

## INSIDE

New positions,  
new challenges 5

TOC associates  
mobilize 5

Social revolution? 6

Age 5, not  
Grade 5! 7

International  
programs 8

### Opinion

- The cost of retreat
- Accountability
- Lively learning 10

Accord '99 11

Pension changes 12

Opening hearts  
and gardens 13

From Coquitlam  
to the Yukon 16

### CONTENTS

President's message	2
Readers write	2
Looking back	2
Top 10 lesson aids	3
Yours for the asking	3
Retirement seminars	11
Teachers remembered	11
Classified	15
PD Calendar	15

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# Teacher

## World-wide struggle for teachers



Nairobi: Terror fills the eyes of a Kenyan teacher as plain-clothes police haul her off. She was one of scores of striking teachers arrested on October 5, World Teachers' Day.

by Nancy Knickerbocker

October 5, 1998, marked the fifth annual World Teachers' Day, proclaimed by the United Nations to celebrate the millions of teachers worldwide who give of their energy, creativity, and knowledge to nurture the emerging intellect of the next generation.

*Although rich in spirit, most teachers are poor in material terms, and many are oppressed in their political lives.*

"Teachers will shape the 21st Century in the most profound ways," said BCTF President Kit Krieger. "It is we who will educate the leaders of tomorrow, we who will train their questing minds and inspire their hopeful hearts. It is a responsibility we take seriously, one we see as a sacred trust."

Although rich in spirit, most teachers are poor in material terms, and many are oppressed in their political lives. About 70% of the world's 50 million teachers live at or below the poverty line and,

unfortunately, their economic plight is deteriorating. The International Labour Organization has said that, for some, the situation has reached "such a low level that it is intolerable." In addition, governments frequently deny teachers their basic human rights: not only a living wage, but also their rights to speak, to organize, to exercise intellectual freedom and professional autonomy.

The day after World Teachers' Day, for example, 63 teachers were arrested in Kenya. Others were beaten and tear-gassed on the first day of a strike to compel the government to honour its promise of a wage increase. Kenyan teachers earn between \$40 and \$200 per month. In Nairobi, armed police occupied the headquarters of the Kenya National Union of Teachers to prevent teachers from gathering there. Fearing arrest, senior KNUST officials went into hiding.

In Russia, all too often teachers are simply not paid at all. Last year more than 400,000 joined a general strike to protest non-payment of wages. In one region, the government tried to pay teachers with toilet paper, funeral services, and even vodka!

In Afghanistan, the ruling

Taliban authorities have banned female students and teachers from all schools and universities. In defiance of the

*In Afghanistan, the ruling Taliban authorities have banned female students and teachers from all schools and universities.*

ban, some teachers set up clandestine classes where girls could still learn basic literacy and numeracy skills; however, following house-to-house raids in the capital city of Kabul, even those home-based schools were closed.

The literacy rate for Afghan women is the lowest in the world.

In Mozambique, children and teachers go to school knowing that unexploded land mines lie undetected nearby. Although the United Nations operates a program to remove mines from schoolgrounds and playgrounds, these deadly leftovers of the civil war will remain for decades. For more information about the effort to clear mines from school grounds, see: <http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/banmines/schools.htm>

In some countries, teachers who fight to improve working and learning conditions pay the ultimate price. Assefa Maru was one. A leader of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, he was assassinated outside his home in 1997. Dr. Taye Woldeamayrat, president of the ETA, has been in prison since May 1996. Although he has been adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, he has little hope of a fair trial or early release.

Such gross violations of the human and economic rights of teachers are widespread, but thankfully not part of the Canadian scene. Here we have the freedom to work without fear and to participate in dynamic teachers' unions. Still, we do not take for granted the rights we have won. As our Ontario colleagues recently taught us, we must continue to defend public education at home as well as abroad.

To that end, B.C. teachers are building intercultural partnerships in many countries. See page 8-9 to learn more about the Federation's international solidarity work.

See STRUGGLE page 4

President's  
message

Kit Krieger

The BCTF has proposed that the Ministry of Education develop a strategic plan for the future of public education, and that teachers, among others, play a role in developing priorities. Here are some of the potential elements:

**Assessment, evaluation, and reporting.** There are numerous and conflicting views about how best to assess, evaluate, and report on the performance of the system and individual learners. Where are we going on Provincial Learning Assessment Program (PLAP), reporting to parents, and the use of standardized testing?

**The role of technology.** Everyone agrees technology is here to stay, but we have no strategic and informed approach. We need to go beyond accepting technology on the basis of "faith" and assess its impact on teaching and learning. Important decisions about distance education and home schooling are being made without considering the profound implications for public schooling.

**Mainstreaming and integration.** After a decade of integration, it's time to review policies and practices. BCTF polling reveals declining support for integration among parents and teachers. Let's address this issue in the dual contexts of social policy and educational effectiveness.

**Education funding.** More than 10 years ago, the Sullivan Commission called for longer-term commitments to education funding. Certainty and stability in funding will provide motivation to think strategically.

**Curriculum.** Where will B.C. situate itself in the drive to national and regional curricula? We are proceeding on an ad hoc basis and without a broad discussion about the relationship between curriculum, resources, and assessment practices.

I have identified five issues that could form the core of a long-term strategy for education. I look forward to teachers contributing their expertise in discussions with the ministry and other partners.

*Kit Krieger*

World  
Teachers' Day

On behalf of the B.C. School Trustees Association, on this World Teachers' Day, October 5, I would like to express school trustees' appreciation and respect for the crucial role played by teachers in our province, in our country, and throughout the world.

In Canada, children learn the value of respect for self and others, democracy, and tolerance, through universally accessible, high-quality public education systems. In preparing children for their future, teachers are helping to build the future for all of us. Public education is the foundation for a healthy, productive society that values freedom and diversity. It is teachers' dedication and commitment to our youth that contributes to the exceptional quality of life in Canada—placing our country at the top of the United Nations human development index for the past five years.

Teachers throughout the world are a tremendous force for stability and knowledge in the lives of children—often school is the only place where hope resides.

The almost constant criticism and doubt expressed in the media about our schools can be frustrating and, at times, discouraging. It is important for all of us who believe in the value and excellence of public education to speak up about the vital contribution teachers make in the lives of children and how teachers everywhere are making the world a better place today—and for the future.

**Carole James**  
President, BCSTA

## \$45 Unjust

I am a retired TOC in SD 59 where I taught for 17 years as a full-time teacher. I took early retirement at age 56 (due to health reasons), which qualified me for a small pension. I find it highly unjust for those retired TOCs to have to pay \$45 for the privilege to work in order to supplement their pension.

In the year 2000, full-time teachers can expect a pay rise of 2% while the dollar plummets and prices skyrocket. Will the VanderZalm-imposed College of Teachers continue to practise extortion on the poorer TOCs who have already donated some of their best years to the youth of this country, or will it show some mercy and allow those teachers free membership during their working retirement by not imposing a College of Teachers' tax?

**Audrey Lucyszyn**  
Dawson Creek

## Looking back

## 70 years...

## Remembrance Day

"In the first week of 1928, King Edward High School, and, indeed, the entire educational system of British Columbia, was shocked and grieved by the sudden death of Mr. (George A.) Fergusson (late principal of King Edward High School), who had for years thrown himself with such energy, keen insight, and broadmindedness into the work of his profession, and also into every other scheme for the betterment of the young people with whom he was associated.

"Hence, this November, there was an added poignancy in the service of dignified and impressive ceremony inaugurated four years ago at the school, as the details were carried out not only with honour to those students who served and sleep in Flanders, but with constant thoughts of that veteran of the Great War, who had been for nine years their director and their friend."

—The B.C. Teacher, December 1928

## 50 years...

"Historical failures in the application of democratic principles must be as earnestly studied as the most brilliant of democracy's triumphs. But underlying all must be the clear conviction that the principles themselves have timeless validity. Dependence by the country upon the schools for this vital service implies no infringement of academic freedom."

—General Dwight D. Eisenhower,  
president of Columbia University  
The B.C. Teacher, January 1949

## 30 years...

"The basic issue of the 20th century...is whether we can harness the knowledge and the insights of the social sciences in time to stave off the Armageddon of nuclear war! to stave off the authoritarian, mindless, technological tyrannies made so real for us by Orwell's 1984, or Huxley's Brave New World, and all too many related crises—the growing threat of the population explosion, world food supplies, pollution, erosion, and the still unrestricted plundering of our planet."

The B.C. Teacher, December 1968

## 10 years...

"They attacked Ontario Conservative Leader Larry Grossman as being 'pink'; are raising \$500,000 in a campaign against the NDP; said that wage discrimination based on sex 'does not exist—period'; have spent at least \$400,000 attacking unions' right to take social and political positions; promote white-only immigration policy; demand a 40% cut in unemployment insurance expenditures; and equate agricultural marketing boards with 'criminal conspiracy.'"

"Who are they?"

"They are the National Citizens Coalition which claim to have 35,000 members across Canada. They are a powerful lobby group, with top corporate connections. Their motto is 'more freedom through less government.'"

Teacher, February/March 1989

AGM '99  
Deadlines

Please note the following deadlines for AGM purposes. For elaboration, refer to By-law 5.4 (page 18) and procedure statements 2.B.02 and 2.B.06 (page 30, Members' Guide to the BCTF).

## December 15

deadline for submission of local resolutions

## January 31

deadline for Executive Committee nominations

## February 1

deadline for candidate statement copy for Teacher newsmagazine

## February 26

deadline for withdrawal of candidate names from ballot and agenda

Beginning  
teachers'  
conference

Wondering how you're going to survive your first year in the classroom?

Whether you are a rookie or you have a couple of years' experience under your belt, mark your calendar for the fourth annual BCTF Beginning Teachers' Conference.

It's the only provincial conference specifically for beginning teachers, and it offers many opportunities to learn and laugh with colleagues and friends.

Workshop topics include safe schools, classroom management, grade/subject specific themes, and practical

tips for surviving your first year. You may attend up to five workshops, facilitated by both experienced and beginning teachers.

You may also meet with the Executive of the BCTF and with presidents of provincial specialist associations. If you're not a member of a PSA yet, you may discover a terrific community of like-minded teachers in your subject or grade. You may also review some of the resources available through the Federation and from commercial exhibitors.

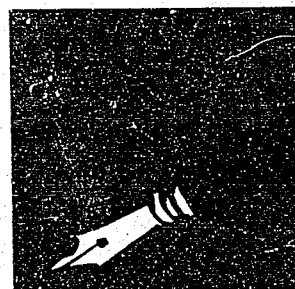
The Beginning Teachers' Conference will take place February 12 and 13, 1999, at the Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre, in Richmond. Look for the preview flyer, sent to all schools, for more information. As well, information will be posted on the BCTF Web site on the Beginning Teachers' homepage.

The registration fee is only \$50 to encourage as many new teachers to attend as possible. The value for your PD dollar is excellent! See your school PD rep for funding available to you.

Any more questions? Call Charan Gill (604) 871-1839 or Barb Preus at (604) 871-1853; toll free 1-800-663-9163, local 1853.

## We're back

The BCTF is back in operation. The Federation was closed due to a strike by the Union of Teachers' Federation Employees, representing the support staff. The strike began Friday, September 18, 1998 and ended on Friday, October 2, 1998. During the strike the UTFE merged with the IWA Canada (Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers, Local 1-3567). The issues that led to the strike were resolved through mediation.



## Write to us

Letters to "Readers Write" may be edited for reasons of legality, taste, brevity, and clarity. To be considered for publication, they must be not more than 150 to 200 words, signed, and include a home phone number for verification.

## Teacher

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All advertisements will be reviewed and approved by the BCTF. They must reflect BCTF policy and be politically, environmentally, and professionally appropriate.



## Get on Board: The Underground Railroad to Canada.

Tom Morton. 80 p. ©1998. Written to help students understand one of the most shameful and significant episodes in history—the slave trade and chattel slavery during the 19th Century, when approximately 50,000 African American slaves escaped to freedom in Canada on the underground railroad. At the same time, the unit teaches about the humane acts of people who tried to stop slavery, a story of hope, co-operation, bravery, and intelligence. Co-operative group activities are outlined for students to interpret primary source documents. The unit also includes lessons that encourage historical thinking and lessons that help students to extend their thinking to contemporary cases of exploitation and how they can make a difference as agents of change. Grade 10. LA 2069—\$8

**2 Canada Map—Poster Size.** Sonja E. Schild. ©1997. This double-sided, coloured, laminated map is 56 cm x 76 cm. The front side is a political map of Canada that shows Canada's provinces and territories (including Nunavut), its capitals, the main cities, the major rivers, lakes, islands, mountains, gulfs, and bays, and the adjoining American states; Canada's flags and coats of arms, the flower and bird symbols of the provinces and territories, and Canadian wildlife; the ships of the most important explorers of Canada and also the kayak, Haida and Beothuk canoes of the First Nations. The reverse side has three sections: an illustrated timeline of the most important events in Canadian history, with emphasis on Canada's development into an independent nation; geographic facts in the form of Canadian and world records; and Canada's Prime Ministers and Governors General since Confederation and information

about the way Canada governs itself. Grades 3-7. LA 9297A—\$18.50

**3 Canada Map—Binder Size.** Sonja E. Schild. ©1997. This coloured, laminated map is a smaller version of the poster-sized Canada Map, LA 9297A. The 22 cm x 28 cm map fits into school binders. Grades 3-7. LA 9297B—\$3

