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# Teacher



by Lily Dyson

Student teaching is generally considered the most important pre-service training for students enrolled in education programs. A key element in successful student teaching is the supervision provided by the sponsor teacher. McBride and Skau (1995) suggest that the supervision relationship between student teachers and sponsor teachers, along with university supervisors, constitutes a “community of persons.” Satisfactory practicum supervision, then, must be based on the development of trust as well as the appreciation of one another as co-members of a single community.

Student teachers and sponsor teachers enter into the supervisory relationship from different backgrounds, with the student teacher drawing on years of experience as a student and the sponsor teacher, from the experience of teaching (Bain, 1991). Do sponsor teachers and practicum students hold similar understanding of processes in the practicum

supervision? What are the perceptions and experiences about practicum supervision? What resources and difficulties exist in the practicum supervision? What are the benefits of sponsoring practicum students? These are but some of the questions a



Darrell Brewer and student teacher Lynette Brook, John Allison Elementary School, Princeton (see story p. 10).

research study has set out to answer at the University of Victoria with support from the BCTF.

The study is designed to interview a total of 75 individuals, including 25 sponsor teachers, 25 pre-practicum students, and 25

post-practicum students. The study hopes to help sponsor teachers and student teachers learn more about the practicum supervision so that they may better understand each other. Teacher-training institutions and service organizations may also be able to better prepare teachers and students for practicum supervision and practicum teaching.

Seventeen sponsor teachers have been interviewed to date. Future practicum students are being interviewed. Results to date show that teachers perceived and experienced the benefits of supervising practicum students.

- This is evidenced by the reasons given by sponsor teachers for becoming a sponsor:
  - “It’s fun; it’s wonderful. I think the kids benefit.”
  - “I’ve often found that that’s a very rewarding experience for me and my students. I learn from the student teacher and I consider that to be a good experience...”
  - “Student teachers bring enthusiasm to the classroom. I



President's message



Kit Krieger

Each year, the BCTF submits an education-funding brief to government, offering our best advice on priorities as government goes through its budget-setting process. The BCTF brief for the 1999-2000 fiscal year went to MLAs in December. Given the state of the provincial economy and the scarcity of resources for all public programs, the funding brief is critically important. I presented last year's brief to both the NDP and the Liberal Caucus and to the minister of finance. Our brief was supported by thousands of faxes to MLAs from teachers detailing the impact of underfunding in their schools and classrooms. The result was the first education budget this decade to keep pace with enrolment and inflation. This year's brief again emphasizes the dramatic changes that have affected schools over the past decade, and it emphasizes the failure of funding to keep pace with those changes. Enrolment of students with special needs is up 65% since 1990! The number of ESL students has increased by 130% over the same period. Yet funding per student in constant dollars declined by \$300 per student. Put in other terms, if per pupil funding in 1998-99 matched that of 1990-91, 3,200 more teachers would be in the system. The brief includes a call for government to fully fund the collective agreement and to begin to restore the funding cuts suffered during the '90s. It calls for a government-funded Teacher Professional Development Service and reiterates our position that government should phase out the \$132 million sent to private schools. Our brief will be supported by presentations to MLAs and lobby efforts by local presidents. The annual brief is one more example of the benefits of a united voice for teachers through their provincial union.

Dear Pat Clarke

I am a recently retired vice-principal in the Shuswap. I was moved to look more closely at the issue of the failing-boys ratio after your first article on the subject some years ago. I agree with many of the points you make and have some observations to add. As a vice principal, I helped many high-risk students. Many of the boys frustrated with the system found that the static nature of the classroom aggravated the frustration they felt. I started a program where they were put into practical work-placement situations ranging from an hour a week to alternate days every week, depending on the risk level of the students. The students had some positive role models outside the home, heard from those who were on the job regarding the qualifications for the jobs, and experienced some activity other than the constant writing-skills-based learning we expected of our students. We had measurable success with the program and significantly reduced the discipline problems in the classroom and increased the success rate of our at-risk students. We have been very successful with our programs for girls in making them aware of opportunities. We need to make the same concerted effort for boys, with a focus on their needs and unique talents and character. We need to consider our teaching styles, students' learning styles, and role models, as we did to attract girls to the sciences. If we do not address this issue, we will have to deal with the end product in society at a later date. Your articles are a big help in raising awareness in this matter. **Doug Leatherdale** Shuswap

When Pat Clarke informed me that my belief in educational choice means that I "do not agree with, do not understand, or do not care about" democratic principles, I thought I had better refresh my understanding of the definition of *democracy*. According to Webster, *democracy* means: "That form of government in which the supreme power rests with the people, ruling themselves either directly or indirectly through representatives aptly expressed by Abraham Lincoln's phrase, of the people, by the people, for the people. The right to private freedom." I humbly submit that perhaps it's Pat Clarke who doesn't really understand. His letter does make sense, however, if we substitute his use of *democratic* with the word, *socialist*. It makes the fundamental error of equating equality of opportunity (i.e., a level playing field

where the same rules apply to all) with sameness of social result or outcomes (i.e., wages, incomes, material resources, intelligence). As William Gairdner points out in his book, *The Trouble with Canada*, this type of state-enforced equality is an unattainable goal and is actually mutually exclusive with liberty. By all means, defend public education; but don't legislate death to other options. And please don't do it in the guise of democracy. **Tom Williams** Sunshine Coast

