendos //Garoëb, national organizer, NANTU, one of the teachers' unions in Namibia, opened on Saturday with the observation that our two unions share a similar vision and objectives: to provide quality education for our students and address issues affecting members. Haingura commented that NANTU is a young union and needs advice from other unions such as ours as they work to address issues such as class size and licensing.

Dr. David Berliner received a standing ovation for his enlightening talk on strategies to resist the accountability juggernaut. He spoke of the ascendance of business as a guiding force in government and observed, "When you frame the problem from the point of view of business—schools become factories and children become widgets." He talked of the world of the future being a VUCA world—Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and filled with Ambiguity. He observed, "Curriculum narrowing is exactly what you cannot afford to have in a VUCA world. Both democracy and the economic viability of our two nations depend on diversity, not homogeneity of skills and ideas. How do we prepare students for a VUCU future?—Broadly." The one way to insure having youth under-prepared for the economy of the 21st Century is to rely upon high-stakes tests. That is because high-stakes tests always result in curriculum narrowing."

It was a humbling and inspiring two days.

Catherine Alpha teaches at Journey Middle School, Sooke and is the STA Pro-D chair.



David Berliner

Learning Round Table meeting January 29

At another meeting of the Learning Round Table, BCTF President Irene Lanzinger had to remind education partners why the Federation joined the Learning Round Table in the first place: Teachers returned to work following the 2005 strike on the promise that the Learning Round Table would resolve issues of class size and composition.

The first item on the agenda was the Ministry's analysis of the class size and class composition—but data promised at the last meeting and still not completed. The majority of the two-hour meeting was spent deciding what items should be on a future agenda.

Class size and composition are still uppermost for the BCTF as it struggles to maintain productive learning environments in our classrooms.

Class size and composition are still uppermost for the BCTF as it struggles to maintain productive learning environments in our classrooms. The BCTF proposed that, during teacher consultations, principals must have resources available to address classroom situations that teachers identify as unsatisfactory learning environments. No other education partners agreed with this proposal. The president of the BCPVPA said that he did not believe that resources should be set aside for that purpose.

The BCTF has consistently pressed the government to make significant improvements to class-size and composition legislation and to provide the much needed funding to make the legislation work.

Neither the minister nor any of the other partner groups have expressed support for the Federation's plea for improved legislation and additional funding.

— Murray Dobbin



Teacher shortage? It depends

By Irene Lanzinger

Is the teacher shortage a myth or reality? In the Jan./Feb. 2008 edition of *Teacher*, Patrik Parkes posed this question. The question reminds me of the experience many BCTF activists have had when asking questions of lawyers. We joke about the fact that the response is so frequently "it depends."

The most accurate answer to the question of whether or not there is a teacher shortage is "it depends." It depends on what you teach and where you teach. In the last round of bargaining, school boards encouraged the BC Public School Employers' Association, their representative at the provincial bargaining table, to bargain a "Recruitment and Retention" allowance.

The allowance will come into effect this year. It recognizes that northern and remote areas of the province have difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. Most of those districts sometimes hire uncertified TOCs because they do not have enough certified TOCs. School districts close to the Alberta border also face the problem of teachers driving across the border to take advantage of salaries that are \$10,000 to \$15,000 higher.

In particular areas there are some critical shortages as well. Most districts are having some difficulty finding technical studies teachers. This situation will only get worse as the high demand for qualified and

experienced trades people continues. There are also shortages in particular areas such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer studies, special education, home economics, French immersion, and Francophone programs.

It is generally recognized that we have adequate numbers of intermediate teachers and secondary English and social studies teachers. No shortage is likely to occur in those areas.

Does this necessarily mean that universities should limit the ability of teachers to train in those areas? There are a number of factors to consider in answering that question. The intake of teachers is already limited by high entrance standards at universities. Also, teachers are at their best when they are passionate about the subject they teach. We need to allow teachers to train in the areas they choose. It may mean that they will move to a new area of the province in order to get a teaching position. Many teachers do this and end up loving their new community and settling there. It may mean that they will have to spend longer on a TOC list but the work of dedicated and well-qualified TOCs is critical to the well being of our system.

However difficult teaching may be at the moment it is a mistake to discourage young people with a passion for teaching from entering the profession. Our children and grandchildren will need them.

Irene Lanzinger is BCTF president.

Looking back

70 years ago

Particular fear has been revealed that accrediting will bring with it a scourge of objective tests and a system of inspection so detailed in character as to limit the professional freedom of the teaching body. Undoubtedly, objective tests will have great value, but every well-informed educator realizes that such tests are of minimum applicability in very important fields such as literature and composition, to mention two. No commission is going to be guilty of the insanity of turning back the hands of the clock and returning to a straight-jacket form of testing of factual information. We may be confident that neither our own representatives on the commission nor any of their colleagues will be guilty of the folly of placing new manacles on the wrists of teachers.

— March, 1938, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

Wherever the BCTF president is asked to speak, on whatever topic relating to education, sooner or later either a challenge or a demand is made for merit pay for teachers by school trustees, parent-teacher associations, etc. The BCTF believes that the merit pay programs for

teachers that have been tried and abandoned in the United States prove that as yet no valid basis has been established for measuring the quality of teacher services in dollars and cents. The only valid test of a teacher's effectiveness is the changes he brings in the knowledge, attitudes, and habits of his pupils. The BCTF believes that all teachers should be evaluated and encouraged to improve their qualifications for professional service when such is necessary. Teachers who remain incompetent should be dismissed.

— March, 1958, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

BC's first open area school, MacCorkindale, opened in 1967 in Vancouver. By September 1971 some 300 open area schools were in operation or under construction in BC. A critical reading of the literature of the early 1970s gives one the impression that these modern-looking facilities would provide a panacea for improving education, and would also reduce construction costs. A variety of imaginative open area designs were presented, along with a plethora of philosophic and economic reasons for building them. Little was written about how to teach in them,

although it was generally assumed that a 'more open' kind of teaching should take place in them. Even less was written about whether open areas should or should not be built in the first place during this initial period of unquestioned optimism.

— March-April, 1978, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

However fervently the fundamentalist elements in society wish to deny it, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are present in every walk of life and social class, in every culture and community. Yet, until recently, "the love that dares not speak its name" has remained shrouded in myth and misinformation. Today more and more people, young and old, are challenging the homophobia that permeates our society and its institutions, including schools. In their struggle to embody and articulate their authentic identity, those who dare to speak out challenge the status quo in a fundamental way. The young people featured in this article are pioneers in the movement for recognition of gay and lesbian youth. We salute them.

— March, 1998, *Teacher*

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich.

Teachers pass the test

In local after local, teachers are standing up to those who try to direct them to attend FSA training, to mark the FSA tests, and in other ways be complicit with the government's accountability agenda. In addition, over administrator and school district objections, teachers are exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of expression by distributing brochures about their concerns about FSA tests to parents. Below are just a few examples of what's happening around the province.

In Coquitlam, the district announced it would order teachers to mark FSAs and teachers, supported by their local, pushed back, clearly indicating their anger at such heavy-handed tactics. The school board backed down—still looking for volunteers, but not ordering anyone. In Vancouver Island North, a principal ordered teachers to attend the FSA marking training session but had to back down when the local and the BCTF argued that such work does not fall within the duties of a teacher. North Vancouver administrators will be doing all the FSA marking after the teachers and their local made it clear that teachers would not, even if ordered. In fact, most districts are not ordering teachers to mark FSAs because of the clear and strong

opposition from teachers, locals, and the BCTF.

In Boundary and Okanagan-Skaha, the school boards objected to the FSA brochure being distributed and both locals obtained an agreement to distribution with a few minor changes to the brochure—teachers handed it out. In Nanaimo, where teachers were ordered not to hand out the brochures via students, on the advice of the BCTF and their local, they handed them out anyway. BCTF advice is to distribute the brochures in plain envelopes if distributing via students. It is clear from the arbitration victory on freedom of expression (Munroe decision) and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that teachers have voice and that speaking out on FSAs falls squarely in the arena of professional concerns. There is an upcoming freedom of expression arbitration in Cranbrook/Fernie about teachers distributing brochures via students; so stay tuned.

It is clear that teachers oppose FSA tests and the general proliferation of testing. It is equally clear that they are prepared to exercise their professional judgment and their rights in taking action in the face of orders, directives, and other heavy-handed tactics.

— Lynne Sinclair

From two-way to three-way freeway splits

By Suzanne Wernli-Roy

Welcome to the fast lane of teaching in an age of migrations to the city! As the rural populations dwindle and communities are reeling from economic and governmental cutbacks, teachers, may they be teaching in regular English or in French Immersion programs, face the prospect of having more than one or two grades in individual classrooms. While some argue there are advantages in joining two or more grades together, many see more disadvantages and challenges in multiple grades.

Compounding the problem is the fact that multigrade classes are not addressed anymore anywhere in legislation.

A BCTF research report by Charlie Naylor, published in January 2000 and entitled "Split-Grade and Multi-Age Classes: A Review of the Research and a Consideration of the BC Context," introduces this topic by giving two reasons why these types of classes exist. One is philosophical, focusses on the benefits, and is termed multi-age. The other is economical, often the result of schools functioning at half their capacities, and is termed multigrade. Being imposed upon teachers "out of necessity rather than choice," it is no wonder that multigrade classes, especially three-way splits and up, are causing dissatisfaction and stress within many of our school communities. Compounding the problem is the fact that multigrade classes are not addressed anymore anywhere in legislation. When funding, staffing,

or class size and composition are considered, multigrade and single-grade classes are on the same level plane.

In the Coast Mountain School District regular program, the school in Kitwanga deals with three-way split classes filled with a high percentage of students on Individual Education Plans. A third of the students also qualify for English as a Second Dialect. When asked what advantages there were in teaching a three-way split, one teacher there put it bluntly: "There are NO advantages." Another teacher ignored the question completely. All deplored the lack of time to meet individual students' needs and insufficient special service assistance caused by inadequate funding.

In the Bulkley Valley, the school in Quick has two classes, one Primary (K-3) and one Intermediate (4-7). Teachers there love their assignments and see many educational and social benefits in allowing younger and older students to interact in various ways (peer assessment, peer tutoring) that encourage pre-learning and reinforce abilities.

The French Immersion programs in Northwestern BC also harbour multigrade teaching assignments. At the elementary level, three-way splits can be found in Kitimat, Hazelton, Smithers, and Burns Lake (to name only the ones I am aware of). There are K/1/2, 2/3/4, 3/4/5, 5/6/7, and even a 4/5/6/7 French Immersion English Language Arts class taught two hours weekly. The main difficulty for early primary multigrade FI classes is that the high level of student-teacher interaction needed to learn a second language is hard to achieve. Kindergarten students, who know little French, tend to discourage the others to communicate in something other than English. On the other hand,

older students can help younger ones to build their oral vocabulary.

There are no incentives or bonuses attached to teaching a

There is no one way to teach a three-way or other type of split, just a good capacity to stretch one's mind, energy, and time for the sake of one's students.

multigrade class. Fifteen years ago, I had a full-time assistant for a slightly oversized primary-intermediate split. In those days, we had clauses in our contracts that acknowledged the particular needs of such assignments. Now, one may feel like Maria in *The Sound of Music* when first presented with the following assignment: "What? Seven children... in Grade 5, eight in Grade 4, and five in Grade 3!" Then, one gets on with it, does better than one's best, and finds love and a purpose in life. Well... If you want to keep your job and stay in a community you have adopted, you accept the challenge. You hope for parental involvement or understanding, and for a well-balanced group of independent learners who can be teamed up for teaching/working purposes (recommendation found in a position paper by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) titled "Split Decisions").

There is no one way to teach a three-way or other type of split, just a good capacity to stretch one's mind, energy, and time for the sake of one's students. It is an assignment that suits a well-seasoned teacher, adept at this sort of gymnastic and who has accumulated baggage to work with a few grades, better than a first-timer who may attempt in one year

to teach the learning outcomes for each area of the curriculum and each grade present in her or his classroom.

Multi-age classes, also named non-graded, work because the curriculum is adapted to the students who progress at their own pace. There are no report cards or FSA tests! In a graded system where grade specific textbooks and standardized achievement tests are the norm, multigrade teachers struggle if they don't prioritize their learning expectations.

Personally, I have taught three-way split classes four times since the 2003-04 school year. It was hardest when I had students on IEPs and others with bad behaviours or study habits. I learned to better plan, assess, manage my classroom, modify or adapt assignments, and use students' strengths to foster autonomy. I agree with a colleague who teaches a FI 2/3/4 class when she says: "There is great continuity in a three-way split as reading groups may already be set from the previous year." You spend less time figuring out your group of students and teaching them routines in September because you've had some of them for two years already. And, over time, you will cover most of the learning outcomes with them, although not in sequential order.