**4 Canada Workbook.** Sonja E. Schild. 46 p. ©1997. This geography workbook is based on the Canada Map, LA 9297A. It includes 33 worksheets, 19 maps, one research assignment, two student projects, a project evaluation form, three tests, and an answer key. The workbook allows students to work on their own, as all the information requested can be found on the Canada Map. The first half of the workbook teaches the basics of Canada's geography, focusing on the borders of Canada, the provinces and territories, the capitals, the main cities, mountains, islands, rivers, and lakes by using illustrations, charts, and maps. The second half of the workbook reinforces and tests students on the subject matter with crossword puzzles, riddles, and word puzzles to make it interesting and fun. Each worksheet has a section called Brainwork, which requires research by the student and encourages creative thinking and problem solving. The workbook pages can be used consecutively or randomly. It can be used by social studies and ESL teachers, in inclusive classrooms, and by parents. The workbook is reproducible for classroom use. Grades 3-7. LA 9297C—\$19.95

## Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

**5 Science K-7 & Multi-graded Classrooms:** A supplement to the Science K-7 curriculum, Year A. Susan Martin, K-7 Science Co-ordinator, BCTF. 90p. ©1997. This unit was written in response to a need voiced by classroom teachers during implementation workshops led by K-7 Science associates from the BCTF during the 1995-96 school year. The writing team developed a two-year alternating program with topics unique to the combined classrooms as designated. These topics were developed from commonalities within the prescribed learning outcomes and context statements in the regular K-7 science curriculum. It is intended that Year A is keyed as an even calendar year, starting in the 1996-97 school year. Year B is an odd calendar year, starting in the 1997-98 school year. This resource has been developed for K/1, 1/2, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5, 5/6, and 6/7 classrooms. A suggested topic chart for Year A includes the topics for life, physical, earth, and space. K-7. LA 8551—\$8.75

**6 Folktales—A Content-related Unit Plan.** Bonny Williams and Anna Daniels. 107p. 1993. This ESL unit provides full explanations as to the approach, content, sequence of tasks and lessons, types of activities and groupings, materials, strategies for providing feedback, roles of the students and teachers, and formative and summative evaluation of student progress specific to, but not exclusive of, the folktales topic. Unit goals and knowledge frameworks are included. The eight complete lesson plans on folktales such as The Three Bears, Little Red Riding Hood,

The Three Little Pigs, and Jack and the Beanstalk address every aspect of a lesson such as student objectives, resources, progression (with timelines), follow-up, and evaluation. K-3. ESL 206—\$8.80

**7 Poverty: A Student Learning Resource.** Sandy Cameron and Patrick Clarke. 40p. ©1997. The purpose of this unit is to inform students in B.C. schools on the issue of poverty. The information presented is intended to allow students some insights into the realities of living in poverty and also to help them understand and reflect on the causes and consequences of poverty. The ultimate objective is to have students develop sufficient awareness of local and global poverty as a significant social issue that they will resolve to help find ways to end it. The material is designed and written as a student resource. The activities included offer a variety of learning approaches, including co-operative group work and individual writing. Secondary. LA 2030—\$5

**8 Humanities 8 Resources.** Eric Bonfield. 217p. ©1997. This workbook provides a literature-based interdisciplinary approach through themes that are integrated with the skills and cognitive aims of the IRPs for Grade 8 English and Social Studies. The book features 24 primary source core readings, which have been edited for classroom audiences. The selections, which average two to three pages in length, represent the theme areas of the IRPs through the disciplines of literature, history, geography, philosophy, and art. The book includes 12 language tools, which enables students to

sympathetically read the sources, yet offer a critical point of view regarding the contribution these sources may have had for their original audiences, and empowers students to evaluate the potential relevance these sources hold for their personal lives and culture. Grade 8. LA 2067—\$25

**9 Humanities 9 Resources.** Eric Bonfield. 174p. ©1998. This workbook provides a literature-based interdisciplinary approach through themes that are integrated with the skills and cognitive aims of the IRPs for Grade 9 English and Social Studies. See LA 2067 for a full description. LA 2068—\$25

**10 The Art Resource Book.** Produced by the Vancouver School Board. 105p. ©1996. This resource book is a full colour, hardcover book filled with outstanding visual images from Vancouver art classrooms, which reflect the visual art curriculum from K to 12. The contributing teachers carefully followed the learning outcomes in the new visual art IRP and the book includes clearly marked icons that immediately identify the curricular areas. The editors have included essential text to help guide teachers who may wish to try the various projects as well as suggesting lesson extensions and references. K-12. LA 9653—\$25

For a complete listing of over 900 BCTF Lesson Aids, consult the catalogue in your school library or the Lesson Aids online catalogue, [www.bctf.bc.ca/LessonAids](http://www.bctf.bc.ca/LessonAids)

To order any of the above lesson aids, enclose a cheque payable to the BCTF or authorized purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2. GST and postage/handling are included in the prices. Orders are sent by return mail.

## Yours for the asking

### Plantwatch

Plantwatch has school and community volunteers report the flowering of eight species of plants to scientists who are studying climate change. Results are posted weekly to the Internet. The free program materials illustrate flowering stages and describe the program. Schools are encouraged to establish "Plantwatch Gardens" with the key indicator species. Participation is free. Contact Plantwatch, Devonian Botanic Garden, U. of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2E1, (403) 987-5455/987-3054, <http://www.biology.ualberta.ca/devonian.hp/pwat-h.htm>

In addition to regular program materials, the Devonian Botanic Garden publishes *Plantwatch Teacher Manual* (\$23.90), which has descriptions, photos, and a North American distribution map for the eight plants monitored, as well as details on habitat, life cycles, ecology, and human uses. Monitoring instructions, sample lessons, and multidisciplinary curriculum connections for Grades 4-9 are also included. The How To Plantwatch manual for non-school participants costs \$12.20 (incl. tax, s&h).

### BIT Challenge

The Bird Identification & Tally (BIT) Challenge invites elementary students to spot, identify, and tally the birds they see on the last weekend in May (an adult must verify the sightings). Participating schools receive a certificate and a comparison of their results with those of other schools across Canada. Last year, more than 12,000 students participated. An extended activity guide costs \$5, but basic instruction sheets and student copy masters are provided free. Contact, SEEDS Foundation, S-202, 25 St. Michael Street, St. Albert, AB T8N 1C7, 1-800-661-8751, [www.greenschools.ca/seeds](http://www.greenschools.ca/seeds)

### Lady Beetle Survey

The Canadian Nature Federation's Lady Beetle Survey is designed to determine the abundance of native populations relative to those of invasive species. Participating classes receive "Spot the Ladybug" brochures and a teacher's package at no cost, but pay \$5 for the newsletter that contains the annual survey results. Contact, CNF, 1 Nicholas Street, S-606, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7, (613) 562-3447, <http://www.web.net/cnf>

### Beach critters video

"Exploring Intertidal Life Through Quadrat Studies," the 18-minute beach critters video shows how students can make simple equipment to undertake intertidal studies and what they can learn in the process. The video is available for \$30 plus \$3 s&h from Save the Georgia Strait Alliance, 201-195 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC V9R 5G5, (250) 753-3459.

### On Your Own for children at home alone

*On Your Own* is a workbook prepared by the Saskatchewan Safety Council and distributed by the Canadian Institute of Child Health for parents and children to read together and discuss how to stay safe when the child is at home alone.

*On Your Own* describes, for example, the differences between emergencies (fire, injuries) and problems (being locked out of the house). Boredom, loneliness, dangerous items around the house, and a home-safety game are just some of the features of this fully illustrated publication.

The workbook is available for \$7.49. To order, contact

Canadian Institute of Child Health, 885 Meadowlands Dr., Ste. 512, Ottawa, ON K2C 3N2, (613) 224-4144, F: (613) 224-4145, e-mail: [cich@igs.net](mailto:cich@igs.net), Web: <http://www.cich.ca>

### Cable in the classroom (CITC)

Cable in the Classroom marks its third anniversary with a series of public-service announcements due to begin airing the week of Sept. 15. *Tears down walls, Opens minds* is the tag line for the spots that feature a classroom of students participating in a shuttle launch, encountering a bear up close and personal, or experiencing the wonders of nature unfolding.

CITC programs are copyright-cleared, commercial-free, and available in French or English to teachers in publicly funded elementary and secondary schools across Canada. Teachers can record programs at school or in their homes, preview the material, and use it to support parts of the curriculum.

More than 70 cable companies have cabled some 8,200 schools, which receive free service.

For more information call, 1-800-244-9049.

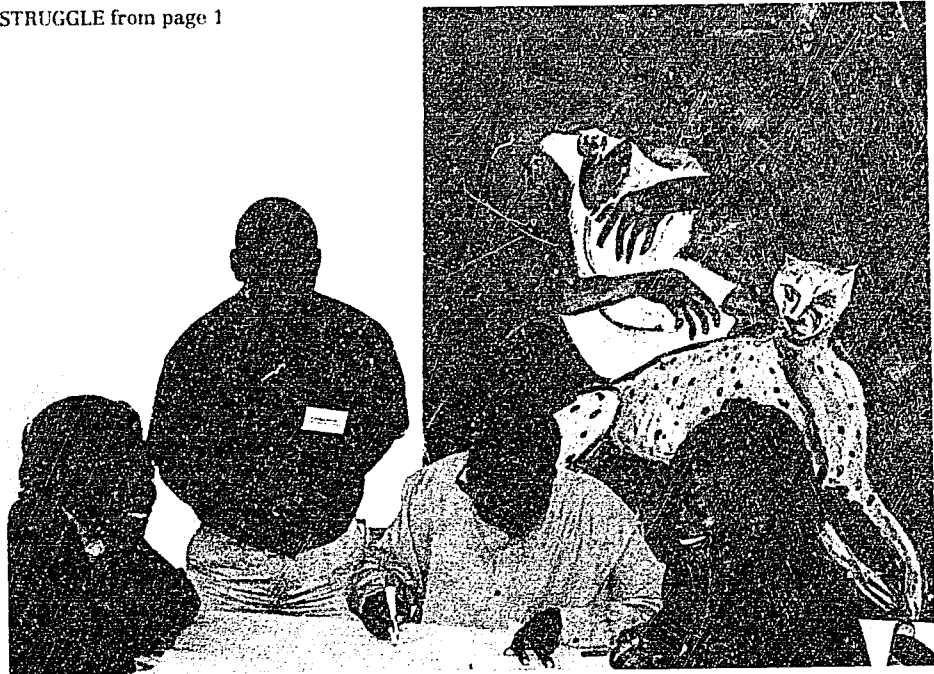
### Integration: Meeting the Challenge

This educational video and manual is for students with severe/profound multiple physical and cognitive disabilities. The video demonstrates four students at the primary, intermediate, and secondary school levels, working on their own skills within regular classroom and school settings. The video provides examples of students interacting with their peers as well as personal experiences from peers, teachers, therapists, principals, and families about some of the challenges and celebrations of inclusion.

In addition, the Provincial Integration Support Program has developed a manual with strategies and information to support the activities and ideas referred to in the video. The package is unique in that it provides an educational focus for a range of students with severe/profound multiple physical and cognitive disabilities.

To order, contact Provincial Integration Support Program, 1525 Rowan Street, Victoria, BC V8P 1X4, (250) 595-2088, F: (250) 592-5976, e-mail: [twendorf@sd61.bc.ca](mailto:twendorf@sd61.bc.ca)

STRUGGLE from page 1



*Hamutenya helping other staff rep trainers prepare workshop materials.*

### David Hipulua Hamutenya, Namibia

David Hamutenya lives with his wife and three daughters in Nkurenkuru, a small town near Namibia's northern border with Angola. His house has no running water or electricity. David prepares his lessons each evening by lamplight.

Every morning he walks to Nkurenkuru Junior Secondary School, where he teaches Grade 9 and 10 science. The school's enrolment is nearly 500, and each class typically has between 30 and 50 students.

"David is a gifted teacher. The kids just love him," says Don Reader, a retired

Vancouver teacher who helped set up the staff-representative training program in Namibia.

Hamutenya's classroom has little lab equipment, and he must find the necessities wherever possible. After he visited Vancouver earlier this year, he was delighted to return to school with about 30 plastic measuring cups his host happened to have accumulated from boxes of laundry detergent.

Despite this critical lack of resources, Hamutenya and his colleagues "have a powerful commitment to making education accessible to all their citizens in a fair and equitable way," Reader says.

As a student, Hamutenya

struggled against apartheid and was arrested for his activism. That experience strengthened his resolve to build a more just society, and to that end, he serves on the regional executive of NANTU, the Namibian teachers' union. When attending regional meetings, he hitchhikes the 150 kilometres to the city, and often sleeps on the floor of the union office for lack of better accommodations.

"He's a proud teacher, trying to give the best to his students," says Reader. "The commitment is the same, but the struggle is greater. It's been very profound for me to have a chance to work with people like David Hamutenya."



### Luz Alba de Perez, Cuba

The daughter of a sugar mill worker, Luz Alba de Perez grew up poor but proud, and determined to improve her world. Her father and brothers joined Fidel Castro's forces fighting to overthrow the corrupt dictatorship of Fulgencia Batista. When Batista's men burned her house to the ground, her life changed forever. From the age of 11, she ran messages for the guerillas hiding out in the mountains.

She was 15 when the revolutionary movement triumphed, and she has spent all her working life helping to build the dream of a Cuba in which children of campesinos can have the same opportunities as all others. Her two brothers served on the early literacy brigades. De Perez has been a teacher for 30 years. Today she teaches English to adult learners in Havana.

Cuba has a school system

rich in human resources but lacking most of the basic supplies. The BCTF is now helping supply stationery and other resources, publish the minutes of the annual meeting of the teachers' union, and to develop a teacher tourism program (see page 9, bottom right) that would offer school visits for teachers wanting more than R&R on the beaches of Varadero.

Last December, de Perez was honoured for the fourth time in her teaching career with a National Teacher Award recognizing her dedication to her students and to the teachers' union.

"Her life is still full of adversity and struggle to meet daily needs, but she is resourceful, optimistic, confident, and proud of Cuba's successes in health care and education," says BCTF President Kit Krieger, who met de Perez when she served as his translator during a 1997 visit to Havana.