I felt quite dismayed when I read the letter (*Teacher*, October 1998) from the TOC maligning the B.C. College of Teachers as a "Vander Zalm" ploy to "money grab" her hard-earned wages. The college was initiated by statute under a Socred government, but since that time, it has been a responsible and responsive body that has dealt with its legal mandate with both compassion and fairness. In my time as an elected BCCT councillor, the Executive of the BCTF has been most forthcoming in its pursuit of a more collaborative dialogue with the BCCT and that is only to its credit. I am sorry that teachers' salaries have not kept abreast of the cost of living for much of the last decade and a half. I, as a single parent of many years, in the most consistently expensive city in Canada, am more than aware of that. However, cutting BCCT fees, so that it is not able to provide the necessary services for which it is responsible and that we expect, is not an answer. **Judith Giles** Coquitlam

In May 1998, Maureen Pollard succumbed to cancer, at the age of 49. An extraordinary wife, mother, and teacher, she was known and loved by a larger group for the generosity of her friendship. For her final 10 years, she was at Emily Carr Elementary School, where she earned the love of her students, the admiration of parents, and the respect and friendship of her colleagues. Tax-deductible gifts to the bursary fund will assist deserving students entering elementary school teaching and will perpetuate the name of an exceptional person. The initial goal of the bursary campaign is \$10,000, which can be matched by an equal amount from the provincial government. To contribute, forward a cheque, payable to SFU, to Maureen Pollard Memorial

Bursary Fund, Office of University Advancement, SFU, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6. For more information, please call Gail McKechnie, SFU, (604) 291-5315. **Bob Pollard** Vancouver

I appreciated the September issue's three articles on educating against racism. Regarding the racist symbols, many youth draw and use some of these symbols in ignorance of their meaning or just because they like the design. So it is valuable to make us all aware what these symbols stand for. The article would have done well to avoid its own brand of stereotyping. It does not help dialogue to use the phrase "red-neck anger." "Red-neck" is a name-calling that does nothing to clarify the issue, but just serves in its turn to label and de-humanize another. If we wish to combat the use of slurs against people/groups, we must begin by modelling that courtesy to those with whom we disagree. **Margaret and Ted Cooper** Powell River

The Social Justice Training Conference was a lesson on practicality for many BCTF activists. Serious concerns were raised by members who are committed to doing social justice work as to how this model will actually work in locals. At the session on gender, most people had concerns about the loss of the SW Program and the SW staff person at the BCTF. Some of the questions raised at the gender session were: Who will continue to update the SW workshops? Why haven't SW contacts received information on S/W matters from the BCTF this year? How could they carry out the goals of the SW Program without a provincial SW committee or a network of SW contacts? Who will train local SW committee chairs to carry on the work in the local? Zone meetings were held at the SJ Conference to highlight common concerns and identify strategies. Information was provided about applying for social-justice grants. But we were soon back to practical questions. How would grant applications be considered? Do individual members, committees, or locals apply? Can a local apply for more than one grant? How will locals decide who can apply? During the last zone meeting of the conference, the groups were asked to choose a topic that everyone felt was important and that they could work on as a zone. While there were

common concerns about some areas, it was impossible for the metro zone to choose a single issue. No one wanted to exclude some of the areas that were important to committees in their local. There were PAR people, SW people and H&H people, but no SJ people, and we all realized that there was pressure to pick an issue or a theme that would become the major project for social justice and possibly exclude other topics. The experience of feminists at the SJ Conference has reaffirmed the goal of the Feminist Caucus, a province-wide group of feminist activists, to have the SW Program reinstated at the 1999 AGM. The Feminist Caucus is not opposing the SJ Program. But feminists realize that the extensive nature and pervasiveness of sexism demands a full Federation effort and a return to a provincial Status of Women program, committee, and local network. To receive information about the Feminist Caucus, please contact Judy de Vries at 29320 McTavish Rd., Abbotsford, BC V4X 2G2. Web site: <http://my.page.direct.ca/swilson/> **Gina Gagne**, New Westminster Teachers' Union **Maeve Moran**, Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

I was interested in the student perspective on corporate advertising in schools (*Teacher*, Nov./Dec. 1998). It's a topic of concern for everyone in education. Many companies and individuals benefit students in a variety of ways without direct advertising in schools. I hope that we can continue to encourage those who share their skills with students, the many people who offer some form of mentoring and the opportunity for business to provide some of the increasingly complex tools of education. At the same time, I recognize that it is a fine line; and that students must be educated in a free and open environment. **Tom Ferris** Trustee, SD 61 (Gr. Victoria)