Multigrade education is invading more rural communities. If the trend continues, could there be a return to the one-room schoolhouses where my great-aunt taught at the

I dream of a freeway of many steps in the same direction: accessible and equitable public education for all, rural and city, folks!

beginning of the 20th Century? I doubt it. Many parents nowadays opt for home schooling backed by computers and the use of the Internet. Secondary school students already virtually attend courses broadcast over the Internet. For example, French Immersion students from Caledonia Secondary School in Terrace are presently accessing a FI Social Studies Internet course (Scs Humaines 11) that is taking place in the FI Grades 8 to 11 classroom at Hazelton Secondary School. This course will be open to more students at a later date.

Besides the use of the Internet, other solutions to the student or teacher shortage in rural areas are self-directed learning and differentiated instruction. Are these methods appropriate in all, first- and second-language settings? How are we going to evaluate students learning this way? Since multigrades are likely here to stay, let us consider some more of the solutions found in the ETFO's report mentioned earlier: a review of the funding formula by the government, allotment of more prep time for smaller multigrade classes by school boards, and more lesson plans and resources specifically for these classes. I dream of a freeway of many steps in the same direction: accessible and equitable public education for all, rural and city, folks!

Suzanne Wernli-Roy teaches at John Field Elementary School, New Hazelton and is a member of the BCTF's French Advisory Committee.

Reported elsewhere...

Provinces warn of 'critical' teacher surplus

This story, by Janice Tibbets of *Canwest News*, adds more to the debate around whether or not there is or will be a teacher shortage. It reports on a "critical overabundance" of teachers in Nova Scotia and an excess of certain teaching categories in Ontario. In Toronto, there were more than 10,000 applicants for 1,000 jobs. But there's also "a nationwide demand for teachers of technology and French, math, and science teachers."

For the full story go to: www.tinyurl.com/2o4yok

Homophobic bullying in schools can and does kill

This article, by Naomi Lakritz, of the *Calgary Herald*, looks at the devastating impact of homophobic bullying in schools in Canada. It reports that Egale Canada, a national advocacy group for gays and lesbians, is partnering with the University of Winnipeg to conduct a national survey, both online on a special website and in classrooms, to determine the extent of homophobic bullying in Canadian schools from Grades 8 to 12.

For the full story go to: www.tinyurl.com/2emsbu

Parents blame mould, asbestos for sickness at school

This story, by Cort Smith of *Canwest*, concerns yet another school with concerns about health and safety. Some parents in Enderby, BC are pulling their children from the town's M.V. Beattie Elementary School because the aging building is home to both mould and asbestos.

For the full story go to: www.tinyurl.com/2d5ndj



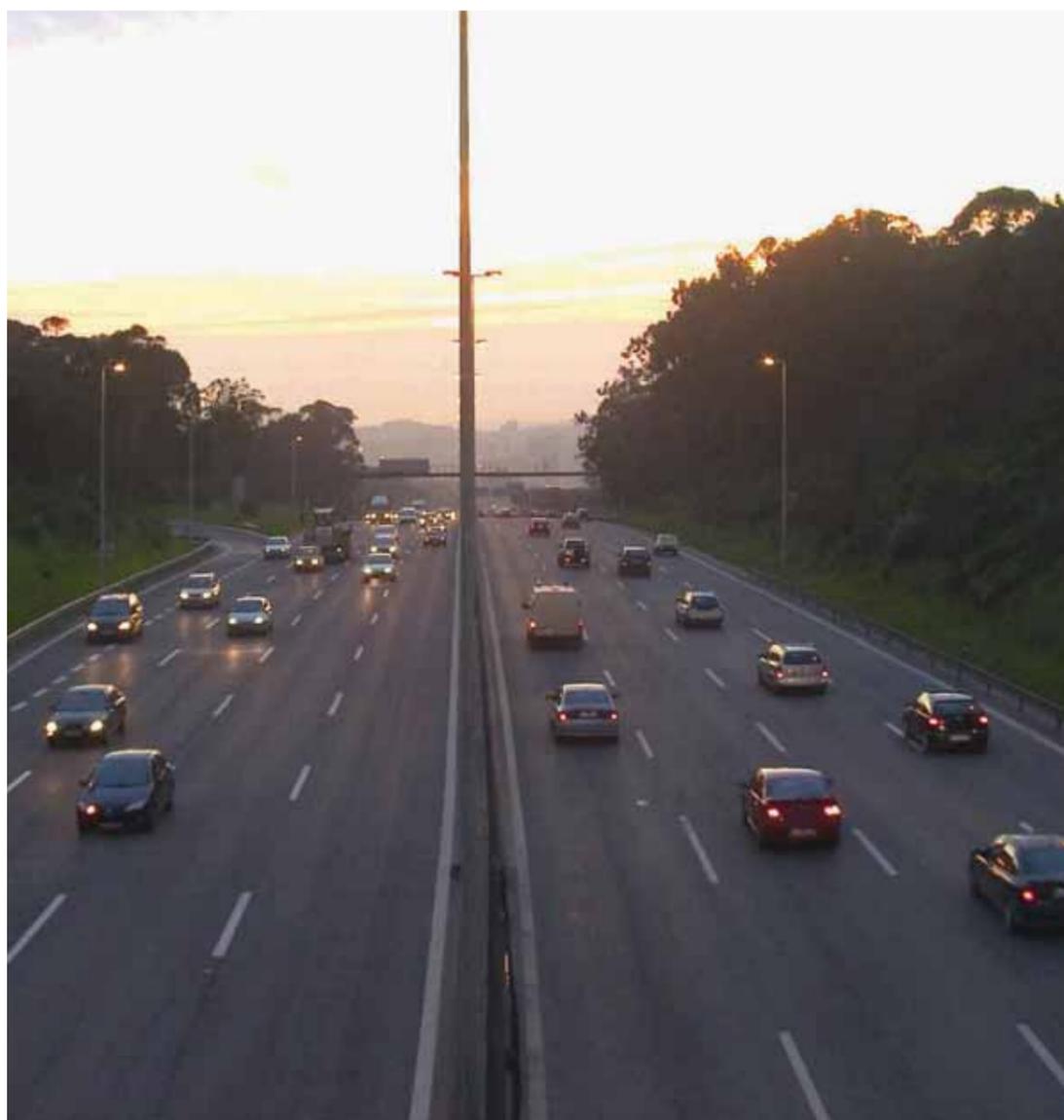
McDonald's to serve up high school credits

This story in the *Associated Press* reveals that the British government is allowing McDonald's employees trained in skills needed to run outlets for the fast-food chain to get credit toward high school diplomas.

"Along with two other large companies, McDonald's Corp. was given the power to award the equivalent of advanced high school qualifications as part of a plan to improve young people's skills, said the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, a government education regulator."

For the full story go to: www.tinyurl.com/2u87xs

— Murray Dobbin



Heart of the community, Hedley Elementary School to close

By Ritchie Kendrick

On Wednesday, January 23, 2008, Hedley Elementary School joined the long list of schools that have fallen victim to the efficiencies of the Ministry of Education after the school board of the Southern Okanagan Similkameen District 53 voted 4 to 2 to close Hedley School.

Many of you may know Hedley from the poster of the Mascot Mine site sitting precariously overlooking the town site of Hedley, which sits in a quiet stretch of the Similkameen Valley between Keremeos and Princeton. During the past few months this poster has served as an analogy for the precarious position of the school itself.

Declining enrolment and the cost of getting district support staff (windshield time as one board member put it) had put this little school in the headlights for the second time in five years. To the school board's credit they made a substantial investment in the school a few years ago by moving the school into a new building. This investment in infrastructure should have been paralleled with an investment in time and effort to look into the needs of the school, in providing support for the teachers, support staff, students, and the community of Hedley.

While many communities continue to reel from the impact of school closures there seems to be little regard paid to the broader impact these closures have on their communities.

While many communities continue to reel from the impact of school closures, there seems to be little regard paid to the broader impact these closures have on their communities. This closure of Hedley Elementary will ensure the demise of an opportunity for community-based schooling for many, many years. Removing a school from a community will have a direct impact on its long-term growth.

The opposition has finally recognized the seriousness of this issue and in an NDP press release on January 29, Juan de Fuca MLA John Horgan asks: "How many communities have to see their schools closed before the Campbell government will fix the problem they created?... It's time for the province to recognize that buildings are a part of the education equation. Constant rounds of closures destabilize communities and create long-term planning problems for regional government."

This is so apropos of Hedley, whose closure comes at a time when the community is in a state of change. New economic development in the area may bring in many families who would opt for residing in Hedley if a school still existed. The Fraser Valley Health Authorities' opening of a Rehab Centre just south of Hedley will bring in approximately 60 workers. The opening of the copper mine in Princeton, 20 minutes down the road, will also attract families. This short-sighted approach to closure of vital links within a community needs to be re-examined province-wide. In Hedley, requests from the local MLA, the regional district,

local unions, and all levels of local government to postpone the closure fell on deaf ears.

What makes this particular closure even more intriguing is the fact that the board had made it clear from the start of this, that it was the quality of education that was the main issue and not funding. Let the parents be the judge of that quality. After all, it is the Ministry of Education that encourages and supports parental involvement in the decision making at their child's school. They love their school. It provides them with the education they want for the children.

In order to help justify their argument regarding the quality of educational services (compared to the school that will receive these students) they used FSA results. FSA results and graduation rates over an extended period were garnered from the ministry's data branch and used as part of their rationale in a report to parents justifying this closure. These results are worthless and as Harry Lalli (local MLA) pointed out at the January 23 meeting, irrelevant due to the sample size. The use of FSA results and grad rates as data to justify school closures is very concerning and I'm sure not the ministry's intended use of FSA results.

School boards are mandated to bring educational services to the people who reside in their communities. And one of our school board's priorities is, "promoting personal and social responsibility and respect within a safe and caring school community." How is this priority reflected in the two hours of daily bussing (for the kids at Hedley) and the difficulty for parental involvement and volunteerism at their child's school?

In the past, as president of the teachers' union in the South Okanagan Similkameen, I have questioned the need for the establishment of certain programs in our district. The answer I received from the superintendent was that parents want choice and the board has an obligation to provide it. Why then would that obligation not extend to the parents of Hedley? They choose to keep their kids in their community school.

Hedley... is a place of learning, a place where children know that they belong and are respected, it is a place of caring, a place of gathering for young families...

— Michell Nimchuk

Michell Nimchuk, a parent with two children, recently moved to Hedley and had to choose Cawston School or switch to Hedley Elementary. He chose Hedley. "We have been thoroughly happy with our choice. Our children have both thrived academically and socially at Hedley School. It is a main fixture in the community. It is a place of learning, a place where children know that they belong and are respected, it is a place of caring, a place of gathering for young families, and a place where the community can take part in the raising of their children."

Ritchie Kendrick is president of South Okanagan Similkameen Teachers' Union.



Photo removed by publisher for web file

Top: Hedley Elementary School scheduled to close June 30, 2008; bottom: Ritchie Kendrick, South Okanagan Similkameen Teachers' Union president and teacher Darla Svendsen with the K-Grade 4 class at Hedley Elementary School.



Election alert

By Eden Haythornthwaite

November, school board elections month, is stalking us and will arrive faster than you think. If you have dismal representation on your school board it is now time to organize around the fact that we need trustees on our school boards who will be loyal to their communities and not just act as handmaidens for provincial ministry policy at the local level.

If you kill yourself getting some seemingly steadfast person elected and they turn against the principles you are hoping to see at the board table, you will feel very unhappy about your efforts.

It should be a source of concern that despite the atrocious conditions trustees labour under as the buffer between their own neighbours and a province bent on wrecking our public education system, there has been only puny resistance to the government roadmap for our schools.

To be fair—it is just too difficult as a solitary or minority trustee to oppose the combination of administration pressures and ministry loyalists on the board without the support of your community.

To begin the journey, there are two elements that should be in place and one is finding the best candidate you can convince to put up with the tough slog of school board politics. The second is a commitment from those who wish to elect this person to stick with them after the campaign and support their work at the board with parallel organizing in the school community.

But first you have to find the individual who will step up and take on this task. The Community Alliance for Public Education in Cowichan has three search criteria as follows, in order of importance, as we see it.

Reliability

The candidate must be trustworthy and sound. Can you depend on this person to honour their platform, put their own self-interest aside—will they remain loyal to the ideals you have elected them to represent? I can't overstate this. If you kill yourself getting some seemingly steadfast person elected and they turn against the principles you are hoping to see at the board table, you will feel very unhappy about your efforts.

Capability

The candidate must have satis-

factory intellectual and personal capacities. Can they do the reading, can they organize themselves to prepare for meetings and debate around items on board agendas, can they be relied upon to attend to their obligations regularly, do they have minimal abilities to speak publicly and express themselves adequately? Can they draw themselves up to meet people and behave in a manner that brings credit on the community?