*The BCTF in conjunction with CoDevelopment Canada and the Cuban teachers' union are developing a teacher tourism program offering school visits for teachers wanting more than R&R on the beaches of Varadero.*

*Below (L) Tunga's mother cooks over an open flame in their tent home. (R) Tunga with her son and friend.*



### Cabangile Bhengu, South Africa

About 40 teachers and 1,350 students work and learn at Margot Fonteyn Secondary School in Klaarwater, a township outside Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. About 90 teachers and 1,550 students work and learn at North Surrey Secondary School, also located near a major port city. The similarities and differences between their lives offer untold opportunities for study, and exciting plans are progressing for a student and teacher exchange between the two schools.

On the South African side, the key organizer is Cabangile Bhengu, a soft-spoken geography teacher and part-time master's student. A mother of three, Bhengu and her husband, a truck driver, are working hard to save for

DAVID CHUDNOVSKY PHOTO

their children's post-secondary schooling.

"She's a very kind and supportive teacher, a salt-of-the-earth sort of person, and a real anchor for the staff," says Surrey teacher and BCTF Executive member David Chudnovsky. "She has a real sparkle in her eye and a passion for the future."

Perhaps it's that passion that fuels her dramatic dream of taking a group of students half way around the world. For a school that cannot afford to go on local field trips, planning such an expedition is like climbing Mt. Everest.

The logistics have been

*Bhengu and her colleagues convinced the South African telephone company to fund an Internet hook-up for the school...*

made easier since North Surrey Secondary School helped out with purchasing a computer and modem, and Bhengu and her colleagues convinced the South African telephone company to fund an Internet hook-up for the school and to train teachers in its use. This unique three-way partnership between the two schools and the telephone company promises a new kind of intercultural communication between students and teachers of North and South



### Tungalag, Mongolia

Vancouver teacher Janet Nicol met many remarkable people during her summer in Mongolia with Project Overseas, but none impressed her so much as a dynamic English and Russian teacher named Tungalag, Tunga for short.

She was raised in the traditional Mongolian way, living in a *ger*, the felt tent dwelling used throughout centuries of nomadic life. Her mother still fuels her cooking fire with dung, and her son still drinks mare's or yak's milk when he's with his

grandparents.

Today, Tunga is comfortable in both the ancient culture of her ancestors and the contemporary globalized culture. Now teaching in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, she wears a smart Western-style business suit to class, and as a single mother, she is challenging the strict gender roles of her society. "She was able to move between the two worlds very lightly and gracefully," said Nicol.

Since 1990, when Mongolia won its independence from Russia, the emerging market



economy has widened the wage gap. Because teachers' salaries amount to only about \$30 US per month, many are forced to seek additional work to make ends meet. Many of Tunga's students are also living in deep poverty, making health issues one of the teachers' key concerns.

This year, Tunga will work full-time developing English and computer skills programs for the Free Federation of Mongolian Education and Scientific Workers' Union.

*Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media-relations officer.*

JANET NICOL PHOTOS



# New positions, new challenges

by Janet Amsden

**I**m just thrilled—there are so many possibilities for kids in our school library,” said Cathy Bouman, the new teacher-librarian at Dease Lake Elementary Secondary School. “Dease Lake is isolated, with few

resources for kids, so it's exciting to open the library doors for them.”

Bouman is no stranger to the library. She has worked in the school as a library aide for the past three years. She is now teaching students how to appreciate and use the collection that she was managing as an aide.

For hundreds of teachers like Bouman, the new contract has provided opportunities to assume the teaching positions they have been waiting for. And, the opportunities have not been limited to new teachers.

*...362 positions have been created for teacher-librarians, learning assistance teachers, special education resource teachers, counselors, and ESL teachers. ...174 positions have been created for primary teachers as a result of the Kindergarten to Grade 3 class-size limits.*

“It has been a personal goal for me to move into counselling full time,” explained Alice Lim, a school psychologist in Maple Ridge who last year had a half-time term position as a counsellor. “I was laid off from a full-time position three years ago when the district had to make some painful cuts and eliminated three elementary counselling positions.” Those positions were restored when the new contract came into effect, and Lim was able to realize her goal. “Counselling can make such a difference to elementary students,” she said. “It has been wonderful to see the change in students who have worked with counsellors.”

The vacancy in school psychology that Lim created was filled by a psychologist new to the district. This process, in which a new position filled by a continuing teacher creates an opening in another area, has come to be known as “backfill” and has had a big effect, particularly in Richmond where an additional 44 ESL positions were funded

as a result of the agreement.

“Our board advertised the ESL positions within the district in accordance with our local agreement. We have a lot of members who are qualified to teach ESL but have been doing something different,” said Richmond Teachers' Association President Lynn Owens Whalen. “By the time the internal part of the posting and filling process is completed, the vacancies will look quite different from the original 44 ESL positions.”

In total, throughout the province, 362 positions have been created for teacher-librarians, learning assistance teachers, special education resource teachers, counselors, and ESL teachers. An additional 174 positions have been created for primary teachers as a result of the Kindergarten to Grade 3 class-size limits. Most of those jobs have been Kindergarten and Grade 1.

“I was expecting around 25 students in my Grade 1/2 French immersion class,” said Rémi Lacroix of North Vancouver's Brooksbank Elementary. “Now I have 21. That is because they opened a division in another school as a result of the contract. It makes a huge difference, especially in Grade 1. They don't speak much French yet and they must learn to read and write in a completely new language. It's really important to give them as much individual

*...staff reps have had to acquire new knowledge for the interpretation of teachers' assignments in accordance with the ministry's Form 1530.*

attention as possible. Also, I am going to be able to give more time to my Grade 2s.”

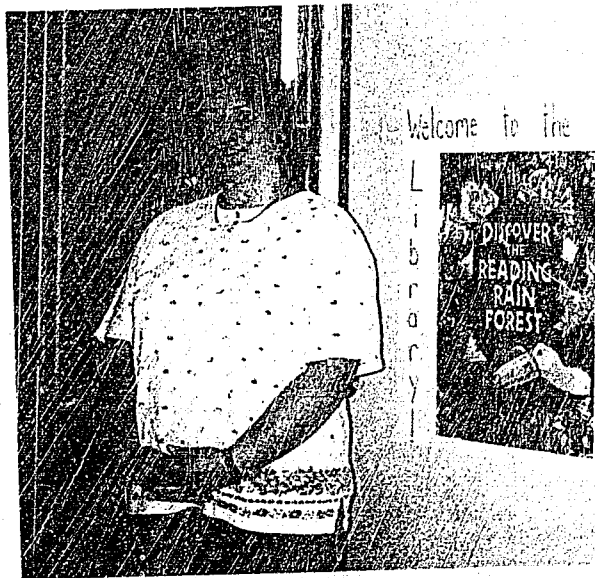
These increased opportunities for students and teachers bring additional responsibility

for staff reps and local officers. For the first time, boards are required to provide locals and the BCTF with staffing plans to show how they intend to use the additional funding provided by the ministry to comply with the class-size numbers and non-enrolling/ESL teacher staffing ratios in the contract. To verify to the boards' reports, staff reps have provided local data collection teams with reports from every teacher on the classification of his or her assignment and elementary enrolments. Counting class-size numbers is familiar to staff reps who have monitored class-size language in the past. In some cases it's even easier than before because it is no longer necessary to consider flexibility factor. However, staff reps have had to acquire new knowledge for the interpretation of teachers' assign-

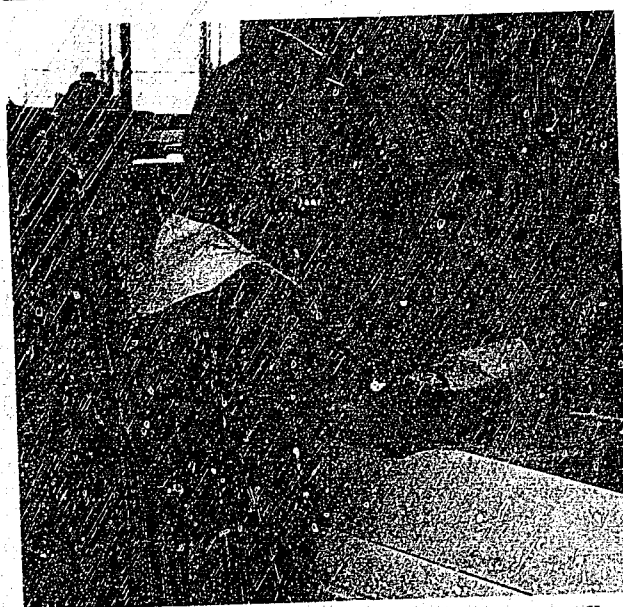
*...efforts of staff reps, local officers and the Federation have combined to ensure opportunities for new teachers, continuing teachers and for students in B.C.'s public schools.*

ments in accordance with the ministry's Form 1530—a job that has proven challenging to some school boards' accounting staff in the past. The data on teacher assignments has been given to locals' data collection teams, which have the further job of sorting through the backfill to ensure that the positions mandated by the collective agreement have actually been created. In all, the efforts of staff reps, local officers and the Federation have combined to ensure opportunities for new teachers, continuing teachers and for students in B.C.'s public schools.

Janet Amsden is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division.



SANDRA PEACOCK PHOTO



MIKE TODD/BCAT PHOTO

Teacher-librarian Cathy Bouman (top) and Counsellor Alice Lim (bottom) are ready to work with students.

## TOC associates mobilize

by Frank Burden

**T**argeted to, developed by, and facilitated by teachers on call, a unique workshop series is being offered to the district by a team of TOC associates who participated in an intensive summer training program. With that training under their belts, the associates are available to facilitate workshops for teachers on call throughout the province. TOC workshops have existed since 1986, but it was in 1992 that the BCTF fully recognized the value of this professional development avenue and committed funding to it. In the spring of 1998, the small cadre of TOC facilitators was expanded, and its members are trained and ready to respond to locals' needs.

This group is diverse in its geographical distribution, gender balance, its specialties within teaching, and, most notably, its variety of experience in both teaching on call and contract teaching. Some are colleagues awaiting their first “real” assignment in teaching, some, including me, have voluntarily become TOCs after many years in continuing assignments, and some tread the fine line between part-time contracts and teaching on call. Thus, the associate program, by its composition, contemplates the range of professional development needs unique to TOCs, whatever their position on the employment ladder and wherever they live and work.

The workshop series has four components embraced by the theme “Thriving Not

Surviving as a TOC.” The components are:

1. **Building for Success—Classroom Management** is a full-morning workshop that may be offered alone or in conjunction with component 3 or 4 for a full day.
2. **Communications Skills—A & B** are two discrete sessions that may be used together in one very full day. Alternatively, component 2A or 2B may be used in conjunction with component 3 or 4.
3. **Component 2A** addresses communication skills with students, peers, administrative officers, and the local association and the BCTF. **Component 2B** identifies and models assertive communication skills and negotiation skills.
4. **Taking Care of the TOC** is a

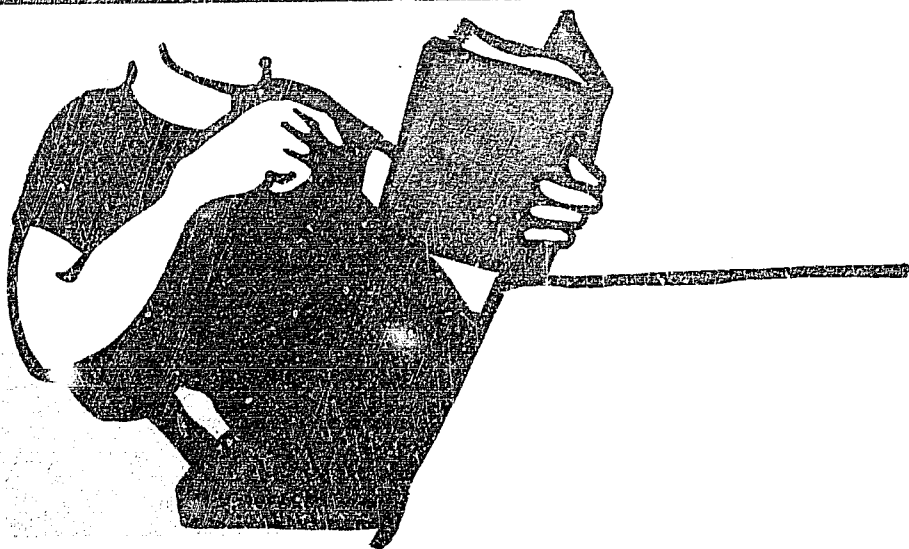
short session that seeks to develop a power start to the day, provide strategies for living with constant change, improve positive self-talk and provide coping skills and activities for stress reduction.

4. **Achieving a Positive Working Environment** is a half-day workshop on professional rights and responsibilities with an emphasis on the Code of Ethics, networking skills, and strategies to increase TOC visibility. As one associate with many years of full-time teaching and almost as many in local association work, I can highly recommend the workshop series to any local. The spectrum of topics covered mirrors many of the concerns

that are expressed by TOCs and that come to the attention of local association officers. The nomadic nature of the TOC's working life makes these issues difficult to deal with in a regular school PD setting.

TOCs believe in and care sincerely about enhancing classroom management and communication skills unique to their working environment and about improving that environment. That belief is reflected in the BCTF's commitment to providing this discrete professional development program designed by and for TOCs and facilitated by their peers.

Frank Burden is a TOC in Comox Valley and Campbell River districts and is a TOC associate.



## Did somebody say social revolution?

by Pat Clarke

Perhaps only 10 years ago, males who left school before Grade 12 or who graduated with marginal results could still look forward to a range of employment or career opportunities. In a resource economy like British Columbia's, scores of such males could reasonably expect to find engagement in relatively low-skilled but well-paid jobs. That career path has gone the way of buggy-whip makers. But many adolescent males haven't realized that the world has changed and their maleness is no particular guarantee for anything.