Electability

The candidate must be suitable, though you do not have to be small-minded about this. Are they presentable, reasonably well spoken, and engaging? Do they have some genuine community presence and reputation that is positive? Do they have family or work experience to draw from?

Sadly, you can't ignore this one—the unshaven cross dresser may be politically sound but they will have a hard time getting elected and their considerable light will be obscured under a basket. And here is a tip—it is not enough to just sound smart. Form is far less important than content.

This is by far the most challenging part of the electoral process. If you can find a good candidate, the rest is a relative cakewalk. The trick is do not under any circumstances allow yourself to be panicked into accepting a candidate who does not meet your criteria. I can tell you

If you can find a good candidate, the rest is a relative cakewalk. The trick is do not under any circumstances allow yourself to be panicked into accepting a candidate who does not meet your criteria.

from sober experience you are far better off having no one rather than supporting the wrong person. Unfortunately, it seems that those who are the most worthy are seldom willing and sometimes the willing have not thought through the commitment they are being asked to make.

Picking a candidate is not the whole journey but it is a crucial start. That's why sufficient lead time is so important—if you wait until the fall you simply won't have enough time to do the process justice. Lastly, if you are smart you will add one other important characteristic to that list—a good sense of humour, because believe me, they will need it.

Eden Haythornthwaite is a school trustee in Cowichan and a founding member of the Community Alliance for Public Education.

Creating a culture of peace for children



Sam Fillipoff explains the Peace Education Project to the BCTF Executive and demonstrates a piece of artwork from "Acts of Transformation From War Toys to Peace Art."

By Sam Fillipoff

How do we encourage respect, caring, empathy, and compassion? We want our children to become responsible adults who value all human beings as equals. We want them to care about others and to learn to resolve conflict through dialogue, mediation, and non-violent means.

Creating a culture of peace for children through education is the main intent of the Peace Education Project (PEP)—*Acts of Transformation: From War Toys to Peace Art*. The project has developed and grown from three global peace initiatives: the 2006 Vancouver World Peace Forum, the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, and the Olympic Truce that will be invoked during the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games.

The transformation project provides an avenue for children and youth to engage in extending safe school environments into their communities. Most schools have participated in determining the values and standards they desire for their school community. This peace education project encourages the process for cultivating cultures of peace and non-violence for children by examining the socialization attributes of children's toys. Why do

children play with toys? What values do war toys teach? Link this to the practice of child soldiering on our planet. At any one time, there are more than 300,000 children fighting as soldiers—child soldiers.

As a legacy for the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, we hope to establish a permanent Centre for a Culture of Peace for Children. The centre would exhibit peace art, develop peace education curriculum for children, promote activities that create cultures of peace for children, advocate for children's welfare and well-being, and find ways to eliminate child soldiers.

The Olympic Truce is a call for all nations to cease fighting and stop war one week prior to the Olympic games, during the Olympic Games, and one week after the games so the Olympic Games may be conducted in an environment of peace, friendship, solidarity, and fair play. This would mean 46 days free from warfare during the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, February 12–28, 2008 and the Paralympic Games, March 12–21, 2008. The work of the Olympic Truce Centre is to develop initiatives that lead to global support and observance of the truce and to motivate the development of grassroots peacemaking through educational and cultural activities.

Sam Fillipoff is a retired Vancouver teacher.

"Peace is in our hands"

The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates declared "Peace is in our hands!" when they issued Manifesto 2000 in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Manifesto 2000 emphasized six values for creating cultures of peace:

1. Respect all life and understand that diversity sustains life.
2. Reject violence in all its forms and practise peaceful conflict resolution.
3. Share with others to decrease economic inequality on our planet.
4. Listen to understand that there are many possible solutions to the challenges we face.
5. Preserve the planet by learning to be a responsible consumer.
6. Rediscover solidarity by building community with full participation of everyone.

The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, then pursued the UN to declare 2001 to 2010 to be the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World," built on the values of Manifesto 2000.

Do well on your tests, kids, and we'll give you fast food and money

Florida's Seminole County students will receive a McDonald's Happy Meal as a reward for scholastic achievements (e.g., a report card consisting of all A's and B's or sterling attendance records) reports Stuart Elliott in the *New York Times* (<http://tinyurl.com/2cu9jd>). The report-card incentive is nothing new, as it replaces a decade-old Pizza Hut-sponsored program. Programs similar to this have been in place for some time now, as schools think creatively to satisfy funding for sports and extracurricular activities without raising taxes (billboards at sporting events, ads on the sides of school buses, etc.). The report-card incentive is a type of performance pay for children, rewarding them for diligent study and attendance with something they find appealing, and there is a different kind of performance pay emerging in New York, reports

Jennifer Medina in the *New York Times* (<http://tinyurl.com/2rd2oh>).

New York City is expanding the use of cash rewards for students, with a \$1 million effort financed by philanthropists that will go to students who do well on Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Secondary school students who score a five, the highest grade, will receive \$1,000, while a score of four will

earn \$750 and a three will net \$500. The program will be in 25 public and 6 private schools, all of which serve high proportions of low-income black or Latino students, and have at least 15 students taking AP exams. In addition to rewarding individual students, the initiative will donate \$2,000 to each participating school and invite them to apply for a grant of up to \$10,000.



On being well

Remembering Julia Johnson

By Enid Bond

It was with sadness and a deep sense of loss that colleagues, friends, and family had to unexpectedly say goodbye to Julia after her life was taken in a tragic car accident near the end of January.

As I sit and look out the window and enjoy the sun sparkling on the snowy, frozen lake by my home, I am reminded of a similar day when Julia dropped in to say hello and how her whole face lit up as she commented on the beauty of the day. Julia was grateful for each day. She viewed each experience, whether positive or negative, as a chance to discover a new gift in her life and she was the first one to admit that sometimes it was upon reflection and the passage of time that these gifts became evident. She strove to express gratitude for her daily life and the journey to attain her own personal wellness developed into a passion to understand the wellness of those around her.

Scrolling through the archives of the *Teacher* Newsmagazine and rereading Julia's articles "On being well" is comforting. It is like having a visit with her. To read her words is to once again experience her passion for this subject of wellness. She was constantly looking for the connection between wellness and the choices people make as they strive to balance each facet of their lives. Even dearer to her heart was the struggle we as teachers have in seeking and maintaining harmony in our lives. Julia strove to support her fellow teachers by sharing research on how our intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical domains function and how they are connected. She wanted to remind us that we are not being

selfish when we care for ourselves because it takes dedication and commitment to do so. Her advocacy for teacher wellness resulted in her being the first Wellness Committee chair in our local.

Part of Julia's personal wellness journey was her strong belief in service to others. An example of this was her constant effort to deliver soup to her friends who were ill or grieving. She believed that service to others and volunteering remain the key components in ensuring hope will never fade in our society and she set out to prove it. She involved herself in our community in many ways and in the past two years she travelled to China and Uganda to see what service in the world community would be like. From her experiences abroad, she observed that communities around the world struggle with the issue of wellness just as our communities do.

"Teachers think, breathe, and live teaching. At the forefront of our minds are the needs of our students, often at the expense of our own needs. Let this be the year you make a commitment to find balance in your life."

— Julia Johnson

Julia's legacy of "wellness" is her gift to us. She encouraged us to take care of ourselves and she provided us with the research and inspiration to do so. Knowing how to take care of one's self truly shapes the wellness of society as a whole. We honour her memory by "living well."

Enid Bond teaches as Red Bluff Lhtako Elementary School, Quesnel and is chairperson of the Quesnel District Teachers' Association Wellness Committee.

March 8: International Women's Day

Putting women and women's rights to equality on the global agenda is the moving force behind International Women's Day. The

International Women's Day really took hold between 1913 and 1917, when women held rallies either to protest the war or to express solidarity with their sisters.

idea of a day for women, celebrated all over the world, began at the beginning of this century in America and Europe. The focus was the movement for women's rights and achieving universal suffrage for women. International Women's Day really took hold between 1913 and 1917, when women held rallies either to protest the war or to express solidarity with their sisters. In December 1977 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.

Since those early years, some progress has been made for women in developed and developing countries alike: in many countries, provisions guaranteeing the enjoyment of human rights without

discrimination on the basis of sex have been included in constitutions; legal literacy and other measures have been introduced to alert women to their rights and to ensure their access to those rights; the world community has identified violence against women as a clear violation of women's rights; incorporating gender perspectives into regular programs and policies has become a priority at the United Nations and in many member states.

However, much remains to be done to achieve full equality and to have the voices of women heard. In British Columbia, issues still facing women are, among others:

- accessible, affordable, quality childcare
- violence in the home, community, and workplace
- prostitution, trafficking, and the sex industry
- poverty.

March 8 provides an opportunity to pay tribute to the achievements of women and to highlight the needs and concerns of women on national, regional, and global agendas.

— Jane Turner

Les défis de l'enseignement francophone en Colombie-Britannique

Par Mohamed Chelali

Parler de la francophonie dans un milieu minoritaire revient souvent à parler des institutions éducatives dont principalement l'école qui en tant qu'institution revêt une importance capitale pour la communauté qu'elle dessert.

En effet, l'école, dans un milieu minoritaire, ne transmet pas simplement des connaissances et socialise les élèves aux valeurs de la société mais elle possède aussi une mission stratégique de préservation et de sauvegarde de la langue et de la culture française.

La construction de l'identité culturelle et identitaire est au cœur de la mission de l'école francophone en milieu minoritaire. La langue est l'élément clé qui permettra à l'élève de s'instruire, de communiquer, de s'affirmer, et d'interagir avec un environnement dans lequel il est à la fois acteur et contributeur.

L'école est alors essentielle à la pérennité de la communauté francophone dans un milieu minoritaire. La vision d'une école francophone dans un milieu minoritaire doit être un puissant agent mobilisateur grâce à son rôle catalyseur d'intervention auprès de la communauté.

L'école a aussi par extension un rôle politique, puisqu'elle a toujours été le théâtre de revendications et de pressions au nom de la communauté. Son rôle est lourd de responsabilités, étant donné sa nature au niveau de la reproduction de la communauté francophone, en ce qui a trait à la langue et à la culture française.

Tous les intervenants en éducation au niveau de l'école deviennent alors de puissants agents de reproduction linguistique et culturelle auprès de la clientèle

scolaire desservie.

En Colombie-Britannique ce rôle de reproduction est, dans bien des cas, important à souligner car vital au succès de l'école francophone et de la communauté d'une manière générale. Deux éléments importants sont à considérer avec soin:

1. la présence d'une clientèle scolaire de plus en plus hétérogène du point de vue de la langue et de la culture, où les compétences langagières en français peuvent varier grandement d'une famille à l'autre et d'un milieu socio-économique à un autre. Ce facteur est exacerbé par le taux assez élevé de l'exogamie en Colombie-Britannique, situation où un parent est francophone et l'autre anglophone. Il n'est pas rare d'ailleurs de voir que l'anglais devienne la langue d'usage en dehors de l'école ce qui occasionne un taux de transfert linguistique important vers l'anglais et qui crée une fragilité lorsque le milieu scolaire devient le seul endroit où les enfants font l'expérience du français dans leur vie quotidienne. Cette situation a tendance à fragiliser les structures de l'école francophone au sens de l'appartenance communautaire et influence négativement la rétention des élèves surtout au niveau secondaire et post secondaire. Cette situation exige donc une vigilance constante de la part de l'école qui doit absolument s'ouvrir sur la communauté et créer un partenariat fort avec elle.

2. Une population de diverses origines ethniques continue à venir, depuis maintenant plus d'une décennie, se greffer à la communauté francophone existante. Face à cette diversité ethnique de l'éducation francophone en Colombie-Britannique, l'école francophone a besoin de s'adapter, de s'ouvrir et d'envoyer des signaux forts à sa clientèle actuelle et potentielle pour que celle-ci se sente partie intégrante de la communauté et pour éviter toute tension qui engendrerait des divisions et des retombées négatives sur la francophonie locale d'une manière générale. Cette nouvelle clientèle francophone doit

aussi comprendre qu'elle a le droit et le devoir de contribuer à la préservation de l'identité de la communauté francophone en Colombie-Britannique.

La dualité communauté-école est l'un des garants clé de la réussite de l'école francophone en milieu minoritaire. L'école par son rôle moteur doit se situer au cœur de la communauté. Ce rôle doit s'articuler sur l'innovation et la vivacité pédagogique ainsi que l'utilisation maximale des outils des technologies modernes pour rapprocher les apprenants non seulement entre eux mais aussi avec les autres communautés francophones et francophiles.