Compounding this social and economic reality is the increasingly dysfunctional effect of media-driven negative male images. Films, advertisements, and television shows convey the powerful messages for adolescent males that dumb is cool, violence is self-actualizing, and lassitude is a career option. These images help shape a male identity that will be a one-way ticket nowhere.

We are teaching the first generation of males that must re-conceptualize maleness. *The Economist* last year ran a theme issue called "The Trouble with Men" that nailed a treatise to the doors of the male sanctum of complacency: "Boys' achievement in school relative to girls is steadily declining not only in Canada but throughout industrialized nations."

"The new world of work is characterized by occupations traditionally held by women."

*Is there anything we can do to improve boys' performance in school?*

"For some reason a vast majority of men will not even consider doing 'women's work' even if this is where most jobs are found. Those who are not able to find a 'man's job' appear to be increasingly inclined to opt for social alienation and idleness."

For teachers of the new millennium, these statements offer a blunt and specific challenge: Is there anything we can do to improve boys'

performance in school? Is there any way educators can disinfect the debilitating effects of negative role images for boys? And is it possible for us to help boys visualize taking on non-traditional (i.e., female) careers?"

*The images they find most fascinating exude the bravado and mindlessness that will most assuredly push too many of them into a social underclass of louts and misfits.*

The resolution of these issues is complicated because they are an interconnected social reality. A large minority of boys do not do as well as girls in school because they are captivated by a dumbed-down, dream-driven boy culture. And as a manifestation of a peculiar current reality, boys will not or cannot broaden their career horizons because there are virtually no role models to follow. The images they find most fascinating exude the bravado and mindlessness that will most assuredly push too many of them into a social underclass of louts and misfits. Perhaps the greatest irony of the late 20th century is that these males will have marginalized themselves by determinedly painting themselves into a disastrously tight gender corner.

For many classroom teachers, the effects of this male culture juggernaut seem beyond remedy. The social effectiveness of a teacher has been seriously circumscribed by innumerable social factors, and one of the most dysfunctional is the subculture of male stupidity and irresponsibility to which a too-large minority of our male students subscribe.

Given the nature and structure of contemporary schools, particularly secondary schools, such places cannot be expected to educate this largely male group of "academic refuseniks." The issues are not the ones schools

were structured to deal with. Schools have been expected to shape a social landscape. The invasion of contemporary media has given this mostly male cohort their own externally developed, school-detached culture that defies the traditional functions of formal schooling. Where schools have modelled and advanced responsibility, community, and achievement, they are now an alien culture for disaffected males acculturated to precisely the opposite. Our array of courses and programs to address the evident needs of boys who are "turned off school" require a certain level of personal and social engagement, which the external boy culture denigrates.

All of this amounts to one of those increasingly common situations where schools and teachers are only part of the solution. Schools will be able to deal with the issues of

*Schools will be able to deal with the issues...when our whole society looks in the mirror, contemplates what it has wrought, and collectively resolves to reconceptualize maleness...*

underachieving, loutish, and socially myopic males when our whole society looks in the mirror, contemplates what it has wrought, and collectively resolves to reconceptualize maleness so that it is more about social responsibility and less about image marketing.

What are the key issues for teachers? If the resolution of the problem of boys and school is primarily a broader social issue, what role do teachers play?

Is the notion of reconceptualizing maleness as an integral part of the solution a reasonable or likely eventuality, and how would teachers be involved in this social revolution?

Pat Clarke is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional Development Division.

## Tweens

by Chris Bocking

Get ready. Marketers have discovered tweens. They have learned that these people, between nine and fourteen years of age, can make a substantial difference to a company's bottom line.

*Advertising revenue for children's television in Canada is \$100 million now, double what it was 10 years ago...*

Canada has almost 2.5 million tweens. They spend \$1.4 billion a year on themselves, and they influence the buying decisions of their parents to 10 times that amount. A substantial minority of tweens have a say in the kind of car their parents buy.

The classroom is an ideal place for companies to pitch these affluent children. In that safe, trusted environment, a company's advertisements don't compete with other messages to the extent they do in the outside world.

Tweens know exactly what they want, according to a 1997 survey by YTV and *Chatelaine*. They want brand-name clothing—Nike, Levi, Calvin Klein, Guess, and Gap. They want slickly packaged food and drink—Schneider's Lunchmates and Kool-Aid.

*School districts sign a contract that students must watch the commercials.*

Advertising revenue for children's television in Canada is \$100 million now, double what it was 10 years ago, says Paul Robertson, president of YTV. Why not use the world's most powerful electronic medium to reach tweens in the classroom?

The United States has a program called "Channel One," a 12-minute closed-circuit newscast with two minutes of commercials. School districts sign a contract that students must watch the commercials. The ads work; they cost twice as much as those on prime-time network news.

Advertisers call it developing "brand and product loyalties through classroom-centred, peer-powered lifestyle patterning." Others call it propaganda.

Canada has a program similar to Channel One, called the Youth News Network (YNN). While YNN has had only limited success so far, it keeps trying to sign up school districts.

Marketers realize that if you develop a brand that fulfills an emotional need, the children will come, says Gene

*A corporate presence in the classroom means selling access to our students.*

Del Vecchio, a Los Angeles-based marketing consultant. He is the author of the 1997 book *Creating Ever-Cool: A Marketer's Guide to a Kid's Heart*.

A corporate presence in the classroom means selling access to our students. Materials developed by corporations in their quest for a share of the tweens' spending money are generally glossy, attractive, and convenient. Educators must keep in mind that students will be absorbing consumer values developed by marketers along with the lesson objectives.

Chris Bocking is a teacher at Deep Cove Elementary School, Sidney, and a member of the Teacher, Newsmagazine Advisory Board.

### THE REST OF US

ANITA, WOULD YOU PLEASE READ PROBLEM #1 ON PAGE 4 OF YOUR NEW COKEY-COLA MATH BOOK?

"BOB HAS 25 CANS OF COKEY-COLA."

"HOW MANY CANS OF DELICIOUS, FIZZY, THIRST-QUENCHING COKEY-COLA DOES BOB HAVE LEFT?"

MISS FEEBIE, CAN I GO TO THE VENDING MACHINE?

IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THERE SOME SORT OF SUBTLE HIDDEN AGENDA THING HAPPENING HERE?!

"HE SELLS 15 CANS TO RON, A SUCCESSFUL, HARD-WORKING CORPORATE EXECUTIVE, AND DONATES 5 MORE CANS TO JEFF, A LAZY WELFARE RECIPIENT."

MISS FEEBIE, CAN I GO TO THE VENDING MACHINE?

IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THERE SOME SORT OF SUBTLE HIDDEN AGENDA THING HAPPENING HERE?!

MISS FEEBIE, CAN I GO TO THE VENDING MACHINE?

IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THERE SOME SORT OF SUBTLE HIDDEN AGENDA THING HAPPENING HERE?!

MISS FEEBIE, CAN I GO TO THE VENDING MACHINE?

IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THERE SOME SORT OF SUBTLE HIDDEN AGENDA THING HAPPENING HERE?!



## Age 5, not Grade 5!

by Dierdre Santesso

One of the many advantages of teaching at different levels is an enhanced awareness of how children learn at each stage of their development. Although I now teach English and French at the secondary level, I did teach in a junior secondary school, and before that at the intermediate level. I also spent 11 years as a primary teacher, seven of which were at the Kindergarten level. Perhaps that is why, in my current position as French co-ordinator of School District #20 (Kootenay-Columbia), one of my major goals is to promote exposure to a second language in the primary years.

*French can easily be incorporated into daily routines and integrated naturally with other subjects.*

Language teachers are familiar with the research that tells us how much more receptive very young children are to a second language than are older children, and of course early immersion has become almost de rigueur for the children of upper-income professional parents. More and more young people, particularly in the eastern provinces, are bilingual by the time they leave school, which is only as it should be in

multicultural, bilingual Canada.

It is the practitioner who validates the research, and it is on personal experience that I base my strong conviction that Kindergarten is the time and place to begin acquiring a second language. When small children hear a second language every day, when that language is incorporated into classroom routines, when it is allowed to spill over into other areas of learning, those children become familiar with its sounds and patterns and assimilate them with ease.

While I was teaching Kindergarten, I used French rather than English to check attendance each day, to reinforce recognition of colours and numbers and the days of the week, and to teach health, nutrition, music, song, and dance. In Grades 1, 2, and 3, French was extended to include art and literature and, of course, all the major holidays and celebrations. French became as natural a part of my students' day as English, although I was not then a French "specialist" and was far from bilingual. The parents of my students accepted, rather than actively supported, the inclusion of French in the Kindergarten curriculum, and to my knowledge no other school in the district had a similar program. That was a number of years before French immersion found its way to the Interior of the province, and now, of course, a number of

districts offer early, as well as late, immersion. My concern is for children who are not and who probably never will be participants in immersion, through either choice or lack of opportunity. When I speak

*Elementary French specialists in our district have found that students who have been exposed to French in the primary grades do far better in Grade 5 than those who have not.*

of early exposure, I am talking about "regular" primary classrooms, and I am talking to "regular" primary teachers who themselves may not have a strong command of the French language.

Let me tell you what's been happening in Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20). About six years ago, when Trail and Castlegar were separate districts, I called a meeting of primary teachers interested in using French in the classroom. Five people showed up including one specialist who provided release time to all the teachers at one elementary school and could teach French to every grade including Kindergarten. The others had very little knowledge of the language but were eager to offer to their students

learning opportunities as rich and varied as possible. So we explored ideas, offered suggestions, sang songs, and practised a few simple classroom expressions. The number at the next meeting had more than doubled, and I provided a handout to take back to other teachers. Thus was born the Primary French Curriculum, albeit rudimentary. As our district has grown, so have our numbers. I have put together a month-by-month teachers' guide, and I am producing an accompanying tape to assist with pronunciation. Upon request, I have visited a number of primary classrooms, and I am full of admiration for all the teachers, some with years of experience, some new to the profession, who are willing to learn in order to teach, and who are committed to creating a learning environment that extends the language experience of their young students. Primary French meetings are far from solemn! We have a lot of fun. We are tolerant of each other's mistakes, generous about sharing resources, and endlessly supportive and encouraging. Last year, a group spent an entire afternoon producing a calendar unit for each school, and one teacher put together a tape of simple French songs. The Primary French program is not another time-consuming, stress-creating extra that somehow has to be added on to the ever-growing list of what must be taught. French

can easily be incorporated into daily routines and integrated naturally with other subjects.

I firmly believe in the benefits of early language acquisition for all students. Elementary French specialists in our district have found that students who have been exposed to French in the primary grades do far better in Grade 5 than those who have not. This is hardly surprising. These children have had the advantage of years of repetition of sounds, words, and phrases in the target language. Their ear is attuned, their word bank already open, their memory receptive. These students do not ask, "Why do we have to take French?" They don't need to ask. They have grown up with French as part of their day at school. It is natural. It is my hope, therefore, that

*Their ear is attuned, their word bank already open, their memory receptive.*

French or another second language will be part of every child's learning experience from Kindergarten until at least the end of Grade 8, not just in SD 20 but eventually throughout the province.

*Deirdre Santesso is the co-ordinator of French for SD 20 (Kootenay-Columbia).*

## KidsFirst! is first with kids on the Knowledge Network

Since the launch of the KidsFirst! literacy initiative a year ago, the hosts, Zack & Zoe, have become household names for families across B.C. In two-minute segments the hosts peddle their magical blimp over the virtual landscape of B.C., focussing on its rich heritage and giving voice to the children of its diverse communities.

Children submit their drawings, stories, and jokes to be read on-air or posted on the KidsFirst! Web page ([www.knowtv.com](http://www.knowtv.com)). Occasionally some young viewers visit the studio and make a guest

appearance. Viewer submissions may also appear in the KidsFirst! section of *The Vancouver Sun*.

This initiative involves three media (television, on-line site, and newspaper) with kids as the authors. Younger children are sitting down with their parent or guardian to write their piece or to colour their drawing. Many submissions come from school teachers who have students write a short story or a poem on a certain theme and submit their collective efforts to KidsFirst!

On Sunday, December 13, 1998, the Knowledge Network,

in partnership with Unicef, will present International Children's Day of Broadcasting during a special, extended line-up of KidsFirst! children's programs and short animations to educate children and families about the need for world-wide recognition of children's rights.

KidsFirst! is a non-commercial, non-violent three-hour time slot that runs from 07:00 to 10:00 seven days a week on the Knowledge Network, with a family time slot every Sunday evening from 18:00 to 20:00.

— Katrina Raddings and Michael Boucher, Knowledge Network



## Early intervention pays off

In a recent medical study published by Health Canada, of 142 adolescents between 14 and 18 years of age:

- 15% had witnessed spousal violence
- 16% reported being sexually abused
- 20% reported neglect
- 39% reported physical abuse
- 41% reported emotional abuse

- 61% reported at least one of these five types of maltreatment

When adolescents who reported maltreatment were compared with those who said they had not experienced maltreatment:

- no significant differences were found in family type (one- or two-parent family), father's occupation, or number of schools attended.

- significant differences were found with respect to mother's occupation (coded "lower" for the maltreatment group), and the likelihood of being in a "special class" (more than twice as likely among the "maltreated" group).
- members of the maltreatment group scored lower on self-esteem and were more likely to exhibit behaviour problems, to be frequent users of drugs, alcohol, and

tobacco, to have lower school attendance, and to contemplate running away from home and committing suicide.

The study concludes: "The findings of this study support the need for prevention and early intervention programs. Early intervention is likely to be more effective and cost-efficient than programs that target more established

dysfunctional family systems and entrenched maladaptive behaviour patterns."

Source: *Take Another Look at Our Schools*, CTF, Ian Manion & Susan Kay Wilson, "An Examination of the Association Between Histories of Maltreatment and Adolescent Risk Behaviors," Health Canada, 1995.

Reprinted from B.C. Alternate Education Association newsletter, June 1998.