La technologie permet certainement d'offrir une gamme de services éducationnels de qualité à tous les apprenants de l'école francophone. En plus de la technologie, l'école francophone en milieu minoritaire doit promouvoir le volet culturel car c'est de cela dont dépend l'utilisation du français dans toutes les sphères d'activités à l'école comme dans la communauté. L'école est l'institution publique fondamentale pour la transmission intergénérationnelle de la langue et de la culture françaises en milieu minoritaire. Cette transmission permettra d'élargir le répertoire linguistique des élèves et de développer leurs connaissances et leurs compétences en français. Il faut dire aussi que l'école francophone en milieu minoritaire doit impérativement, non seulement, offrir un enseignement de haute qualité dans toutes les matières et sujets enseignés y compris la langue anglaise, mais aussi stabiliser le corps enseignant, le valoriser, et l'impliquer tant dans la prise de décision que dans les grands choix stratégiques. Un taux élevé de départs ou d'insatisfaction du corps enseignant nuira grandement à la mission de l'école.

L'idéal est que dans le long terme le couple communauté-école génère les acteurs qui pérenniseront sa survie, les saveurs et les exigences d'une francophonie spécifique en Colombie-Britannique. Les institutions

postsecondaires auront un rôle capital dans ce domaine. D'ores et déjà, il faut se féliciter d'une grande avancée dans ce domaine avec la création du bureau des Affaires Francophones et Francophiles de l'université Simon Fraser et avec la vitalité de l'organisme Éducentre.

Au niveau provincial il faut dire qu'en Colombie-Britannique, la situation des francophones malgré ces progrès demeure plutôt précaire et les droits tiennent plus du symbole que de la réalité car ils sont limités au domaine scolaire, imposés par la *Charte des droits et libertés*, obtenus de haute lutte devant les tribunaux.

Bien évidemment des progrès notables ont vu le jour ces cinq dernières années avec l'accroissement des diverses activités et programmes francophones. Le grand défi est comment étendre ce développement du domaine scolaire aux autres domaines vitaux d'un développement communautaire équilibré qui inclura les volets économique, social et culturel.

N'oublions pas, qu'y compris dans le domaine scolaire, en Colombie-Britannique comme ailleurs au Canada il y a beaucoup à faire pour la scolarisation des ayants droit. Selon le président de la fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF) Monsieur Ernest Thibodeau, «... seulement 49% des enfants ayants droit fréquentent une école primaire ou secondaire de langue française.» «Il est évident qu'il y a beaucoup de pain sur la planche.» - dira-t-il- Nous espérons que les efforts entrepris depuis le Sommet de l'éducation de 2005 permettront d'augmenter les nombres dans un avenir rapproché. Ce qui est toutefois encourageant, c'est qu'une bonne proportion des parents (35%) qui envoient leurs enfants dans le système anglophone ou d'immersion ont déclaré qu'ils auraient préféré que leur enfant fréquente une école de langue française. Il faut donc tout mettre en œuvre pour attirer ces parents.

N'oublions pas non plus qu'il y a presque 2000 enseignants dans le programme d'immersion en

Colombie-Britannique. Parmi ces 2000 enseignants il y a au moins 60% qui sont francophones à 100% et dont les compétences et le savoir faire n'est aucunement utilisé par la communauté francophone qui a un grand besoin de leurs talents dans ce moment crucial de son histoire sans parler que ces mêmes enseignants sont aussi parents d'un ou de plusieurs enfants qui ne fréquentent pas toujours eux-mêmes le programme francophone.

Enfin, une fois pour toute il faut se mettre d'accord sur la relation que les francophones doivent entretenir vis à vis de l'immersion française. Cette dernière selon beaucoup de francophones représente une profondeur de la dualité linguistique du pays et est un allié stratégique indéfectible. Pour d'autres, l'école d'immersion est un sérieux concurrent aux écoles francophones et ne serait qu'une source d'assimilation des élèves francophones.

Les questions sont posées et il est temps d'avoir un débat franc et sérieux.

Moh Chelali, Directeur adjoint, coordonnateur des programmes et services français de la Fédération des enseignants de Colombie-Britannique.

This article explains the challenges of the francophone education system in BC. The article also explores different aspects of the vital role of francophone schools in keeping the francophone community viable and alive.

Invitation

Le Bureau des programmes et services en français invite les délégués et enseignants des Programmes Francophones/Immersion/Français langue de base à un lunch durant l'assemblée générale annuelle de la Fédération des Enseignants de la Colombie Britannique à l'hôtel Hyatt de Vancouver.

Pour s'inscrire, merci de communiquer avec Cécilia Huard, 604-871-1869, chuarddelamarre@bctf.ca.

Specialist teachers

Who are we and what do we have to offer?



By Paul Boscarior and Janice Neden

The term *specialist teacher* is often heard and used, but do we really know what it refers to? A specialist teacher can be defined as one who has training in a specific discipline taken as a major in undergrad studies or taken throughout the university education program. This training has prepared the teacher with the knowledge and skills necessary to most effectively teach that area.

What is the importance of a specialist teacher? The specialist

teacher is extremely important to ensure that our students are receiving the best level of education in that particular discipline. In the case of technology education, a person trained in that discipline knows far more than what the tools and equipment are and how to use them. The training includes how to safely manage a class of students who are in constant motion, using the tools and equipment, performing tasks and operations that have inherent safety risks. This is achieved through both the course of study and supervised practicum in a shop. Another example is that of learning assistance and special

education, where teachers have specific training that gives them the tools and skills necessary to identify learning challenges that students may have. The second part of this process is to develop and implement appropriate programs to assist the students to be successful. These are but two examples of many areas where a specialist teacher is required to ensure that grade and age level, subject area, safety, identification of special needs, and learning support of students are effectively met.

The BCTF Provincial Specialist Association Council (PSAC) has identified and supported the need to recognize the importance of specialist teachers in our schools. To that end, PSAC put forward the following recommendation to the Executive Committee in November 2007. This was developed from an ad hoc committee consisting of: Irene Lanzinger, BCTF president; Fran Robinson, past EC member; Pat Clarke, BCTF staff; Janice Neden, Learning Assistance Teachers' Association president; and Paul Boscarior, BC Technology Education Association president.

PSAC Recommendation—Specialist teachers

That the AGM amend BCTF policy 47.D. 01 to read:

1. That all assignments to teaching positions should be appropriate in terms of the member's specific qualifications and teaching experience, and appointments should be made in consideration of relevant qualification and experience factors pertaining to grade and age level, subject area, special needs, learning support, and student safety in any

proposed teaching assignment.

2. That where teachers are assigned or choose to teach in areas where they may lack specific qualifications and/or relevant experience, a plan of professional support and development be provided through such programs or activities as district/local joint mentoring programs, post-certification training opportunities, and local union, PSA or LSA organized professional development.

While it is the hope of PSAC that specialist teachers be employed in these positions, it is also understood that this cannot always be achieved for a number of reasons. To accommodate this situation, the ad hoc committee developed a second part to the proposed amendment that would provide proper training opportunities for non-specialist teachers who find themselves in such a position.

The focus should... be on improving the training opportunities and support for those who, for whatever reason, have found themselves teaching in an area they have not been trained in.

The Executive Committee, after much debate, deleted part 1 of this recommendation. Part 2 was amended to read:

That professional support such as district and/or local mentoring programs post-certificate training opportunities and local union, PSA,

LSA organized professional development be made available when teachers are assigned or choose to teach in areas outside of their relevant experience and the teacher requests such assistance.

It is difficult to understand how, on one hand the BCTF recognizes specialist teachers through the individual Provincial Specialist Associations and through our collective PSA Council, yet they do not want to recognize the same in policy. A precedent has been set with the recognition, in policy, of counsellors as specialists, yet there is a resistance to recognize the rest of the specialists. The intent here is to give due recognition to all, and not to have the counsellors' recognition removed.

The focus should not be on preventing recognition of specialist teachers, but rather on recognizing specialists in policy and improving the training opportunities and support for those who, for whatever reason, have found themselves teaching in an area they have not been trained in. Within our membership, we have a wealth of expertise and experience that can be utilized to assist with post-certification training opportunities and mentoring programs. Let us not lose this opportunity to recognize specialist teachers.

Paul Boscarior teaches at LV Rogers Secondary School, Nelson and Janice Neden teaches at McGowan Park Elementary School, Kamloops.

Agree? Disagree? More to add? Send us your views ([news@bctf](mailto:news@bctf.ca)) and we may print them in the next issue.

Alberta teachers historic agreement clears last hurdle

By Murray Dobbin

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has come to a far-reaching agreement with the Conservative government involving the teachers' pension fund and a five-year agreement that includes pay increases and a commitment to reduce class sizes.

"...we remain fully committed to important programs designed to improve the delivery of our education system, such as the Class Size Initiative."

— Premier Ed Stelmach

The agreement demonstrates that, given good will on both sides, teachers' unions can come to good agreements with even the most conservative governments. "It is worth noting that Premier Campbell often holds Alberta up as a model for BC to follow—and 'partners' with that province on a range of issues," said BCTF President Irene Lanzinger. "It would be gratifying to see the BC government emulate Alberta in developing a relationship of mutual respect with BC teachers. That's the only way real progress is made on education issues."

The centre piece of the agreement is the resolution of a long-standing irritant between the government and the ATA—an unfunded liability of \$2.1 billion in the ATA pension plan. The agreement provides for the provincial government to assume full responsibility for funding the pre-1992,

unfunded liability. The net result will be a continuing reduction in pension contributions for teachers averaging 3.1% of salary.

The five-year agreement also involves a 3% salary increase for 2007-08 and yearly increases equal to the increase in the average Alberta weekly earnings in the subsequent four years of the deal.

Equally important, however, is the government's commitment to the class-size reduction initiative negotiated with the ATA. As reported in the *ATA News*, "...the government will undertake to seek the support of the legislature to provide the necessary funding to school boards to enable the full implementation of the agreement and ensure that class-size targets are achieved."

Just as notable as the actual details of the agreement is the tone of the negotiations and the final results. The deal was reached through the direct intervention of premier Ed Stelmach. As *ATA News* reported, ATA President Frank Bruseker recognized the contribution of Stelmach in achieving this solution. "During his leadership bid, Mr. Stelmach made a personal commitment to teachers that he would solve the issue of the unfunded pension liability. He has met that commitment. In fact, his personal intervention and leadership were essential in the process that ultimately resulted in this agreement."

The *ATA News* also reported: "On a more pro-active note, the Association and the government undertake in the agreement to work cooperatively to enhance the quality of education in Alberta."



Stelmach has put his political reputation on the line by making a personal commitment to lowering class sizes. In a letter to the ATA he stated: "Beyond the legislative and financial aspects of this agreement, I also wish to reinforce to Association members that we remain fully committed to important programs designed to improve the delivery of our education system, such as the Class Size Initiative. Our government recognizes reducing class sizes goes a long way in laying the foundation for a positive learning environment for our students."

"...the government has formally committed to refrain from introducing legislation, regulations or policies that might affect the rights, or employment conditions of the members of the Association."

The Class Size Initiative in four years has provided funding to hire 2,500 additional teachers. According to Stelmach's letter: "This is an ongoing financial commitment by government to school jurisdictions

and school jurisdictions will be expected to allocate resources to achieve the Alberta's Commission on Learning targets."

The Alberta Commission on Learning established the following targets:

- Jr K to Grade 3: 17 students
- Grades 4 to 6: 23 students
- Grades 7 to 9: 25 students
- Grades 10 to 12: 27 students

These targets are district-wide averages and a considerable range in class size can still exist. Also, there are no specific maximum targets for children with special needs and no provision for consulting with classroom teachers on either class size or composition.

In addition to the pension, salary, and class-size commitments, the government has formally committed to "refrain from introducing legislation, regulations or policies that might affect the rights, or employment conditions of the members of the Association."

While the ATA was clearly pleased with the agreement, the process for ratification was complex and time-constrained. The first step was an overwhelming approval by the Emergent Representative Assembly in November. But teachers had to vote individually on the deal and pass it by 50% plus one and 62 teacher bargaining units had to approve new five-year deals.

Because local teacher associations still bargain substantive issues with their school boards—unlike BC teachers—each had to sign a separate collective agreement with their respective boards before January 31, 2008, for the provincial framework agreement to take effect. According to Ernest

Clintberg, ATA co-ordinator of Teacher Welfare: "While the agreement between the government and the ATA is fairly straightforward, integrating the terms of that agreement with the specific language contained in individual collective agreements can be tricky." They provided increased bargaining resources to assist local teacher associations.

Teachers overwhelmingly approved the provincial deal. All 62 teacher bargaining units ratified new five-year deals. And in a province-wide vote, 97% of individual teachers also voted in favour.

Teachers overwhelmingly approved the provincial deal. All 62 teacher bargaining units ratified new five-year deals. And in a province-wide vote, 97% of individual teachers also voted in favour.