# International

by Larry Kuehn

## Partners in international work

The BCTF's international programs are carried out as partnerships. Teacher unions in other countries are the key partners, with programs jointly designed and developed. The work could not be done without others involved as well, providing communication links, translation when required, and administrative support, and often funds that match those from the BCTF's International Solidarity Fund.

Co-Development Canada (Co-Dev) is an international development organization located in Vancouver. Many of the BCTF projects with Latin American unions have been facilitated by Co-Dev, including the matching of funds through grants from the Canadian International Development Agency.

Oxfam-Canada has jointly organized with NANTU and the BCTF the projects in Namibia. In addition to on-the-ground support, Oxfam has been able to bring funds of the Canadian government and its own fundraising to match those from the BCTF.

Many of the BCTF international projects are carried out through a consortium with the Canadian Teachers' Federation and Education International. As an example, the three organizations, along with CUSO, have worked together to assist teachers in war-torn Mozambique develop their organization so it can speak for the needs of education and teachers.

Partnership and mutual learning, not charity, form the central philosophy of the BCTF International Solidarity Program.

## Namibia

"Because of BCTF support for our training program, teachers in Namibia are more assertive of their rights." This was the message brought to the BCTF executive in August by John Nakuta, general secretary of NANTU (Namibian National Union of Teachers).

Namibia was a colony of South Africa until its independence in 1989, at which point the long process of dismantling the apartheid system began. "Our system was oppressive and repres-

sive," Nakuta told the executive. "The training supported by the BCTF has helped our members be equipped now as advocates in their schools."

In addition to resources for the training, matched by funding from OXFAM-Canada, the BCTF has provided experienced staff representative trainers, who travelled to Namibia to work with colleagues there. Don Reader, from Vancouver Elementary, for example, spent an extended time over several years assisting in the design and delivery of school representative workshops, and he has participated in the training of more than a thousand Namibian teachers in advocacy skills.

Nakuta told the BCTF that NANTU is committed to becoming self-reliant, and the BCTF support has played an important role as they develop toward that goal.

Federation members come back from experiences like Reader's enriched by the experience and committed to building links between teachers internationally.

## South Africa

The non-racial teacher union created in South Africa in 1990 as apartheid finally started to crumble has been linked with the BCTF since its beginning. Initially, funding was provided to the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) to assist in its sign-up of members in a climate where change was under way but sand was being poured in the gears by those who opposed the transformation from white domination.

Once an organization was in place, SADTU drew on BCTF experience in developing training programs for union activists. Those soon became incorporated as a regular part of the program of the organization, fully financed by the rapidly growing union.

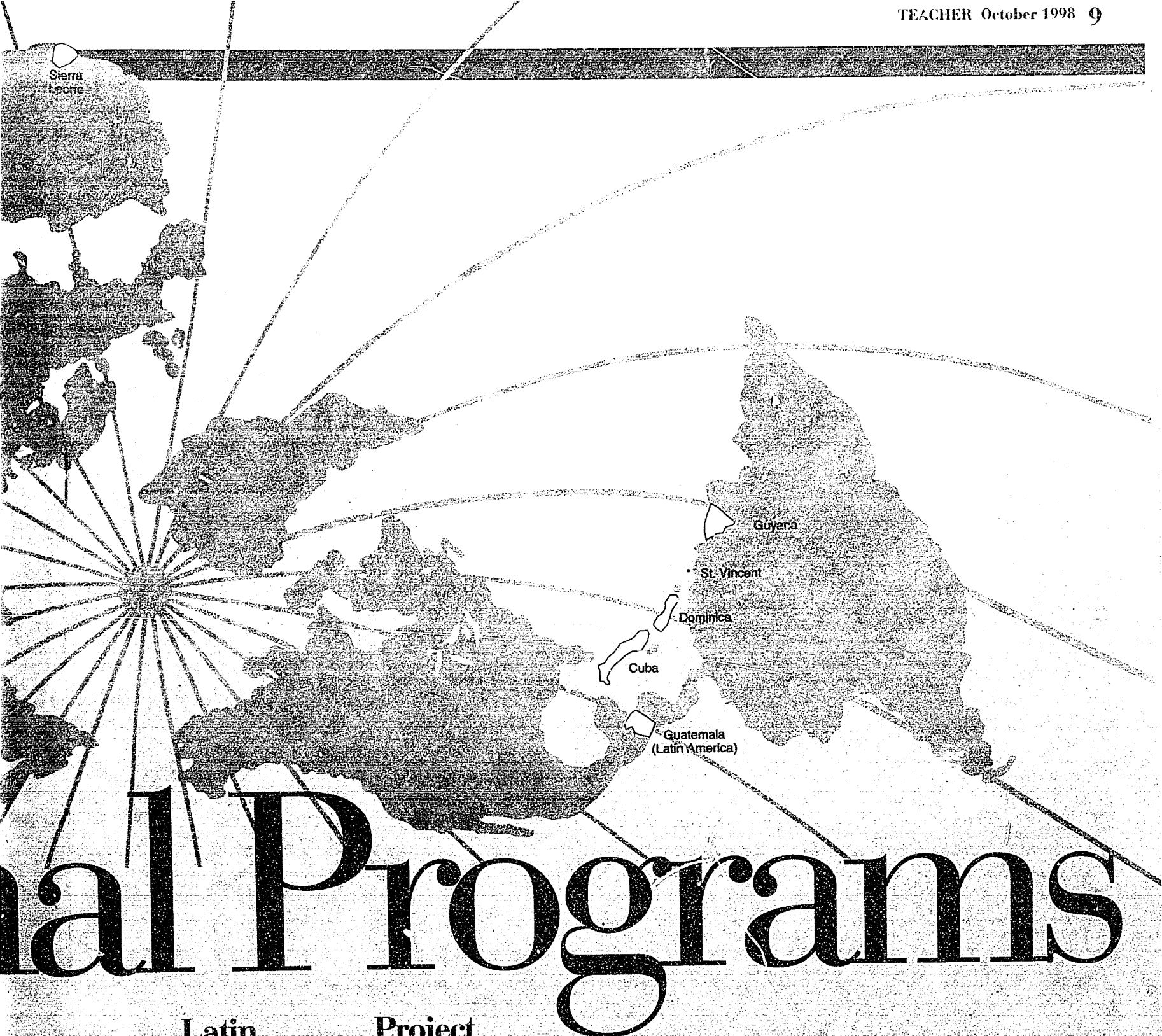
A union priority—and a national priority—is the creation of a "culture of learning" in South Africa's schools that had been thrown into chaos by apartheid and the social struggle to end it. Union professional development programs were seen as making an essential contribution to the process. The BCTF and the Canadian

Teachers' Federation responded to SADTU's request for support in this initiative. Retired BCTF Professional Development Director Mike Zlotnik spent a month in the country listening to the dreams and problems of teachers and, with another CTF colleague, made a recommendation for future program directions. Initial startup funding will soon be replaced by ongoing allocations from South African teacher fees.

The SADTU-BCTF relationship has been further developed by many exchanges. The most recent, in April, saw 10 South African union activists spend three weeks in B.C. teacher locals and schools. Ten B.C. teachers, in return, spent three weeks in August, getting to know the teachers and schools of South Africa.

In less than 10 years, SADTU has grown into a strong union for the teachers of South Africa. It is carrying out its own international solidarity programs, now, helping other teacher organizations in Africa develop their capacity to serve teachers and education.





# International Programs

## Latin America

Throughout Latin America, women make up the great majority of the teaching force, but few have been in leadership positions in their union. That is changing, and the BCTF has played a role in encouraging that change.

The Federation has supported programs to encourage women to get active in the union in several countries in Central and South America. Every program has led to some increased participation of women in the union, through women's committees or secretariats. Many more women are being elected to union offices.

Rosario Bajarona, from the Women's Commission of the Education Workers of Guatemala, described the impact in this way: "Guatemalan teachers have been motivated by what British Columbian teachers do in their own context. They have helped us to understand our rights as teachers within the union. Many women teachers are now participating actively, and, finally, three women have been elected to the national union executive."

## Project Overseas

The Canadian Teachers' Federation annually runs professional development programs in other countries, using the facilitation skills of Canadian teachers. The program has been sending teachers overseas for two-to-four-week workshops since the 1960s. Four BCTF members are funded to take part each year.

Some countries in which B.C. teachers have worked over the past few years are Dominica, Ghana, Guyana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania, Thailand, Tibet, Sierra Leone, and St. Vincent.

## Cuba

Teachers in Cuba could offer anyone in the world lessons in organizing. Skills and programs are no problem—but the resources to carry them out are. The U.S. blockade and current economic problems mean programs just sit on a shelf. Paper to print manuals, tools to put on workshops—all of these are lacking.

The BCTF, with matching funding from the Canadian

government through CIDA, has provided some basic resources to the teachers' union.

And B.C. teachers responded when a Cuban-teacher-union officer told the 1997 BCTF Summer Conference about how the shortages affect the classroom. She said that teachers had to collect notebooks from students at the end of the school year and erase the pages so that the next year's class would have notebooks. This news led to an immediate collection for paper and pencils for her to carry back with her to Cuba. Teachers and students around B.C. contributed 10,000 notebooks and crates of pencils last December to be sent to Cuban students. A similar program will be carried out this school year.

Now a teacher tour to Cuba for the December holiday is being jointly organized for B.C. teachers by Co-Development Canada and the Cuban teacher union. One week of the two-week trip will be spent visiting schools and meeting teachers, all organized by the union.

Larry Kuehn is the director of the BCTF's Research & Technology Division.

## Winter holiday break teacher tour to Cuba!

Teachers from B.C. are invited to join an educational tour to Cuba for the December 1998 holiday break. The tour, hosted by the Cuban teachers' organization, the SNTECD, is being organized by Co-Development Canada in conjunction with the BCTF.

The first week will consist of lots of recreational time at some of Cuba's most spectacular beaches. The second week will include school visits, meeting with teachers, and teacher-training professionals at the Faculty of Education, and visiting historic and cultural sites in and around Havana. A highlight of the trip will be participating in the celebrations for the 40th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution on New Year's Eve!

Numbers will be limited. For details of costs and to make bookings, contact Co-Development Canada: (604) 708-1495, F: (604) 708-1497, [codev@web.net](mailto:codev@web.net)

## Spring Break '99 school group trips to Cuba

Looking for new sights, sounds, flavours, and people? Looking for a travel experience that is thought-provoking, exciting, and safe?

Consider a teacher-student tour to Cuba for the 1999 Spring Break. Cuba is culturally, historically, and politically fascinating—not to mention warm and sunny. Discover why this controversial Caribbean island is such a unique and exhilarating place to visit.

Co-Development Canada, a non-government development organization that works with the BCTF and the Cuban teachers' union, is organizing the tours. Students will link with Cuban youth to share ideas and experiences, and participate in community projects.

For more information, contact Co-Development Canada: (604) 708-1495, F: (604) 708-1497, or [codev@web.net](mailto:codev@web.net)

## Opinion

### The cost of retreat

by Jerry Reed

Retreating from the goals of "Year 2000" has cost B.C. students and teachers dearly. Once upon a time, some forward-looking people in the Ministry of Education felt that we needed to take a careful look at the state of public education. The new millennium was approaching, and it was felt that some basic changes might be needed to address the new realities of the next century. The Sullivan Commission was formed to take that look.

They listened to a broad group of people who were intimately involved in educating our youth. As a result of that consultation, they recommended some fundamental changes to the way we approach public education in B.C.

One of the most far-reaching

changes recommended broadened graduation requirements. While recognizing the primary values of language and mathematical literacy that form the major criteria for our present Dogwood Certificate of Graduation, the commission identified at least two other routes to the Dogwood that gave increased status to other "non-academic" skills such as practical and performing arts, and more general non-classroom-oriented skills. This proposed broadening was fundamental in that the requirements for graduation drive the whole secondary curriculum. A wider graduation funnel promised more opportunity for the significant segment of our students who are not primarily academically oriented, to be recognized for the genuine skills and interests that they bring to our society, and to be better

prepared for the contribution that they can make.

This is a very positive alternative to the present practice of providing one, primarily language-based, academic road to the Dogwood Certificate. The present practice essentially ignores the variety of needs, interests, skills, and motivations of our students. Essentially all are asked to jump through the same academic hoops, in approximately the same order, for the purpose of obtaining a degree which, as a result of discounting many of our students' real interests and abilities, is becoming increasingly viewed as a necessary ticket for full participation in the society at large. It perverts the educational process into a narrow focus on means to an end that is increasingly vague and problematic in this rapidly changing society. By clinging to the one sacred route to

graduation, we have unwittingly preserved two huge systemic problems that continue to grow and are costing us a great price in terms of student motivation and teacher stress. For the purposes of brevity here I'll label these problems as *the growth of special education and the increase of teacher stress*.

When students are presented with a curriculum that discounts or ignores their motivations, skills, and interests, they often react negatively. We no longer have the passive student body that accepted the educational opportunities offered by a relatively unified societal view of education needs. Our reaction to this growing number of students is to "medicalize" the situation and try, in various ways, to "remediate" their sad deficiencies so they too can somehow enjoy the fruits of a

"normal graduation." Hence the growth of special education and learning assistance. However, if these fail, we still offer a consolation prize in the form of a School-Leaving Certificate.

I don't think we need to reinvent the wheel here. Year 2000 provided a course of action based on a lengthy process of listening to the educational stakeholders of B.C. We need to take it out, dust it off, and begin its implementation at the secondary level. The findings are in; the recommendations are made. Let's have the courage to offer our youth the best opportunities we can give them to participate positively in the next millennium!

*Jerry Reed teaches at David Stoddart Secondary School, Cache Creek.*

### What it means to be accountable

by Sandra Davie

We often hear *accountability* bandied about regarding teachers. Curriculum is devised, learning outcomes are prescribed, and test scores are collected with the very public goal of making the educational system and, by implication, the teachers within that system, accountable. The implication that neither teachers nor the system have been accountable is what riles teachers so much.