The toughest test was getting all the 62 school boards to sign five-year collective agreements with their individual teacher associations by the government deadline of midnight, January 31. It literally came down to the wire. At the beginning of the day there were still six holdouts. With just hours to go, all six either accepted settlements or agreed to binding arbitration. The agreement is now ready to be implemented.

Murray Dobbin is assistant director, BCTF's Communications and Campaigns Division.

AGM 2008 Agenda

March 15–18, 2008

FIRST SESSION

March 15, Saturday evening

7:00 p.m.

- Welcome
- First Nations recognition
- Preliminaries:
 - Adoption of chairpersons, scrutineers, tellers, resolutions committee
 - Chairpersons' orientation session
 - Introduction of ombudsperson
 - Adoption of agenda
 - Adoption of 2007 AGM Minutes
 - Stewardship Report on 2007 AGM

President's report
Irene Lanzinger

Greetings/Comments

- BC Federation of Labour
Jim Sinclair, president
- Canadian Teachers' Federation
Emily Noble, president
- Canadian Union of Public Employees, BC Division
Barry O'Neill, president
- BC School Trustees Association
Penny Tees, president
- BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Kim Howland, president

9:00 p.m.

Election statements from candidates for table officer positions. Questions and answers for candidates running for table officer positions.

Call for nominations

10:00 p.m.

Adjourn

SECOND SESSION

March 16, Sunday morning

9:00 a.m.

- Leadership Report
 - Presentation
 - Recommendation 1
- Political Action
 - Recommendations 13–15
- Constitution and By-laws
 - Resolution 101
- Education Finance
 - Resolutions 109–114

12:10 p.m.

College of Teachers' report
Richard Walker, college council chairperson

12:30 p.m.—Lunch

THIRD SESSION

March 16, Sunday afternoon

2:00 p.m.

- Aboriginal Education
- Employment Equity presentation
 - Recommendation 2
- Organization of the BCTF
 - Resolutions 157–177

3:45 p.m.

Report of the Executive Director
Ken Novakowski

4:00 p.m.

Election statements from candidates for member-at-large positions. Questions and answers for candidates running for member-at-large.

Call for Nominations

5:00 p.m.

Adjourn

5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.

All candidates' meeting (main ballroom). All delegates invited.

FOURTH SESSION

March 17, Monday morning

9:00 a.m.

Keynote Address: Gerald Bracey

- Education Policy
 - Recommendations 3–7
 - Resolutions 115–139
- Teacher Education
 - Recommendation 21
- Professional Development
 - Resolutions 180–185

12:30 p.m. Lunch

FIFTH SESSION

March 17, Monday afternoon

2:00 p.m.

- Pensions
 - Report
 - Resolutions 178–179

Health, Welfare, and Safety of Teachers

- Recommendation 11
- Resolutions 147–154

Health and Welfare of Students

- Resolution 146

Bargaining

- Resolutions 102–104

Teachers on call

- Resolutions 203–204

Boards of School Trustees, School Districts, and BC School Trustees Association

- Resolutions 105–106

Independent Schools

- Resolutions 155–156

Non-Teaching Employment of Members

- Recommendation 12

5:25 p.m.

Final call for nominations

5:30 p.m.

Adjourn

SIXTH SESSION

March 18, Tuesday morning

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

BALLOT DISTRIBUTION

For one hour, the election tellers will distribute ballots, one pad for each voting card, in the Prince of Wales Room (on the convention level). Each delegation is asked to assist by appointing one of its members to present all the delegation's cards, (including the LR cards) and to receive all its ballots individually.

Executive Committee members should each pick up their own ballots.

No ballots will be distributed after the session has begun.

AGM Standing Rule 12.2 specifies that ballots will be given out only at the place and times specified on the agenda.

9:00 a.m.

Elections

International Guest Speaker from Peru

Social Justice

- Recommendations 16–20

Canadian Teachers' Federation

- Resolution 107

Provincial Specialist Associations

- Resolutions 186–188

Public Affairs

- Resolutions 189–202

12:15 p.m.

Committee Reports—Questions

12:30 p.m.

Lunch

Please note: Evening sessions may be scheduled if required.

SEVENTH SESSION

March 18, Tuesday afternoon

2:00 p.m.

Finance

- Comments from the treasurer
 - Recommendations 8–10
 - Resolutions 140–145
 - Affinity program

4:00 p.m.

Awards, Honorary membership, Recognition of retiring activists

Unfinished Business

Late Resolutions

New Resolutions

New Business

5:15 p.m.

Closing Courtesy Motion

5:30 p.m.

Adjourn

Special resolution

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Resolution 101—Campbell River District Teachers' Association
That By-law 6.1 be amended to read: "The Representative Assembly shall consist of the Local Representatives, the Local Presidents, and the members of the Executive Committee, but any decision at the meeting of the Representative Assembly shall be by vote of the Local Representatives and the Local Presidents only."

The Representative Assembly may, either... (the rest remains unchanged).

Candidates for Executive Committee

For President



Irene Lanzinger

It is an amazing experience to be president of the BCTF. I am so impressed by our members. Teachers have been willing to take significant risks to stand up for our bargaining and professional rights. They vigorously defend the welfare of our students and of public education. In spite of very difficult classroom situations they are extremely dedicated to professional development and willing to defend professional autonomy.

Leaders of the BCTF can never waver from a deep commitment to the engagement of our members and insistence on democratic

processes. It is what keeps our organization strong. We have daunting challenges. The government refuses to live up to its promise to make critical improvements in class size and composition. They continue to underfund public education. At the same time they remain obsessed with expanding unnecessary testing and data-driven accountability measures.

The coming year will bring both municipal and provincial elections. Teachers' voices must be heard in that election. The public must understand the damage done to

public education by this government.

Teaching is about making the world a better place. It extends beyond our classrooms to our global fight for social justice. I would be honoured to continue helping teachers make a difference.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF: President (1 yr.), 1st Vice-president (3 yrs.), BCTF 2nd Vice-president (3), Co-chief Negotiator Bargaining Team (2000-02), Advisory council of local presidents (3), AGM delegate (14), Summer conference (14), Job

action planning committee, LR (1), (alternate) (5).

Local: President (3), Vice-president (2), Member-at-large (2), Staff rep (2), Bargaining Committee (2), Status of Women Committee (2).

Teaching: Secondary (9 yrs.), Elementary (4 yrs.).

Education: B.Sc. (UBC), Teacher Training (UBC), M.Sc (SFU)

For First Vice-President



Susan Lambert

Teachers joining together have created in the BCTF a powerful advocate for public education. Our union is unique in that we define ourselves as both a union of professionals and a social justice union. And we can clearly articulate the bond between the two: in our view free, universal quality public education is the cornerstone of a just and equitable civil society.

For this reason we are committed to nurturing the quality of the system in which we work and protecting it from harm. We do this through the union: ensuring that

teachers are highly qualified and fairly paid, and that classrooms and schools meet the needs of every child. We keep children and their welfare at the centre of our considerations, our policies, and our actions.

As an extension of these beliefs we pursue social justice in our communities and our world. I am proud to have served in the leadership of the BCTF over the last five years and I ask for your ongoing support.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 1st Vice-president (1 yr.), BCTF 2nd Vice-president (3 yrs.), BCTF Executive member-at-large (1 yr.); AGM delegate (22), Task Force on the Code of Ethics, Trainer/facilitator in Namibia (8 sessions) and South Africa (1 session), Staff Rep Trainer (5), WOW facilitator, Summer Conference participant and workshop presenter, BCTF OSD/PD Administrative Staff (4), Federation Appeals Board (2).

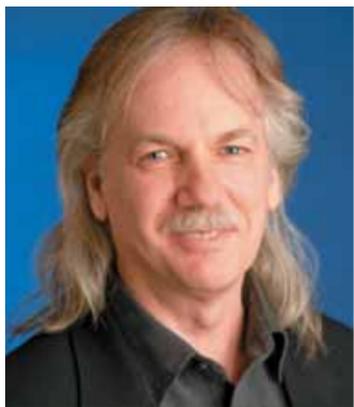
Local: (Prince Rupert): Staff Rep (4), S/W Committee (1), Program Against Racism Chair (2), Bargaining Committee (1); Communications

Officer (2), Labour Liaison Officer (3). (Burnaby): Vice President (2), LR (4), Leave of Absence Committee (2), Grade 7 Girls' Conference (1), BTA Scholarship Committee (2), Job Action Committee (1).

Teaching: 23 years—intermediate, teacher-librarian, learning assistance, gifted education, special needs resource.

Education: Honors English BA (SFU), PDP (SFU), Teacher-Librarian Diploma (UBC).

For Second Vice-President



Jim Iker

The needs of every child drive our passion to defend public education.

The BCTF is strong and effective when we engage members, new and experienced, and we support all our locals. Together we make a difference.

It is critical that we:

- advocate for full and stable funding that enables success for every student and stops privatization.
- push changes to Bill 33 that ensure firm and lower class size/composition limits for all grades including multi-age/grade classes, support for students with special needs and non-enrolling teacher

ratios/caseloads.

- use the Supreme Court challenge to reverse the stripping and vaporization of our collective agreements.

- implement and enforce our contract.

- exercise professional autonomy and protect students from the harmful mandated testing agenda.

- build social justice networks for systemic change for a just civil society.

- strengthen professional support and professional development networks and opportunities for members.

- ensure that education is a vote

determining issue in school board, municipal, and provincial elections.

I believe in leadership that promotes democratic processes, listens to member input, and provides pro-active and co-ordinated strategies.

I bring you my experience and energy as your 2nd vice-president and value the opportunity to continue to work with the Executive on your behalf.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 2nd Vice-president (1 yr.), Member-at-Large (5), Prov. Bargaining Team 2006, Learning Roundtable (3), Social Justice Review Cttee. (1), CTF AGM Delegate (4 yrs.), Bargaining Mobilization Cttee.

Chair (1), Prov. Bargaining Team, 1st 2 rounds of Prov. Bargaining, GR/LR (12), AGM delegate (19), Local Presidents' Advisory Cttee. (2), Chair (1), BCTF Interim Bargaining Structures Cttee., Legislative Adv. Cttee/ team, Staff Rep Training, Summer Conference Participant (24).

Local: President (15), Bargaining Chair (2), Chief Negotiator, Local Bargaining (all 3 rounds), Bargaining Cttee. WLC Chair (2), Staff rep, District Health And Safety Rep (4), EAP District Cttee. (14), *Teaching:* 29 yrs. (full and part time) K/2/3/4/ 6/7, Learning Assistance, Counselling, Special Ed. *Education:* Honours BA McMaster, B.Ed Dalhousie, Various Counselling Courses UVic.

For Member-at-Large



Gail Chaddock-Costello

Since January 2002, we have seen a steady deterioration in the working and learning conditions of teachers across the province. It is most noticeable in the area of special education, where the failure to provide adequate services for needy students has had an immediate and profound impact on all teachers' ability to meet the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms.

The broken promise of Bill 33, the continued and systemic underfunding of special education, and the increasing accountability agendas forced on teachers without

regard to the impact on their mental and emotional health are leading to a crisis for teachers everywhere.

Teachers are professionals—our opinions and concerns matter. It is imperative that we stand united for the rights of teachers to work in a safe, supportive environment with a reasonable workload. I believe the BCTF has a mandate to work on teachers' behalf to improve the quality of their professional experience. As a result of this belief, I became involved with Langley's Special Education Inquiry.

Self-initiative, leadership, determination, and a proven ability

to work collaboratively for tangible change are skills I will bring to the BCTF to work on your behalf.

It would be my privilege to be your member-at-large.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Public Ed Conferences delegate & presenter, BCTF parent presenter, FLI delegate, Zone meetings, Summer conference, AGM, New Teachers' Conf. presenter, Cross Currents presenter, BCTF spokesperson for special education (4 radio shows), International SE review team (NS).

Local: Professional development (10 yrs.), Ed Change (1), WLC (2), 2nd VP (2), Budget (2), Bargaining (2),

Building (2), school-based committees (15), Staff rep (10), Langley SE inquiry chief spokesperson, BC Fed and labour council delegate.

Teaching: 30 yrs. in special education (all categories, all levels), adult ed (2), adjunct professor, U of San Diego, practicum evaluator, education students (2).

Education: BA, B.Ed. St. Mary's University (Summa Cum Laude), NS, M.Ed. Mount St. Vincent University, NS, Doctoral courses completed for educational leadership, dissertation pending, U of San Diego.