We know that there is no greater accountability than facing a class of students day in and day out. Our responsibilities are great in that if we do not appropriately plan,

organize, assess resources, deliver instruction, provide adequate and effective practice, and then formatively and summatively assess the outcome of our and our students' efforts, the classroom is in chaos. If we don't do our job properly, we get immediate feedback.

We know that every day is an adventure in which we will be asked to make hundreds of decisions that will have an impact on other people's lives. We know that we will not have time to reflect on those decisions, but will have to make many based on our experience and our knowledge and our assessment of a situation. We know that most decisions will be good ones, but that sometimes we will err.

And when we err, we know that retribution will be swift. It may come in the form of a classroom confrontation, an irate parent, a disciplinary investigation, or all of the above. We know that as professionals we will be asked to explain ourselves and to seek out help if we need professional development. We expect that in the service of children, we must display the highest standards of behaviour. Otherwise, we cannot be the effective educators we wish to be.

We must not only display the highest standards of behaviour in the classroom, but also be a role model in the community. If we are not, we can find ourselves again subject to public scrutiny and potential

discipline. No other professionals except religious leaders are held to such a high public standard.

When on our own time we involve our students in activities outside the classroom, we are again reminded of our responsibilities. If we do not acquit ourselves properly, we may find ourselves defending our behaviour or our decisions in dealing with a particular situation, and, again, we may find ourselves being disciplined.

Such is the nature of our profession. And given that teaching is the most important job in the world, we know how vital it is that we do our job and get it right. So if the word *accountable* can be defined as "subject to giving

an account," then we need to realize that we are definitely accountable every hour of every day. In the eyes of our students, our community, and the law, we are never off duty.

I don't think there is any other job where there is such a high standard of accountability. So, the next time you hear people imply or state that teachers are not accountable, tell them about the high standard that teachers are held to. I bet they'll be surprised!

*Sandra Davie is vice-president of the Prince George Teachers' Association.*

Source: *Crosscurrents*, newsletter of the Special Education Association of B.C., Fall 1998.

### Lively learning

by Jane Powell

At one time, professional theatre was restricted to large Canadian cities, and residents of the Interior eagerly anticipated school productions or those presented by Tom Kerr and The Western Canada Youth Theatre, who toured plays through the Interior. At that time, too, high school drama/theatre programs involved choosing a play, rehearsing, and performing it. In the 1990s, many smaller cities host visiting professional performers or run their own theatre companies and community theatre groups. For example, Kamloops has a professional theatre company with two theatres, Salmon Arm and Vernon, among others, have highly respected amateur groups with their own theatres. Schools are also very different in that they are charged with preparing

students for an increasingly complex world. The purpose of drama/theatre programs in schools is to help students understand the social world, to examine human experiences through imagined roles and situations, and to offer learning experiences that "help prepare learners for present and future challenges." (Ministry of Education, 1995, p.1).

In drama education, we have come to realise, therefore, that there are fundamental differences between putting on plays; part of the mandate of community theatre, and educating students. In theatre, the objective is to have an effect on the audience; in schools, we aim to have an effect, primarily, on the participants. In theatre, the end product is the production, in schools, the end product is the student. In theatre, we are generally working with adults; in schools, we are working with young people whose

developmental needs we have to consider.

Of course, many schools still choose to put on productions for the community—usually on an extra-curricular basis. These endeavours are valuable in that they build a sense of cohesion and foster good public relations; but they may

*In theatre, the objective is to have an effect on the audience; in schools, we aim to have an effect, primarily, on the participants.*

also perpetuate the idea that the objective of drama/theatre programs is to put on plays.

In contrast to these highly publicized shows, let us now examine an endeavour undertaken by many schools—the Remembrance Day assembly. In what ways might it be considered an educational

endeavour as well as a theatrical one? The key is in the process, of course. If the teacher works as a facilitator, he/she will involve students in researching aspects of war, taking surveys of the prospective audience, deciding on messages they want to convey, selecting or creating their own material, deciding on staging, performing, and, finally, reflecting on the experience by responding to questions such as What did you learn about war, the ways people solve conflict, and Canada's contribution to peace? Which techniques were most effective and why? What did you realize about yourself/the group? and, In what ways is drama a way of building community?

In this kind of assignment, students are not only adding to their own knowledge and understanding but also sharing that understanding in a way that benefits the school. By our emphasizing learning and service, the performers feel a

sense of accomplishment without developing the kind of arrogance that can impede learning.

Of course, the Remembrance Day assembly is only one of the ways that teachers work with students in drama programs. We may choose a variety of strategies, from role drama to playbuilding to play analysis, depending on the age of the students and what we want them to learn. Thus, drama in education has developed its own set of objectives and forms that are different from those of community theatre. The next time you meet a drama teacher, please acknowledge the work he/she does in educating young people through drama by asking, "What are your students learning about these days?"

*Jane Powell teaches at NorKam Secondary School and University College of the Cariboo, School of Education, Kamloops.*



## 1998-99 Retirement-planning seminars

All teachers age 40+ should plan to attend one of the retirement-planning seminars listed. There is no pre-registration, nor fee. Seminars are on Saturdays from 09:00 to 16:00, except where noted. The agenda includes what retirement is, the Teachers' Pension Plan, legal issues, retirement experiences, pension calculations, and personal advice. Make sure to bring a calculator and your most recent pension statement. Younger teachers are welcome.

Date	Location
November 7, 1998	Cranbrook, Inn of the South
November 14, 1998	Kamloops, Ok. College of the Cariboo
November 21, 1998	Nanaimo, Coast Bastion Inn
November 28, 1998	Richmond, Richmond Inn
January 16, 1999	Surrey, Sheraton Guildford Hotel
January 23, 1999	Coquitlam, Westwood Plateau G&C Club
January 30, 1999	Burnaby, Clarion Hotel Villa
February 6, 1999	Langley, Newlands Golf & Country Club
February 13, 1999	North Vancouver, N. Shore Winter Club
February 27, 1999	Vancouver, Plaza 500 Hotel
March 27, 1999	Kelowna, Ramada Lodge Hotel
April 10, 1999	Castlegar, Sandman Inn
April 17, 1999	Abbotsford, Inn at King's Crossing
April 24, 1999	Prince George, Inn of the North
April 29, 1999*	Smithers, Hudson's Bay Lodge
April 30, 1999*	Prince Rupert, Crest Motor Hotel
May 1, 1999	Terrace, The Terrace Inn
May 8, 1999	Victoria, Victoria Conference Centre

\*Thurs. & Fri. 16:00 to 20:00

### Factor 88? Age 64?

Reminder: SIP-Long Term

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.

If you fit one of the above criteria and wish to withdraw from the long-term part of the plan, write or fax (604) 871-2287 the BCTF Income Security Department for withdrawal application forms.

### Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan extends deadline

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan has advised the B.C. Teachers' Pension Plan that it has extended the deadline on cancellation of the reciprocal agreement to December 31, 1998.

If you wish to have this service recognized in B.C., you must submit to Ontario an application to transfer on or before December 31, 1998. Under the current system, failure to do so will mean no ability to use the service toward your B.C. Pension.

If you have service, apply to transfer it now. The opportunity is until the end of this year.

More information on the BCTF Web site: [www.bctf.bc.ca](http://www.bctf.bc.ca) under "Pensions and Income Security."

## Teachers remembered

We have been notified by the Superannuation Commission that these teachers died during the past year.

Adcock, Mary	Ferguson, Agnes D.	Martin, Gladys E.	Rice-Jones, William
Alexander, Patricia L.	Foisy, Alma D.	Martin, Margaret B.	Richardson, Bernard
Andreashuk, Kathieen	Frandsen, Frank E.	Martin, Mary D.	Rinta, Edwin A.
Ashurst, Lila C.	Frederick, Eugene	Mathews, Leslie B.	Robertson, A. Jean
Aston, Lionel W.	Galbraith, Stuart	McAllister, John L.	Robinson, Marian R.
Bachleitner, Donald	Gautier, Thomas E.	McBain, Kathleen	Rogelstad, Mervin
Ballard, Ernest	Gibson, Eva L.	McDonnell, Robert A.	Rogers, Gordon E.
Barbour, Mary K.	Gilbert, Doris A.	McDougal, Mary	Rooney, Thomas P.
Barkman, Vincent	Goddard, William P.	McDougal, Hugh	Rorke, Gladys
Bassewitz, Vicke	Good, Vernice	McGregor, A. Jim	Ross, Grant Hilton
Batch, Alice M.	Gormna, Helen	McIntosh, Helen G.	Rougeau, Marguerite
Bird, W. Ray	Grant, Mildred	McKay, Auralie H.	Rowe, Ada F.
Bledsoe, Ada	Green, Thomasena	McKenzie, John A.	Sale, Thomas D.
Borelli, James V.	Grove Ruth	McKinley, Donna M.	Sarell, Terence J.
Borland, Marjorie	Guindon, Jason	McLeod, Ena G.	Shumka, Ann L.
Bossi, Anita	Haan, Leola	McMartin, Wendy	Shunter, Esma C.
Botkin, Lucille B.	Hamlet, Patricia	McMicken, Eloise	Simpson, Keith B.
Bouey, Marion A.	Hards, Albert A.	McMillan, John C.	Sinclair, Harold
Bowcott, Ronald E.	Harper, Mary A.	McMorrison, Patricia	Smart, Ian S.
Bowell, Susie D.	Haselhan, Annie C.	McNaughton, Edith	Smith, Herbert S.
Boyd, Grace M.	Hawkins, Robert T.	McNicol, Helen K.	Smith, Hope R.
Brealey, Ida U.	Hazle, Evelyn E.	McPherson, Hugh J.	Smith, Robin N.
Buckley, Marjorie	Healy, John C.	McRae, Anne M.	Spain, Dorothy
Buckley, Roger M.	Helem, Valerie	Mereigh, Christopher	Spanbauer, D.J.
Bunting, P.A.	Heywood, Robert L.	Merlees, Welbourne	Sproule, Clifford
Burns, Aina E.	Hickman, Harry	Mitchell, Jean	Steele, E. Ruth
Caldwell, Kathe	Higuchi, Gus	Montgomery, Kathleen	Stephenson, Archibald
Calleberg, Robert D.	Hill, M. Agnes	Moore, John D.	Stewart, George R.
Campbell, Edith L.	Hinds, James C.	Morland, Elizabeth	Story, Isabel R.
Campbell, Robert	Hogan, David T.	Morley, Isabel	Stretton, Marjorie I.
Carter, Don B.	Hollins, Frank	Mottishaw, Henry	Tait, Roger M.
Celli, Arturo G.	Humphries, Dennis	Mould, Margaret L.	Tate, Eleanor
Chapman, James R.	Jackson, James M.	Muir, Donald	Tate, Wilda I.
Churchill, Edmond	Jewkes, James C.	Munro, Frances	Taylor, Agnes A.
Clarke, Charity	Kaethler, Jack	Nelms, Ernest J.	Taylor, Jean D.
Clarke, Margaret N.	Kenny, Fanny V.	Nelson, Yvonne	Terris, Edward M.
Cole, Earl C.	Kero, Melvin	Newcom, Hazel F.	Tetrault, John L.
Collins, Ann C.	Ketter, Yvonne	Nye, Florence	Thompson, Marget
Connolly, Helen I.	Keys, Mary E.	O'Shaughnessy, Patrick	Titsworth, Wilma G.
Corkle, Anna B.	Kiltz, Cecilia	Page, Ralph T.	Todd, Stuart
Cornish, Norman C.	Kinahan, Michael	Pagett, Martha	Trunkfield, Joy
Crawford, John D.	King, M. Elizabeth	Palvesky, Ralph	Valio, Lenore
Cruttenden, Bertie	Kirk, Marjorie	Papan, Mahabir	Voth, William
Cunningham, Lloyd	Kirkby, Alan G.	Parker, Annie	Wainwright, Roy D.
Curtis, Mary A.	Knight, Margaret	Parker, John A.	Wallis, Jessie M.
Daly, Gary D.	Knight, Rowland A.	Parlett, Joyce M.	Warick, John A.
Davis, Ruth W.	Kohanik, Margaret	Parsons, Phyllis A.	Warner, Joseph W.
Dawson, Ernest T.	Kuiper, Marian	Peacock, Dorothy	Webb, Margaret
Dear, Stanley H.	Lane, Gladys P.	Pearson, Kathleen E.	Wellburn, Elizabeth
Dibb, Ustina	Lange, Laura	Pederson, John G.	Wenschlag, Patrick
Dobie, Robert W.	Latimer, Edgar C.	Peale, Merle R.	Wickens, James
Doell, Jacob C.	Leach, Wanetta	Penman, Ralph J.	Wiens, Menno
Douglas, Mary M.	Leag, Raine	Phillipson, Joe	Wight, Eulie F.
Eaton, Edna May	Lodgerwood, Jean	Plummer, Patricia A.	Wilkin, Dorval
Edwards, Norma R.	Lee, David E.	Pontoni, Marjorie	Wilson, Charles J.
Elliott, Dorothy	Lehman, Beatrice	Poole, Louise E.	Wilson, Donald J.
Elliott, Winifred A.	Leitch, Georgina	Porter, Erica M.	Woodman, S. Eric
Eltringham, Phyllis	Leppard, Minnie	Preddy, Mabel V.	Woodruff, Elizabeth
Ensor, Annie A.	Leslie, Peter M.	Price, Bertram E.	Woods, Sadie
Evans, Georgina	Lighburn, Reeta	Pryce, Colin J.	Wright, Arthur B.
Fargey, Betty J.	MacRae, Jeffery	Raglin, Gordon	Wright, Francis
Fargey, Dorothy	Maki, Helen M.	Regan, Arte	Wyllie, Margarite
Feltham, Peter A.	Manuel, Leon W.L.	Reid, Ida L.	Zimmerman, Gary
Fenton, Gertrude	Marshall, William F.	Reid, Marjorie M.	