Michelle Davies

Teachers in British Columbia are overwhelmed and overworked. In my opinion, the most important question the BCTF needs to be asking is, "How can I help you?" Then, listen carefully and empathically to their answers and find avenues to support and achieve their goals. The health of the entire education system relies on the wellness and support of the professionals within it. Today's political and social climate is not public education friendly and the BCTF must be proactive in seeking ways to educate the public and the government on the essential needs

of our members. Creative input from our members is key. A good friend of mine has often said that we have been living in the suburbs of our mandate for quite some time and I firmly believe it is time for us to revisit our main purpose as a union of professionals. We need to refocus our energies on supporting autonomous professionals. To this end my focus and energies will be committed to teacher-directed and BCTF supported professional development, continued social justice activism, fair and sustainable working and learning conditions for our members and enhanced public

understanding of meaningful accountability in our profession.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Councilor BCTF Judicial Council, facilitator: Program for Quality Teaching, Global ed, Parent workshops, School goal setting. Peer support consultant. Attended FLI, BC Fed delegate (2 yrs.), AGM (11 yrs.), many summer institutes.

Local: 1st Vice-president, COTA rep on Mentorship, ProD, Education and Student Services committees, 2nd Vice-president, Social justice co-chair, social committee chair, COTA

rep to DPAC, staff rep, social justice rep, ProD rep.

Teaching: 28 years of classroom experience ranging from K through 12.

For Member-at-Large



Al Klassen

The BCTF is the provincial voice of teachers in BC and the proud defender of public education. We continue to face challenges from government underfunding, inadequate legislation, difficult working conditions, and high public expectations.

As an effective organization we must face these challenges and succeed. We will need strong leadership from both the local and provincial levels. I am putting my name forward for member-at-large to provide choice for BCTF members. As President of a mid-size local, I have many years of

experience dealing with the complex issues facing teachers. I have done so with respect, integrity, and honesty. In Richmond, I have built a collaborative relationship with all stakeholders through thoughtful, reflective problem-solving around the issues of the day.

The BCTF will need effective leadership, active participation and wise counsel from every member of the Executive Committee to meet the many challenges we face. The Federation must build stronger and more productive relationships with its members and with other stakeholders.

The Executive Committee needs a variety of perspectives and voices of reason. I ask for your support so that my voice will be heard as we address these many issues on behalf of the teachers in this province.

EXPERIENCE:

Provincial: ACLP (3 yrs), LR (7 yrs), AGM Delegate (9 yrs),

Local: President (7 yrs) Vice-president (2 yrs), Local Bargaining chair (2 yrs), Health and Safety rep (2 yrs), Member-at-Large (2 yrs), Staff rep (2 yrs),

Teaching: Secondary School, Technology education.

Education: B.Ed UBC, trades—BCIT.

Other: (17 yrs) Construction Trades



Fred Robertson

It has never been easy being a teacher in British Columbia. The years we have endured from the Liberal attack agenda have not been easy years. The good news is that we have come through these times and emerged a stronger union.

The commitment and unity shown by our leadership and the members of our union is unparalleled.

Sadly, it is not getting easier. Classes are larger, more of our students are seldom seeing the services they need for success, and we are faced with a government with a bizarre fixation on standar-

dized tests, and an unwritten agenda of privatization. Through my experience with HSAC I have seen our jobs become more difficult and in some cases more dangerous. On the North Island I have seen the "accountability agenda" hurt our most vulnerable learners.

We must look to the strengths we have shown in the past and we will succeed. As a local leader and as a member of the Health and Safety Advisory Committee I bring the experience and understanding of leadership.

We can change this. We will change this. Political resolve and collective action are concepts we know and understand.

I look forward to the opportunity to represent the teachers of our province.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Health and Safety Advisory Committee (6 yrs.), Health and Safety Advisory Committee Chair (1), Teacher Education Committee (1), Local Presidents' Advisory Committee (2)

Local: President (4), Local Representative (4), Local Bargaining Chair

(4), Negotiating Team (4), Staff Rep (12), AGM Delegate (11+), Summer Conference Delegate (11+)

Teaching: Brazil Intermediate (1), Northern Manitoba Intermediate (2); Nunavut Intermediate (3), Vancouver Island North Teacher Librarian (in a disappearing assignment) and Intermediate (19).

Education: BA University of Winnipeg, Teacher Training UVic, MA—Gonzaga



Robert Tarswell

It has been a privilege to serve you on the BCTF Executive this past year as a Member-at-large. As BCTF members we are all proud to belong to a democratic, membership-driven union. We need to stand together as we have in the past to defend and enhance the high standards and values of our profession, our union, and public education.

Together, we must oppose underfunding and offer alternatives to this government's privatization agenda in order to maintain an education system second to none.

Top priorities for us all:

- Class size/composition—thousands of classes with four or more students with special needs and tens of thousands of secondary students in classes over 30.
- Bill 33—not being funded resulting in kids being denied opportunities, avoiding testing of needy students, cuts to other programs, classes and services
- Accountability—a growing bureaucracy turning teachers into test prep technicians.
- Teaching conditions—teacher disillusionment, exhaustion and frustration in not being able to provide what their students need.

Now is not the time to relax. Now is the time to press our issues.

As a Member-at-large candidate, I pledge my support, commitment, and passion to the teaching profession, our union and public education.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive Member-at-large (1 yr.), CTF Delegate (1), AGM Delegate (4), BCTF Executive liaison Teachers Teaching on Call Advisory Committee (1), AGM Delegate (4), AGM Local Rep (2), BC Fed Delegate (5), Summer Conference (7), Public Education Conference (4),

Bargaining, Negotiation Training.

Local: PDTU President (5), Bargaining Chair (5), Negotiation Team (6), Grievance Chair (5), Health and Safety Committee (8), Staff Rep (10), Bargaining Committee (6), Communications Officer (6), Pro-D Committee (6), Social Justice Chair (2), Social Justice Committee (5), Treasurer (2), Zone Meeting Rep (6).

Teaching: 26 years including Special Education, 5 years; K-5, 22 years.

Education: B.Ed (SFU), MA (SDSU)



John Wadge

My first term on the Executive has been challenging, intense at times, but very rewarding. I am proud of the work we have done and hope to continue to make a contribution in our fight to preserve public education.

This fall, I returned to teaching after five years as president of Surrey. Classroom conditions, particularly the reduction in services for special needs students, are truly appalling. Being in schools again has confirmed for me that we need to focus our energies on improving working and learning conditions.

My time on the executive has

also given me a much better understanding of the complexities of our organization. We are strongest when our work in professional issues, social justice, and member welfare are equally valued and supported.

Our collective resolve has been a major roadblock to this government's privatization agenda. We need to continue to speak up and take action when necessary.

With your support, I will continue to be a strong voice in support of our union, our profession, and public education.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Member at Large, AGM Delegate, Local Representative, Summer Conference delegate and presenter.

Local: Surrey Teachers' Association President (5 yrs.), Grievance Officer (3 yrs.), Bargaining Committee, Job Action Co-ordinator, Grievance Committee, Staff Rep., Staff Committee Chair.

Teaching: 27 yrs. Elementary, Secondary, Special Ed.

Bonuses for superintendents

By Jim McMurtry

Florentine writer Nicolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) wrote in *The Prince* that people were "wretched creatures" who had to be forced by a strong ruler to do what is right. This view is reflected in the proposal by the provincial government that \$1,000 bonuses be given to district superintendents and secretary-treasurers. Like Machiavelli, Gordon Campbell may believe that ordinary teachers are less able to improve schools than their supreme rulers.

As a teacher, I would ask why teachers are excluded from the incentive pay, being the ones working directly with school children. Yet my own union is opposed to incentive pay for its members because of the Pandora's Box it would open, the principal fear being that incentive pay might be

awarded on an arbitrary and subjective basis. There is also worry that incentive pay to one teacher may reduce the incentive of those passed over.

If incentive pay for teachers is questionable, surely the same can be said of extra money for superintendents, considering that they already make up to \$200,000-five times the base wage of teachers. I know that paying top executives at Ford and GM 200 times the average wage of auto workers has not made any difference.

In January the British Columbia Public School Employers Association (BCPSEA)—the bargaining agent for all 60 public schools boards in BC—announced that it will be offering a thousands of dollars in annual bonuses to superintendents and secretary-treasurers recommended by their boards of education for setting and meeting goals beyond expectations.

The basic goals are to make the K-12 system "more successful and efficient." The problem here is that I think the goals should be to make each child "more successful and efficient." These two sets of goals are not always compatible as evidenced by the debate on provincial exams. Superintendents

If incentive pay for teachers is questionable, surely the same can be said of extra money for superintendents, considering they already make up to \$200,000—five times the base wage of teachers.

are praised for higher district test scores, while some students are discouraged from taking the tests, and acceding to the next level,

because they are likely to bring down the class and school average.

At my former school, there was a C+ policy where students who had less than 67% in a Grade 11 course were restricted from taking the Grade 12 course. Some teachers also worked to remove weak students from their courses after testing them on the first day of classes. Then there were the really weak students at a private school where once I taught for a year. The administration found a way for them to be absent from school on the day of the exam or otherwise avoid writing it. Remember that all schools administer their own external exams.

Measuring success and efficiency in the first place is not easy. The BCPSEA seeks to measure superintendent "contribution toward efficiency and effectiveness." Clearly these are vague terms to use in measuring all the important things

that go on in schools, such as getting students to feel good about themselves or be responsible citizens of the school and community.

Educating children is a complicated business that requires ever more strategies, resources, and facilities. For instance, I was a PE teacher in a semestered school with five classes of Physical Education in the same block. On a rotating basis two classes split the big gym, one took the small gym, and two classes were outside if the weather was clement or watching movies and chatting in the cafeteria when the weather was bad. What a lot of schools need is another gym. So if the provincial government has more money to spend, I suggest it goes there and not to district officials.

Jim McMurtry is a retired Surrey teacher.



Coincidence or cluster?

By Jodie Nagy
and Janice Travis

It was late August 2000 and many staff at Riverside Elementary School in Maple Ridge were busy with the usual activities involved in preparing their classrooms for the upcoming school year. As bulletin boards were put up and desks arranged, an unwelcome surprise awaited—mould. Within the walls of classrooms located in one particular wing of the school, the growth of various moulds was soon detected. Instead of the usual beginning to a school year, the start-up process of RSE soon involved the complete shut down of that wing of the school, collection and lab assessment on the moulds found, and the subsequent renovations to the affected areas of the school. Due to the closure of a number of classrooms, all intermediate students and teachers had to be bussed to another school within the district. This disruption lasted for about four months. Staff and parents of the students who remained in the building expressed concern about possible health issues that could result from this situation, but were assured that the lab tests done on the moulds indicated there were no apparent dangers and that it would be safe to remain in the building.

Flash forward to January 2008 and media attention is being focussed on what seems to be an unusual number of individuals diagnosed with cancer, all of whom worked at or attended RSE. At

present, eight staff members and two former students have been diagnosed with cancer. Because this number seems high, parents and staff have started to question whether or not these cases could have something to do with the environmental conditions at RSE, either past or present. For example, was there anything in the air that could have led to weakened

Based on data provided by SD 42, guidelines set out by the BC Cancer Research Centre will be used to determine whether or not the numbers of reported cancer cases at RSE qualify as a "cancer cluster."

immune systems? Concerns from both teachers and parents were voiced to district personnel and they began to take steps to address them. At a public meeting held at the school on January 24, 2008, School District 42 officials, together with representatives from the Fraser Health Authority, informed parents and staff of what had been done to date and the preliminary results.

One of the first steps taken was to involve the BC Cancer Agency. Based on data provided by SD 42, guidelines set out by the BC Cancer Research Centre will be used to determine whether or not the numbers of reported cancer cases at RSE qualify as a "cancer cluster." If so, the district has committed to

doing a full environmental investigation. Although this question has yet to be answered, the preliminary findings indicate that the numbers at Riverside "do not support the presence of a cancer cluster." Staff and parents await the official word from the Cancer Research Centre. Will the final data mirror the preliminary findings? Will this seemingly high number of cancer cases from a single worksite have to be chalked up to coincidence? Time will tell.

Having each worked at RSE for over seven years, including the 2000–01 school year, we, the authors of this article, have a particular interest in the findings. Each of us has been diagnosed with cancer, one with breast cancer in 2005 and the other with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2006. Thanks to the excellent treatments and care of the BC Cancer Agency, we are both currently in remission. Whether the incidents of cancers at RSE prove to be coincidence or cluster, it's simply natural to always wonder about the possible causes of such a villainous disease. If there is anything to be learned from the story at RSE, perhaps it is simply to remember the importance of being aware of possible health and safety issues and to always, always advocate for your own personal health and well-being, as well as that of the students because, after all, they are our future.

Jodie Nagy and Janice Travis teach at Riverside Elementary School, Maple Ridge.

Group, and VESTA Inclusion Inquiry Group. Undertaken with support from locals and the BCTF, these pilots give locals an opportunity to consider the utility and merits of teacher inquiry developed and supported by the BCTF in partnership with school districts.