## Accord '99: early retirement and career transition

by Al Cornes

Accord '99 is for BCTF members who are close to retirement age; some of the information applies to those between the ages of 50 and 55 considering a career change.

### Who is eligible?

Participants must have 10 years of contributory service in the pension plan and must have been members of the BCTF bargaining unit during the previous 20 months (two years).

Teachers aged 50-54 are eligible for the career-transition component of the accord. Teachers aged 55-64 are eligible for the early-retirement component of the accord. Eligible teachers will be those who retire or leave the system effective July 1, 1999. June 30, 1999, will be the date used for determining the age of benefit entitlement.

### What is the benefit?

The benefit paid to participants will be an amount equal

to the actual savings achieved over a two-year period based on the difference between the average salary paid to outgoing and incoming teachers. The calculations will be based on provincial averages rather than on particular teachers.

The Superannuation Commission will provide a statement as to the actual amount of the benefit in the late fall of 1999, following resignation from your district.

### What about part-time teachers and teachers on leaves of absence?

Eligible teachers with part-time assignments in their final year of teaching will receive a benefit determined by their percentage time of appointment. For example, a teacher working part-time but on leave from a full-time assignment will be eligible for the benefit of a full-time teacher. Teachers on a part-time assignment, not on leave from a full-time assignment, will receive a benefit prorated to the amount of the assignment.

Teachers on leave from a full-time assignment, and not teaching at all, will be treated as if they have been working full-time in terms of the benefit from the accord.

### What about health and welfare benefits?

No health and welfare plan is available for teachers who resign prior to reaching the retirement age of 55. Such teachers make their own arrangements for dental and extended health.

The Teachers' Pension Plan provides a health and welfare plan for those in receipt of a pension.

### District ERIPs and the accord

Teachers whose districts offer other early-retirement incentive programs may elect either the local ERIP or participation in this accord, but they may not access both programs.

### Retirement allowance/RRSP

Assuming the benefit qualifies as a retirement allowance,

it can be tax-sheltered in an RRSP, up to \$2,000 per year for each year up to and including 1996, but not beyond, in which teachers have been members of the teachers' pension plan. This is in addition to any existing RRSP room teachers may have.

### What about returning to teaching?

Teachers who participate in this accord will not be eligible to return to employment in the public school system, including employment as a teacher on call, until one year after the final payment is made. The final payment will be made on June 30, 2001. Participants who return to teaching prior to June 30, 2002, must repay the full amount of the benefit received.

### Should members take advantage of the accord?

Members should gather as much information as possible before making a decision.

Check your pension statement, visit the BCTF Web site, and attend a BCTF Retirement Planning Seminar in your community.

Teachers under 55 should think about taking advantage of the accord only if they have other satisfactory income.

Teachers aged 55 and older should take advantage of the accord if they can afford to retire on their existing retirement income.

If you are considering retiring effective July 1, 1999, you should contact the Superannuation Commission in mid-fall, requesting a retirement package and pension estimate for a pension to commence July 1, 1999.

Information contained in this article is taken from the *Public Sector Accord on Early Retirement and Teacher Career Transition* and letters of correspondence between the BCTF and government.

Al Cornes is an assistant director in the BCTF's Income Security Division.

# Teachers' Pension Plan changes

Attention former  
Saskatchewan  
teachers

by Karen Harper

As a part of the recent accord between the BCTF and the provincial government, which will provide for an early-retirement cash payout for those retiring on June 30, 1999 (see Accord '99 on page 10) changes on a cost-neutral basis to the Teachers' Pension Plan were recommended to the Teachers' Pension Board. The changes, approved by the board, will be implemented via either Order in Council or legislative amendment as required by the Teachers' Pension Plan.

## 1. Child-rearing dropout credit

The child-rearing dropout credit will permit those whose break in service for child rearing occurred after starting teaching, but prior to teaching in B.C., to have that time recognized. The first period of teaching must have occurred in another Canadian province, and the service must have remained on account in that province either for transfer to B.C. or for payment of a separate pension. This will help those whose age plus service would equal "90" if the child-rearing time were recognized to achieve a non-reduced pension. (Note: a non-reduced pension at 90 is not a full pension. A full pension is based on 35 years of full-time service and is achieved only by working and contributing over a 35-year period)

*The change will be accomplished by Order in Council and will be effective no later than July 1, 1999.*

## 2. Transfer of associated professionals into the Teachers' Pension Plan

This transfer will include all speech language pathologists, school psychologists, certified adult educators, and any other BCTF members who have degrees and are certified either as teachers or in some other profession as noted above. The change will simplify the reporting of service for these members, and it will eliminate many errors that have occurred in the past in the reporting by employers to the commission. Once the transfer has occurred, each of these members will be notified by the commission within the following year about transferring the prior service into the Teachers' Pension Plan. The transfer should be agreed to (more information on this will be provided at a later date through the Income Security Department to the locals). Any previous problems on service and salary reporting will be corrected at the time of transfer.

*The change will require legislation, and the target date is January 1, 1999.*

## 3. Equity for single members

The benefits paid on death in service, or pre-retirement survivor benefits, are being changed. The principle behind the change is that the value of

the pension benefit earned by the member to the date of death is paid, regardless of marital status. The new benefits on death in service will work as follows: For those who die in service prior to age 55, a commuted value will be paid to either the spouse or dependent relative as recognized by Revenue Canada (to be placed into a locked-in RRSP) or into the estate if there is no spouse or dependent relative. If the commuted value goes into the estate, it will be taxed and distributed pursuant to the member's will. In the current system, a refund of contributions plus interest is paid into the estate of the single member, which is far less valuable than the commuted value of the pension. For those who die after their 55th birthday, the commuted value of the pension that would have been payable on that date will be paid to the spouse, if there is one, on a joint-life and last-survivor basis, or to a dependant as noted above. If there is neither a spouse nor a dependant, as defined, then the commuted value will go into the member's estate.

*Legislation is required for the change, scheduled for implementation January 1, 1999.*

## 4. Restrict joint-life and last-survivor benefits

This change to the Teachers' Pension Plan is to restrict the ability to select joint-life and last-survivor benefits at retirement to a spouse, including common-law and same-sex spouses, and dependants, as defined by the Income Tax Act. Since 1991 registered pension plans have had to make many amendments to remain registered under the ITA.

*The proposed implementation date of the change is January 1, 1999.*

## 5. Modernize the disability provision

The disability provision will be modernized so that it, too, complies with the ITA. In future, to qualify for disability benefits under the TPP, the member must be totally disabled from all forms of gainful employment. This is not a provision of the act that is used by many members, as the Salary Indemnity Plan provides coverage for 18 months for a disability from teaching and to retirement (age 65 or factor "90") for total disability. It was agreed that those who currently qualify for disability benefits through the pension plan will be grandfathered under the current "own occupation" provisions. Most of those currently on benefits through the TPP came under the old salary indemnity provisions that terminated benefits after 24 months for those who were totally disabled by a psychoneurotic ailment. This provision was deleted in the early '90s, and now no member who is totally disabled has benefits terminated from the SIP after 24 months, so those who are totally disabled remain with the SIP,

thereby having no need to apply to the TPP. The retention of the changed provision is to provide a minimal benefit to those who may not have disability coverage, such as teachers on call.

*The change requires legislation and is proposed to be effective January 1, 1999.*

## 6. Provide extended health and dental benefits to retirees living outside B.C.

Initially the benefits will be for those living in Canada only. The provision of benefits for those who live out of country is being further studied, as there are complications in the provision of those benefits, from a plan design and cost point of view. As the cost of the benefits comes from the Inflation Adjustment Account, the Teachers' Pension Board will need to review the implementation costs carefully, as the ability to provide cost-of-living increases to retirees could be negatively affected by this change.

*The change can be implemented by regulation. The recommended effective date is January 1, 1999, to extend coverage to those who live outside of B.C. but within Canada.*

There were no other changes to the Teachers' Pension Plan, as other changes are quite costly. Examples of changes that are costly and not currently under active consideration include guaranteed indexing and the rule of "85." The cost of guaranteed indexing exceeds 12% of pay. Currently cost-of-living increases come from the Inflation Adjustment Account, which is well funded. However, it pays cost of living only to the extent that there are funds on account. Currently, the projection is that full cost of living will not be available beyond 2020. That is, from 2020 onwards, under the current system, only partial cost-of-living increases could be paid. The rule of "85" would cost 1.63% of salary and would benefit only about 10% of those retiring. This is an issue that the Pensions Committee is reviewing for recommendations to the AGM.

The "85" recently achieved in the Public Service Plan is being paid out of the surplus the plan has developed. Neither the government nor members of that plan have to pay additional contributions to cover the cost of the plan improvement. Because the TPP still has an unfunded liability (currently only 80% funded), benefit improvements that are not cost neutral must be funded by the parties. The government clearly indicated during the accord process its unwillingness to pay additional funds into the pension plan for pension changes.

The changes that have been achieved ensure that some important issues of equity have been addressed, particu-

larly in child rearing and death in service. All the changes were being sought by teacher representatives to the Teachers' Pension Board, and they should make the plan more modern and appropriate for members. Further changes continue to be reviewed and pursued within the current constraints of equity and finances.

*Karen Harper is the staff person with primary responsibility for pensions, and a member of the Teachers' Pension Board.*

Former Saskatchewan teachers may be eligible for a small pension benefit from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Superannuation Commission. Any teacher who taught in Saskatchewan between July 1930 and April 1963, left the teaching profession, and did not transfer pension contributions to another pension plan, may be entitled to a benefit from the Saskatchewan plan.

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# Opening hearts and gardens: A Saints' Haven rises from The Refuge



by Gavin Hainsworth

Occasionally teachers receive the rare and remarkable gift of knowing that they have made a true and lasting impact on the lives of others. Such a gift goes beyond the daily light in children's eyes and lasts longer than the chocolate boxes of Christmas. It arrives unheralded and unexpectedly and is treasured more than gold. It is the returning student come back to thank; the glowing letter that tracks you down through the internal courier sent to the district office.

Last year, I visited a small and private garden, appropriately called The Refuge, in the heart of a North Vancouver school, Ridgeway Elementary. The teacher within me marvelled at the learning opportunities it provided; the writer within soared with spirits it inspired and felt compelled to tell its story in the BCTF's *Teacher*.

This fall, I received a call to visit Langley Secondary School. Alison Hewitt, the teacher-librarian, had been inspired by the example of Ridgeway teacher-librarian Chuck Heath. She and teacher-colleague Carol Matheson had asked each other Why not here?

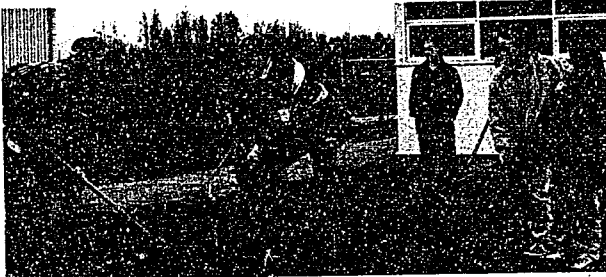
*The garden filled an area left vacant by the removal of the old library at the centre of the school.*

"LSS had been through some hard times the last two years, and we were looking for a positive way to bring our people together," said Hewitt.

*"The seeds of our garden were first sown last fall when some of our teachers read the article in the BCTF's Teacher newsmagazine."*

"The seeds of our garden were first sown last fall when some of our teachers read the article in the BCTF's *Teacher* newsmagazine. Calling themselves the LSS Garden Committee, aka The Mad Gardeners, the original seven-person committee (Ronni Blake, Della Crawford, Alison Hewitt, Karen Johnson, Kathleen MacRae, Carol Matheson, and Maureen Ware) solicited the staff on December 2, 1997, for help in building and planting a 25 x 22 m garden, signing off with a playful "Yours in the dirt" call to shovels.

Their plan was ambitious: turn one-third of a large vacant green area that once housed the now-demolished portable library, and transform the dull, litter-strewn space into "a tranquil, beautiful space in which to relax and enjoy nature." The vision also included using the garden as an outdoor venue for small music and drama performances. Their timeline was short: have the garden fully built and planted for the



*Langley Secondary School community works together to build a garden at the heart of the school.*

school's 50th Anniversary Open House on April 30, 1998.

The response reached far beyond the school into the community. More than 750 volunteer hours went into planning, constructing, and planting by staff, students, parents, school-district personnel, and community members. The enthusiasm and donations expanded to fill the entire 55 x 22 m space that now included four areas (all wheelchair accessible).

1. *Performance Area*—a grassy, amphitheatre for lunch-hour music and drama performances, ringed by low shrubs and shade trees.
2. *West Coast Shade Garden*—including a variety of indigenous plants such as

ferns and dogwoods.

3. *Asian Garden*—including a stone river and plants from China and India to reflect the school's multiculturalism.

4. *Community Garden*—to include double raised beds to be managed by the special-education classes.

"The project snowballed," said Hewitt, "leaders emerged, and a community was formed." Jim Babchuk, a just-retired nursery owner, donated 75 trees, and reached out to many others in the business, calling in old favours and exciting old friends. One LSS staffer's husband, Andy Budden, a professional landscaper, helped make the plan and co-ordinate the many novice volunteers for sod

removal (February 28), berm building, pathway drainage, and digging up donations for planting (Spring Break 1998), and the final plantings (April 1998).