- A BCTF workgroup exploring teacher inquiry as an area of potential focus for the BCTF with representation from local presidents, PD chairs, the BCTF Executive, a range of BCTF committees. The workgroup will issue its report by March 2008, in order for AGM and RA delegates to consider the group's recommendations.

- Ongoing Program for Quality Teaching (PQT) projects and plans in Cranbrook, Surrey, Central Okanagan, and Sooke.

- Support from BCTF Research and Technology Division staff for mentoring/professional conversa-

tion for resource teachers (Kamloops) and for Livingstone Elementary's Interactive Whiteboards Inquiry Group with UBC professor Gaalen Erickson (Vancouver).

- The launch of The Teacher Inquirer webpage. This webpage (www.bctf.ca/publications/teacher_inquirer.aspx) has been developed to provide a publishing space for teachers undertaking inquiry in BC schools. The first issue includes several reports from teachers in School District 33 (Chilliwack).

All of these initiatives will be reported in more depth to the BCTF Executive and to BCTF members. What do you think? Should the BCTF consider an increased focus on teacher inquiry as a way to promote professional development for its members? Send any comments to Charlie Naylor, (cnaylor@bctf.ca).

—Charlie Naylor, BCTF Research

ShawTV will rebroadcast each new episode three times a week: Mondays at 6:30 p.m. and Sundays at 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

The show will be hosted by Shaker, who says its purpose is to provide insights and opinions from practitioners and scholars on education issues that matter for parents, students, educators, and policy makers.

"Our guests are people who know the key issues and can help our viewers prepare to actively participate in making the education

experience a successful one for learners today and in the future," says Shaker, who looks forward to receiving feedback about the program. "It's a way for all groups who care about education to connect and share their insights so that we can work together to ensure quality public education."

Initially, the program will only be available to cable viewers in the Lower Mainland, but programs are archived and can be viewed at: www.youreducationmatters.ca.

—SFU news release

Yours for the asking

Lights out in Parksville

In 2005, Kaleigh Annau, one of three students at Ballenas Secondary School in Parksville, started a program called *Lights Out Ballenas*. The program now includes many schools in Canada and Annau currently studying in Italy is working on the project—Lights Out World!

What is it exactly? Lights Out Ballenas started with the school switching off as many lights as possible one day a year. Then, the school started to do it every Friday. The school has reduced their electricity bill by 20% and their goal now is to reach a 25% reduction.

The school took different initiatives: teachers shut down their computers at the end of the day and during the weekend (especially in the computer labs). They also switched off lights as they left the classrooms, and they take care to reduce the heat too.

If any teachers are interested or want to implement this program in their school, please contact: Sylvain Chapdelaine at schapdel@sd69.bc.ca. For more information, go to www.lightsoutcanada.org.

Rick Hansen School Programs

- *Schools In Motion*—events and activities held at schools that raise awareness of spinal cord injury and issues of access and inclusion. Beyond awareness, students develop leadership and team-building skills and discover the satisfaction that comes from helping others and effecting positive change. The program engages students in celebrating the spirit of

the Rick Hansen Man In Motion World Tour and provides them with an understanding that they can play a role in improving access and inclusion in the world around them.

- *Rick Hansen Awards*—a program that recognizes young people for making a difference in the lives of others.

- *Rick Hansen Foundation Ambassadors*—local individuals with spinal cord injury who volunteer their time visiting schools, sharing their stories of inspiration and courage. They put a face to spinal cord injury and raise awareness about the potential of people with spinal cord injury and help children to learn that anything is possible with hard work and passionate determination.

- Two illustrated books titled *Tale of the Great White Fish* and *The Boy In Motion* are brought to students to provide inspiration through education.

In October 2007, the Province of BC also partnered with the Foundation to launch *Let's Play*, a program that offers grants for the creation of accessible public play spaces for children ages 0–6 in BC. Let's Play builds awareness about accessible play and related best practices helping make BC's play spaces accessible and inclusive for young children and caregivers with physical disabilities. Let's Play links directly with the Foundation's Schools In Motion and Wheels In Motion Programs. More information on Let's Play can be found at www.rickhansen.com/play.

For more information about the Rick Hansen School Programs go to www.rickhansen.com/bcschools.

Factor 88? Don't wait!

Teachers who have reached the age of 64 or the factor 88, age plus contributory service with the teachers or municipal pension plan, may voluntarily withdraw from the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan: Long Term.

If you have reached age 65 or factor 90, you are no longer eligible for long-term benefits and should withdraw. As the BCTF does not have access to your personal

pension information, it is up to you to apply to withdraw.

Send a completed withdrawal form, available from Income Security, local presidents, or online at bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=4782 to the BCTF Income Security Division.

Please also discuss this issue in your staffrooms.

New law protects wages

Canadian workers have won new protection for their wages and their pension contributions when their employer goes bankrupt. Bill C-12, a series of amendments to existing insolvency and wage protection laws, has become law.

Working men and women used to lose \$50 million a year in unpaid wages when companies went bankrupt and then they waited for two years to receive only 15 cents on the dollar. After an intensive three-year campaign by the Canadian Labour Congress and its affiliated unions, bankruptcy laws that unfairly put workers last in line to get paid have been changed.

"Finally, workers no longer have to fear the prospect of lost earnings owed to them while dealing with

the blow of the loss of their jobs," says CLC president Ken Georgetti.

The new law also provides for protection of unpaid pension contributions.

Workers' collective agreements are also now protected from unilateral changes by bankruptcy judges. Changes can only be made with the agreement of the union.

"Canadians have been waiting a long time for these protection measures. It is not just unionized workers that will benefit but every working woman and man in Canada will have this protection as soon as the government proclaims the new law," says Georgetti.

—CLC/CALM

Teacher inquiry as professional development— one way forward for the BCTF?

What is teacher inquiry? While it can incorporate a range of methods (action research, appreciative inquiry, etc.) it's also a collaborative, reflective, and teacher-controlled form of professional development that models and builds the professional autonomy of teachers.

Should the BCTF focus more of its PD initiatives on teacher inquiry? This is a question being addressed in various ways:

- Three pilot teacher-inquiry projects underway this school year—Kootenay-Columbia New Secondary Teachers' Group, North Vancouver Collaborative Inquiry

SFU launches BC's only education TV program

The Faculty of Education is producing BC's only television program dedicated to in-depth analysis of education issues.

Paul Shaker, dean of education, says each half-hour episode of *Your Education Matters* will air on the first Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. on ShawTV, Channel 4. The program premiere was January 21.

CUBA tours for teachers, students and ESL volunteers.

Win a free trip to Cuba.

See HelloCuba.ca for details.

We take care of your vacation needs



Melissa Di Poce

With the choices available today to consumers, it may seem like it's just as easy to book your holiday online or through a 1-800-number, but how do you know what's best? The options are unlimited; so how do you make the right choice?

There's so much to know about the complexities of travelling these days. A good travel agent really knows the world of travel. An experienced travel agent can help you decide on the right destination for your personality and needs, as well as have up-to-the-minute information on travel deals and places to avoid. If you haven't taken a cruise before (and even if you have), it can be a little complicated and intimidating trying to determine what options to choose (room type, cruise company, itinerary, etc.). Your trusted agent's professional skills will guide you through all the must-knows such as vaccinations and documentation to travel to your chosen locale.

While you may be able to snag great airfares online on your own, travel agents have access to wholesale airfares often not found on a public website, and will be able to secure better deals for you on cruises, packages, and hotels. Many travel providers offer special deals to travel agents, particularly if they are a high-volume producer. Travel agents can also keep an eye on fares, to see whether a fare you booked has fallen. If it does, the agent may be able to get you a refund on the difference you paid.

Benefits of booking through BCTF Advantage Program and a BCAA travel agent:

- You get travel advice and recommendations from seasoned professionals. We do much more than issue tickets—we plan dream vacations.
- You save time and money by having a professional advise and make recommendations based on years of travel experience in the industry.
- Each person and each holiday is unique from all others. We focus on what you individually need to make your vacation getaway a perfect dream.
- We provide all-inclusive services. We help you plan as much or as little as you want. Not only will we help arrange your cruise, tour, or airline ticket, we also arrange transfers, excursions, cars, rail, and more.
- When you're vacationing, the only surprises should be pleasant ones. When you book you will know exactly how much your trip will cost. There are no unexpected charges for transfers, taxes, fees, or anything else.
- We're here for you before, during, and after your trip. Should anything come up before you go and you need to change, we're right here waiting to help. If a hiccup happens while you're away or you need to make a change, our 24-hour worldwide service is just a phone call away.

Melissa Di Poce is the BCAA product manager, Group Affinity Services.

For more information, contact 1-877-778-8717 or go to bctf.ca.

New BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 9935—Universal Design for Learning: Using Technology to Remove Barriers to Curriculum by the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association, 77 p. ©2007. This issue of *The Vital Link* (Summer 2007) includes articles on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which means using the power and flexibility of technology to provide multiple approaches to learning to accommodate individual differences. UDL was originally developed by the Center for Applied Technology in Wakefield, MA. Mirrored on the universal design movement in architecture and product development (headsets, speaker phones, curb cuts) UDL provides a way to create methods, materials, and assessments that meet the needs of diverse learners. This issue includes several feature articles that describe UDL in action. K-12. \$15

2 LA 9936—Supporting Students in the Grey Area by the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association, 72 p. ©2007. This issue of *The Vital Link* (Fall 2007) is a combined effort between the Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association and the LATA. The issue includes articles on the theme that concerns all teachers—"grey-area" kids. These are students who are struggling to achieve learning outcomes for any number of reasons including social, economic, emotional, slower learning pace, cultural, behavioural, etc. The one thing they have in common is that they are not designated as students with exceptionalities. The numerous articles discuss and address the topic in a variety of areas. K-12. \$15

3 LA 2080—Working Lives: A Musical History of Labour and Enterprise in British Columbia by John McLachlan and Valerie Dare, Musical CD and 22 p. ©2007. Working Lives is an online learning resource (www.workinglives.ca) that provides a uniquely creative perspective on the social and economic history of the province. Developed by a teacher-librarian in collaboration with a singer/songwriter, Working Lives supports the Social Studies 10 curriculum by exploring through song the working conditions of pioneers in fishing, mining, logging, and transportation. Some characters, like legendary miner Billy Barker, are well known while the memory of others like Albert J. Savoie, who started the first ferry service to Hornby Island, is kept alive through the songs they inspired. Each of the 10 songs, sung by John McLachlan who also wrote three original songs for the project, can be downloaded and are also included in a CD in the printed package. Archival photographs and pen and ink drawings give the songs a visual context, while background information and learning activities in a PDF format encourage students to actively engage with the website. Extension activities and extensive bibliographies enable further research. Some activities are also suitable for the study of communities in Grades 5 and 6 social studies. \$5

4 LA 8037—Reading Pals: Short and Long Vowels: K-1 by Creative Teaching Press, 49 p. ©2007. This interactive Reading Pals book includes whimsical reading pals characters: Top Hat Cat, Ribbit the Frog, and Ziggy the Pig. The book provides students the opportunity for repeated reading practise, which leads to fluent and confident readers. The book includes 12 full-colour Reading Pals—four of each character—with punch-out text frames designed to isolate letters, sounds, and words; a black and white reproducible of each design with suggested activities, and multilevel activity pages. \$6.95

5 LA 8063—Phonemic Awareness Instant Learning Centers: K-2, 34 p. ©2004. This resource contains four ready-to-go centers to keep students on task and reinforce key concepts. The book includes task cards and 66 picture and letter cards. Each center includes a task card, a center management card and all the picture and letter cards students need to complete the center activity. No reproducing, coloring or cutting is required for the cards and all cards are color coded to assist in managing the materials for each center. Note this book is produced in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. \$10.95

6 LA 8439—Math Facts to 20: K-1 by Creative Teaching Press, 34 p. ©2007. This build-a-skill instant book is designed to teach basic skills as students read and reread their fun and easy-to-make instant books. Instant books are good for extension activities, learning centers or homework assignments. This resource features reproducible instant books focusing on a variety of addition and subtraction facts to help children increase their immediate recognition of basic facts, and develop their mathematical thinking. \$4.95

7 LA 9185—Reading: Grade 7 by Creative Teaching Press, 114 p. ©2005. This book includes a wide range of activities that focus on essential grade-level skills and strategies. These activities are shaped and influenced by current research findings in literacy instruction grounded in the Reading First Initiative. Suitable for ESL students also. Each activity book is divided into five units with reading selections in each unit that all center on a common theme. Each unit features these skill strands: phonemic awareness, phonics/structural word analysis, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. \$8.95

8 LA 9429—Math: Grade 7 by Creative Teaching Press, 114 p. ©2005. This resource book includes 100 activity pages to make math fun while offering students plenty of essential computation practice infused with a strong problem-solving strand. Instruction and practice for key skills in numeration and number theory, operations, geometry, and measurement, patterns, functions, and algebra and data analysis, probability, and problem solving. Practice tests and answer key included. \$8.95

9 LA 9518—Circulatory System Sharp Chart by Creative Teaching Press, 43 cm x 53 cm, ©2003. This coloured chart includes detailed illustrations, labeled body parts, concise descriptions of body functions, and, for further exploration, four blackline reproducibles with task cards printed on the back. Grades 3-8. \$8.95

10 LA 9519—Digestive System Sharp Chart by Creative Teaching Press, 43 cm x 53 cm, ©2003. This coloured chart includes detailed illustrations, labeled body parts, concise descriptions of body functions, and, for further exploration, four blackline reproducibles with task cards printed on the back. Grades 3-8. \$8.95

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 Avenue, 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.