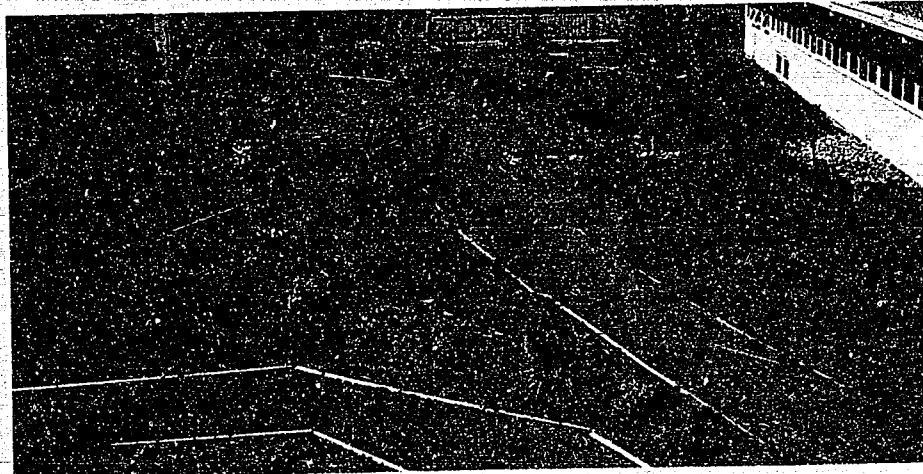
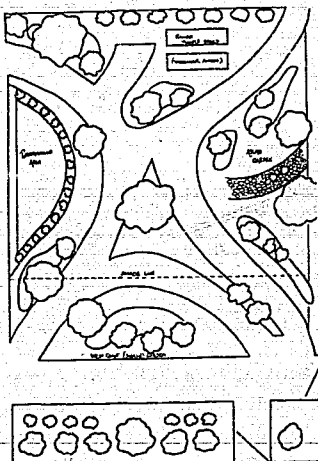
"One thing I really like about our garden," said art teacher Kathleen MacRae, "is we didn't have to fundraise. People just opened up their hearts and gardens to us—even people whose children don't go to school here volunteered time." MacRae's art class made 16 pebble mosaics for the garden, and Karen Johnson's Clothing and Textiles 11 class made a beautiful traditional log cabin quilt (auctioned for \$300 for the garden). The math classes calculated the curvature of the pathways, and Ken Wolgram's metal-work classes made eight benches. Twenty businesses and 10 individuals made significant donations of supplies, equipment, ground cover, trees, and shrubs. The Evergreen Foundation (funded by partner BC Hydro) donated \$450 to the garden, and the Langley School District funded \$750 for the full Asian Garden.

The garden opened on time for the 50th, and to great celebration. Its name is *Saints' Haven*, a name chosen after consultation by the school's student council and a school-wide vote. *Saints* reflects the school's team symbol; *Haven*, its philosophy. "It's very exciting to see a dream and a vision come true for the school," said LSS Principal Dave Michel. "I am very proud of our staff, students, and community."

Next year, *Saints' Haven* will continue to grow, as MacRae's art class makes mosaic murals, and the LSS mad gardeners seek donations of bulbs to fill in around their shrubs and trees. "There's no vandalism," said MacRae, "I believe because children and people from all walks of life came together to make this and participate."

"Many schools also have ugly corners. I'd like to see them do this, too. You'll be surprised," concludes MacRae. It's a gift worth sharing that could take wide root.

*Gavin Hainsworth teaches at North Surrey Secondary School, Surrey.*



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**12-13 Nanaimo.** Rural 98, B.C. Rural Teachers' Association Conference, Malaspina University-College. Contact Gail Moseley, F: (250) 456-2442, moseley@bcinter.net

**12-13 Vancouver.** B.C. School Counsellors' Association Conference 98, Continuing Together: Advocating Together for Children and Youth, Coast Stanley Park Hotel. Contact Dianne Noort, c/o Poplar Glade Elementary School, 845 North 11th Avenue, Williams Lake, BC V2G 2M5, S: (250) 392-7198, F: (250) 392-4989, dnoort@rodeo.s27.bc.ca

**13-14 Vancouver.** Down Syndrome Research Foundation and Resource Centre Conference for Parents and Educators, SFU Harbour Centre. \$140. Contact DSRF, 3580 Slocan Street, Vancouver, BC V5M 3E8, (604) 431-9694, F: (604) 431-9248, 1-888-464-DSRF (3373).

**13-15 Vancouver.** Backstage 98, 50 workshops in the theatre arts. Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design, Granville Island. Contact 1-888-604-7433, (604) 602-9595, F: (604) 602-9596, theatrebc@pacifcoast.net, http://www.theatrebc.org

**18 Vancouver.** CAPP Symposium on the personal-development strand of CAPP. Robson Square Conference Centre, with keynote Peter Norman. \$30 before September 30; \$40 thereafter. Contact Audrey Hobbs Johnson, (604) 988-1697, Audrey.Hobbs@gems6.gov.bc.ca

**19-21 Vancouver.** Conference on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, Finding Common Ground: Working Together for the Future, strategies, advocacy and support, Coast Plaza Suite Hotel at Stanley Park. Contact Elaine Liau, Interprofessional Continuing Education in the Health Sciences, UBC, 105-2194 Health Sciences Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3, (604) 822-4965, F: (604) 822-4835, elaine@cehs.ubc.ca

**20 Chilliwack.** Robert Sylwester, author of Celebrating Neurons, provides excellent metaphors and cutting-edge research for how the brain works and how new research will affect teaching and learning. Best Western Motor Inn. \$100 fee includes a light lunch. Contact Joyce Clough, Chilliwack Senior Secondary, (604) 795-7295, or download a form from http://www.chill.org/prod/csss/cn.html

**23-24 Vancouver.** Technology Education Design Forum for teachers, administrators, industry representatives, co-sponsored by B.C. Technology Education Association, SFU Harbour Centre. \$50. Contact John FitzGibbon, (250) 413-4460, F: (250) 413-4403, jfitzgibbon@cctt.bc.ca

## DECEMBER

**3-5 Kelowna.** Three-day intensive Leaders Training Program certifies registrants to facilitate Developing Capable People to parents, educators, and support staff. \$495 + GST includes \$250 worth of training materials. Contact Developing Capable People (Canada), 1-800-327-1090, F: (250) 545-1270.

**4-5 Victoria.** UVic A La Mode: French Immersion Weekends for Teachers. The second of three weekends: Inciter la communication dans la salle de classe (FSL strategies, plus Le Reveillon de Noel) FSL teaching strategies, lesson ideas, and communication skills to implement the Core French IRP in elementary and middle schools. Contact Leslie Kennedy at (250) 721-7875, lkennedy@uvcs.uvic.ca.

## JANUARY

**14-16 Richmond.** Working Together To Empower Youth, B.C. Student Activity Advisors Third Annual Conference, Thursday p.m. to Saturday a.m., Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel and Marina. \$150. Contact Gloria Solley, (250) 477-6945, F: (250) 721-1960, chill@sd61.bc.ca

**14-16 Victoria.** Three-day intensive Leaders Training Program certifies registrants to facilitate Developing Capable People to parents, educators, and support staff. \$495 + GST includes \$250 worth of training materials. Contact Developing Capable People (Canada), 1-800-327-1090, F: (250) 545-1270.

**15-16 Victoria.** UVic A La Mode: French Immersion Weekends for Teachers. The third of three weekends: Le francais dans la vie (Expressing yourself in daily life situations) FSL teaching strategies, lesson ideas, and communication skills to implement the Core French IRP in elementary and middle schools. Contact Leslie Kennedy at (250) 721-7875, lkennedy@uvcs.uvic.ca.

**21-22 Vancouver.** B.C. Alternate Education Association Conference, Challenge and Change, Westin Bayshore. Contact Joyce Pauls (604) 859-3015, joyce\_pauls@sd34.abbotsford.bc.ca

**21-23 Vancouver.** Three-day intensive Leaders Training Program certifies registrants to facilitate Developing Capable People to parents, educators, and support staff. \$495 + GST includes \$250 worth of training materials. Contact Developing Capable People (Canada), 1-800-327-1090, F: (250) 545-1270.

## FEBRUARY

**4-5 Vancouver.** Teaching the Holocaust, An Educators' Conference, rationales and strategies for teaching the Holocaust within the context of B.C. curriculum and with a focus on Canada's historical role, Norman Rothstein Theatre and Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. \$70 before December 18; \$85 thereafter. Contact (604) 264-0499, F: (604) 264-0497, holocaust@direct.ca

**18-20 Victoria.** Renaissance 99: Celebrating Our Creative Spirit, 43rd Annual B.C. Art Teachers' Association Conference, MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria. An evening at the Royal British Columbia Museum will feature the genius of the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci. Contact Lily Wallace, c/o Cedar Hill Junior Secondary School, 3910 Cedar Hill Road, Victoria, BC V8P 3Z8, (250) 4776945, F: (250) 721-1960.

http://www.bctf.bc.ca/events/PD-Calendar.html

October PD Day	
1999-2000	October 22

Any additions or changes? E-mail Debby Stagg, PSA services co-ordinator, Professional Development Division, BCTF, dstagg@bctf.bc.ca

# From Coquitlam to the Yukon

by Chris King  
and Phil Wright

"I can't believe we did it!" "This is the best thing I have ever done!" "An experience of a lifetime. I won't ever forget this. Wow!"

Those were just a few of the many reactions of the 21 students from Gleneagle Secondary School, in Coquitlam, who were part of a 19-day trip to the Yukon in which they paddled 368 km down the Teslin and Yukon rivers in eight-and-a-half days. The trip was organized by the teachers who run the Outdoor Club.

Gleneagle, a new Grade 9-12 school, opened just last year. As part of the inaugural year, teachers Phil Wright and Chris King planned and organized the trip, not only to celebrate the new school, but also to continue to promote outdoor activities among young people. Wright, who ran successful outdoor clubs for 18 years in other schools in the district, met up with King at their last school, Hastings Junior. When both teachers moved to Gleneagle, they decided that if the outdoor club were to become a major extra-curricular activity for students it would need to catch the imagination of the students and set a standard for the new school. With the help of their colleagues, Gerry Ott, Rick Thompson, Karen Skye, and Laurel Whatley, they planned the 19-day trip—with lectures, videos, and practice

*...the trip would demonstrate what is sometimes required to achieve a goal or cope with failure.*

in preparation for the June 19 departure date.

The 100th anniversary of the Yukon Gold Rush was a perfect reason to take the students north. The immediate educational value for the students was clear. In addition to tracing the steps of the early pioneers and their quest for lucre, the trip would demonstrate what is sometimes required to achieve a goal or cope with failure.

The outdoor experience would be unmatched. While on the river, the group would have to depend on each other (the area is isolated and untouched by encroaching civilization). Packing all

necessary gear, collecting water, finding campsites, digging latrines, cooking meals, dealing with insects, practising low-impact or no-trace camping, solving problems both personal and

mechanical, paddling 50 to 75 km a day, and putting up with a sun that never sets, are just some of the challenges that faced this group of young explorers.

Students were both novice

and experienced campers. Two had never camped before, and a few were veterans of fifth-wheel and motorhome camping. Paddling experience also ran the gamut from none to instructors' certification.

Most students had done some paddling as part of their elementary-school program. There were 8 girls and 13 boys from Grades 9-11, and only a few knew each other before signing up for the trip.

"I was amazed at how well we got along; while not everyone was my best friend, I knew that I could count on each and every one to help as required."

"The trip made me realize the good in people. I was constantly surprised by the little things someone would do to make my life easier, from carrying my pack up a steep bank to sharing a granola bar on the river."

"I can't believe it went so smoothly. I was sure that we would run out of fuel or food."

"Even after a hard day paddling, there was still time to play."

*Some were pleased with the physical accomplishment; others, with the sense that somehow they have grown personally.*

"Some people had to learn to compromise; a hard lesson."

"It is hard to believe that there are still places like that in the world; and to imagine it is in our own neck of the woods."

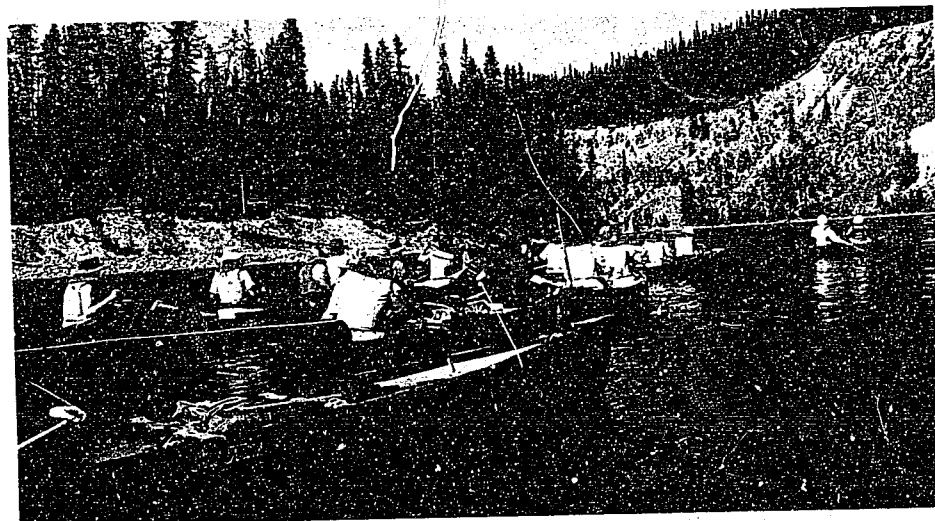
"I am going back when I graduate."

The value that the students received from the experience can never be measured. It affected each differently. Some were pleased with the physical accomplishment; others, with the sense that somehow they have grown personally. Within some, a love for the outdoors was planted deep within and a true appreciation for nature and its beauty ingrained.

The friendships, memories, and emotions linger. The group got together in early September to share pictures; the laughter and non-stop chatter indicating that it was indeed a trip to remember.

The students and staff of Gleneagle's Outdoor Club are grateful to all those who helped plan the trip.

*To find out more about the trip, contact Phil Wright or Chris King, at Gleneagle Secondary School, in Coquitlam.*



Twenty-one students from Gleneagle Secondary School's Outdoor Club paddled 368 km down the isolated Teslin and Yukon rivers in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Yukon Gold Rush.

GLENEAGLE SECONDARY SCHOOL PHOTOS