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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.

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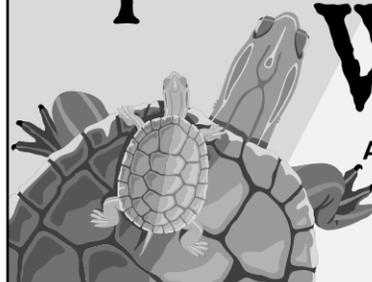
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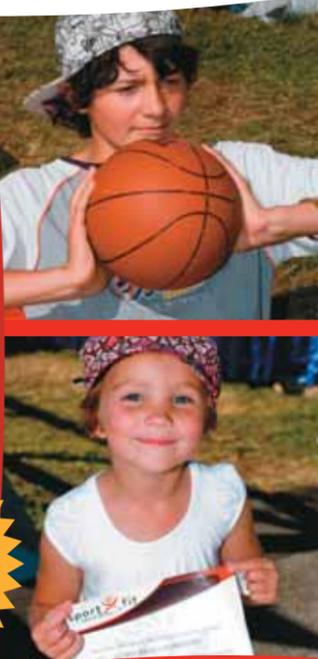


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PD Calendar

MARCH 2008

1 Burnaby. Adult Educators' annual conference "Critical, Emergent Issues in Adult Education" will be held at the Schou Centre, 4041 Canada Way. For details and more information phone Dell Sutton 604-541-0569 or e-mail peacepark@look.ca.

2-4 Five sites. Interactive Innovations. Five sites connected via web-casting, the conference welcomes all educators, parents, and students. Themes include literacy, secondary learners, the first 10 years, equitable futures and leadership. Check out web site: www.interactiveinnovations.ca. Registration e-mail interactiveinnovations@shaw.ca.

7 Prince George. Educational Spring Fling: 4th North Central zone conference. Featuring Barry MacDonald (MentoringBoys.com) as keynote in addition to PITA and BCPTA mini-conferences. Excellent variety of workshops for all grades and subject areas. Prince George Senior Secondary School. Brochure and presenter information at: www.bctf.ca/NorthCentralZone. Contact Deb Vandal at dvandal@sd57.bc.ca or 250-562-7214.

13-14 Vancouver. Special Education Association of BC presents its 33rd annual Crosscurrents Conference at the Westin Bayshore. Keynote speaker Deborah Estes, "Brain Power." Workshops and exhibitors for regular and special educators. Contact person: bjfoulds@telus.net.

15 Vancouver. A conference for the British Columbia Prader-Willi Syndrome Association (BCPWSA) will be held at the Century Plaza Hotel from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. This would be a great conference for teachers or CEA's that work with students with PWS. For more information visit the BCPWSA website at www.bcpwsa.com.

APRIL 2008

4 Victoria. St. Michaels University School presents a one-day workshop featuring Dr. Mel Levine. The award-winning author, teacher and researcher will speak about his work and the philosophy he has built through "All Kinds of Minds" in a session titled "Meeting the Needs of All Learners." For more information, visit www.smus.ca/campus/extension/schools_attuned.html, send an e-mail to edextension@smus.bc.ca or call 250-370-6120.

4-6 North Vancouver. Join LTTA Lead Artists for three days of workshops to discover how to use arts integration to deliver the core curriculum. Find out how you and your students can dance your way through science, learn math through drama, and expand literacy skills through visual arts. Three days of workshops amount to one fantastic weekend of learning and fun! View the brochure at www.ltta.ca. Register at www.regonline.com/lttabc2008.

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19-20 Kelowna. UBCO offers a French and Spanish Immersion Weekend. \$350 includes tuition and three meals. Accommodation at the Manteo Resort is extra. Teachers can use their Tuition Fee Certificate toward the tuition fee. Call 250-807-8177 or visit www.ubc.ca/okanagan/continuingstudies

25-26 Kelowna. Catalyst 2008, "Scientific and Environmental Literacy." Keynote speakers: Simon Jackson (Spirit Bear Youth Coalition Founder) and Bob McDonald (Quirks and Quarks). The Grand Lakefront Resort and Conference Centre, Kelowna. Co-chairs: kmorley@bcsccta.ca, grainey@bcsccta.ca, Check web site www.bcsccta.ca, for presenter, delegate, and exhibitor registrations.

30-May 1 North Vancouver. Fast Forward Educational Media Showcase, Capilano College Sportsplex. Who should attend? Buyers and evaluators from schools, colleges, universities, libraries and resource centres; trainers from healthcare agencies and human relations departments; and media centre staff. www.langara.bc.ca/jfwd Contact Susan Weber 604-323-5533 sweber@langara.bc.ca

MAY 2008

2 Williams Lake. Educators Against Racism PSA Conference, "Imagine a World Without Racism," Williams Lake Secondary School. Contact Roz Johns at rjohns@richmond.sd38.bc.ca.

3 Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices 2008. Teachers from different educational contexts convene at UBC to share their investigations, understandings and questions. Call for Proposals—Share Your Classroom Inquiries. Submission Deadline: March 7. Registration fee: \$25. Lunch and refreshments included. Scarfe Education Building, 2125 Main Mall, UBC. Information: www.eplt.educ.ubc.ca/workshops/ or contact Judy Paley, 604-822-2733, judy.paley@ubc.ca.

8-9 Castlegar. Eighth Annual Early Success Symposium. Selkirk College. Target audience is those who work with early learners, birth to age 8. Keynote speaker is Colleen Politano. Sponsored by School Districts 5, 6, 8, 10, 20, and 51. For more information contact Pat Dooley, pdooley@sd8.bc.ca

9 Whistler. 3rd Annual "Practical Strategies in Reading and Math to Support Struggling Students—In the Classroom and the Learning Centre." Featuring Dawn Reithaug, Mary Mood, and Beth Sparks. For classroom teachers, learning assistance teachers, education assistants and principals. Fee \$125 Early Bird registration \$95 Group rate \$85. Hotel from \$99. For details and online registration visit www.pita.ca. For information contact Brenda Head at whistler-registrar@pita.ca

9-11 Campbell River. UBC offers a French and Spanish Immersion Weekend. Teachers can use their Tuition Fee Certificate toward the \$250 tuition fee. April Point Resort offers a great two nights/four meals package to all participants. Call toll-free 1-866-528-7485 or visit www.frenchcentre.ubc.ca/weekend.html

16 Brussels. International conference on ACP-EU-arbitration issues (Cotonou Agreement, EPAs, WTO and the legal realities in the ACP-countries) will be organized in Brussels by the Association for International Arbitration (AIA.) The conference is designed to upgrade the knowledge and skills in this field and to improve the awareness and knowledge of lawyers, arbitrators, judges and all other experts of the ACP States and EU Member States. The experts presentations, based on analytical insights and a research of new tendencies will provide in-depth information. For more information visit www.arbitration-adr.org

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Britannia rules!

Vancouver's Britannia Secondary School celebrates its 100th

By Diane Minichiello

In the heart of Vancouver's Eastside, at Britannia Secondary School on May 16 and 17, 2008, thousands of alumni, former teachers and staff, as well as today's students, teachers, and friends will converge to chant "Britannia Rules" and "Go, Bruins!" Britannia's halls will bustle as never before. Graduates from the 1930s to the 2000s share a common purpose as they mix and mingle, reminiscing and reconnecting with old classmates and friends.

What a century it's been. The 100-day countdown to the Gala weekend began with a ribbon-cutting event on February 6, 2007, attended by several key Britannia supporters. Former Bruins and distinguished educators Norm Lee, Neva Morley, and Lou Rossi led the charge. Excited students, supportive staff, energetic alums, and other well-wishers joined the throng, each receiving and wearing proudly,

the green and red wristband, to mark the May 16 and 17 Gala dates, and to celebrate a Britannia Secondary School milestone.

During its first hundred years, Vancouver's oldest secondary school has experienced massive changes. Today's site, combined with the Britannia Community Services Centre, has facilities and programs for all ages from daycare to seniors, and speaks to its unique and individual character. John Minichiello, former coach, teacher, and principal steered the creation and construction of this facility while advising the Association to

Taking a walk through the hallways, one gains a sense of Britannia's past through a peek at the accomplishments of some of the graduates.

Tackle Adverse Conditions (ATTAC). ATTAC is a community group of politically savvy Britannia grads, teachers, and citizens, who achieved their goal of stopping a major downtown highway through

the Venables Street corridor. One of these students, Enzo Guerriero, is now executive director of the Britannia Centre.

Taking a walk through the hallways, one gains a sense of Britannia's past through a peek at the accomplishments of some of the graduates. Britannia athletes boast 40 provincial championships with three provincial athletes of the year.

Individual student accomplishment and successes attest to the quality education, personal commitment, and influence of past Britannia educators. In *Remembering Britannia—100 Years of Growth and Achievement*, a memoir book co-edited by graduates Clive Cocking and Ray Culos, and designed by graduate Amy Pon, many former educators are recognized. Today, Britannia teachers continue to exemplify the standard of excellence of their predecessors.

Remembering Britannia highlights some of its graduate's accomplishments as well. Britannia boasts an impressive list of graduates

including educators, judges, physicists, athletes, entrepreneurs, politicians, architects, fashion and graphic designers, authors, and entertainers.

Britannia has always been more than a school where teachers and students meet; it has been, and will continue to be, a facility greater than the sum of its parts—a fusion of all that is best.

The Barrett brothers, Dave who was BC's New Democratic Party (NDP) premier in 1972, his brother, Isadore ("Izzy"), former director of the US Southwest Fisheries Science Center, and Bill Esson, once chief justice of the BC Supreme Court, are also featured. Another brother duo, the Honorable Frank Iacobucci and his brother, John, graced Britannia's halls in the 1950s.

The centennial celebration begins on Friday evening of May 16, 2008, at Britannia and continues through

Saturday's Open House. Visit old school haunts. See how Britannia has changed. Participate fully with your Passport as a future keepsake. Bill Reiter and Bob Fitzpatrick, the reunion's chair, emcee the reunion finale.

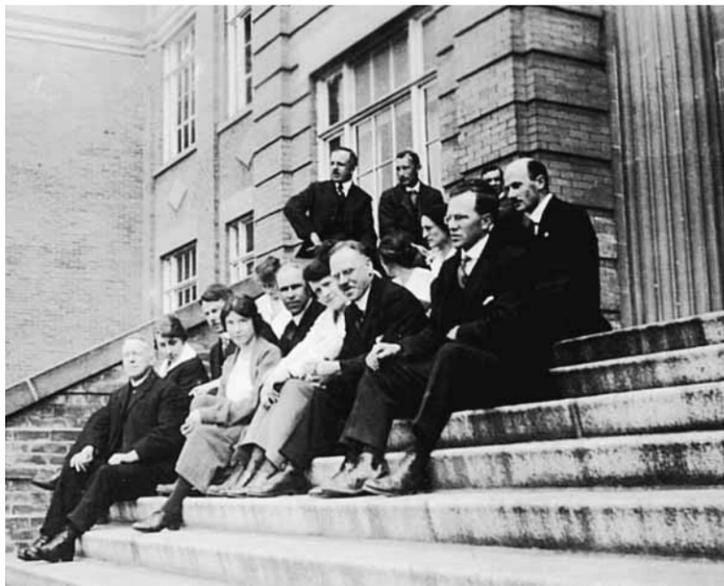
The Gala event, at the Agrodome Saturday evening, stars Dal Richards and his Orchestra, Federico "Ricky" Fuoco with "Fire," the Soul-Mates, David Steele and the Just Funk Band, and Britannia's very own 2008 Chorus and Band.

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Register today! Apply as an early bird by February 29 to qualify for the draw for the early-bird prize of a trip for two to Las Vegas. The website is:

<http://britanniacentennial.com>

Diane Minichiello is the PR chairperson, Britannia Centennial Reunion Society.



Photos from *Remembering Britannia—100 Years of Growth and Achievement*, a memoir book. Clockwise from left: Girls basketball team in China; staff on the steps of the school (1919); Britannia Secondary School (1940); Pirates of Penzance; and the Waltz Club (1962).