Your lead articles (Nov./Dec. 1998 *Teacher*) are timely! Now retired from Vancouver (where I taught music), I remember resisting corporate sponsorship in spite of the "benefits" offered, and the pressures to accept. I have written to the students of Thomas Haney Secondary School thanking them and encouraging them to continue. Thanks also to Erika Shaker and your cartoonist, Haddock. **John Fearing** Winlaw

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# LOOKING BACK

## 70 years...

"The Teachers' Pensions Act passed its Third Reading in the Provincial Legislature at five minutes past ten o'clock on Friday evening, March 15, 1929, and was assented to by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor at the close of the Session on Wednesday, March 20.

"The Act will come into operation on the first day of April, 1929, and the first payments by teachers will be made from the salaries paid at the end of April.

— *The B.C. Teacher*, March 1929

## 50 years...

"Most of our present pension troubles seem to be attributable to that shocking impasse of the thirties when the whole of our pension structure erected on the flimsiest financial and actuarial foundations nearly came tumbling down about our luckless heads...Be that as it may, we found ourselves consequently in a situation unrivaled, as far as I can discover, for futility and sheer inadequacy by any pension scheme operated by any government for any public service anywhere in the world...

## Oops!

### Peace and global education

In the Nov./Dec. 1998 issue of *Teacher*, p. 13, we inadvertently reported that Twila Konynenbelt is president of the Teachers of Peace and Global Education PSA. Twila is the newsletter editor of the PSA and Judy Braden is president.

### B.C. Treaty Process Awareness Test

The answer to the question "What is the significance to First Nations of OIC (Order in Council) 1036?" on page 11 of the Nov./Dec. issue of *Teacher*, had an error in the percentage reported in the answer. The correct percentage is 5% not 105%.



## Notice of AGM '99

As required by the Society Act, the following formal notice of the 1999 Annual General Meeting is made to all BCTF members pursuant to by-law 8.1 by publication in this edition of *Teacher*:

The 83rd Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation will be held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver, beginning on Sunday, March 14, 1999 at 19:00 and continuing to Wednesday, March 17, 1999.

"Second only to an increased service pension should be inaugurated a voluntary retirement plan for both men and women at age 60. I have never understood the argument behind the genial but fantastic assumption that "the gentler sex" must inevitably and invariably collapse beneath the teaching burden five years earlier than her male counterpart, when insurance and other statistics clearly show that having surmounted successfully the critical ages of 50 to 55 her future expectation of a healthy and vigorous life is substantially greater than his."

*The B.C. Teacher*, April 1949

Note: In 1949, mandatory retirement age was 65 for men and 60 for women.

## 30 years...

[humour] "Now that it's dirty to be over 30, youth has taken command and the middle-aged teacher has been shunted into Limbo...According to Dr. Kenneth H. Superman, the inventor of aerobics (the science of keeping physically fit without will power), the best way for the middle-aged teacher to get

back in shape is to take up some ugly middle-aged hobby like jogging around the streets in the dawn's surly light...

"As a matter of fact, jogging teachers are now so common in the district where I live that at an intersection not far from my house, an official from the SPCA goes on duty at 6 a.m. to make sure that not too many little old ladies walking their dogs are run over by us groggy joggers in the half-wit light of morning."

*The B.C. Teacher*, April 1969

## 10 years...

"One in every 50 teachers drew short-term benefits from the Salary Indemnity Plan in 1987.

"That startling number represents a one-third increase over preceding years. The causes of this sudden increase are unknown, but they may be the result of the cumulative effect of stress in the system (Bills 19 and 20), the increasing age of the teaching force, the elimination of the 10-day waiting period and greater member awareness of SIP benefits."

*Teacher*, Nov./Dec. 1988

## BCTF Web Site— What's New www.bctf.bc.ca

Recent news from BCTF Communications staff is online as soon as it is written! Check out the current issues of:

- *BCTF News* (<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bctfnews/>)
- *Issue Alert* (<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/alert/>)
- *News Release* (<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/NewsReleases/current/>)
- *Staff Rep News* (<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/StaffRepNews/>)

These publications respond to the pressing education and labour issues of concern to BCTF members.

The Inclusion Resource Network Web site is a collaborative project of the seven BCTF PSAs supporting students with special needs. The Web site features publications, resource databases, and a calendar of ProD events. Each month, one PSA will contribute current information to the site.

([www.bctf.bc.ca/IRN/](http://www.bctf.bc.ca/IRN/))

—Diana Broome

## Striking Kenyan teachers released from jail

Several readers have contacted us with questions about the fate of the arrested Kenyan teacher pictured on the cover of October's *Teacher* newsmagazine. According to the latest information from Education International, all teachers arrested in connection with the national strike have been released and no charges will be laid.

The Kenyan National Union of Teachers called off the strike after two weeks. Factors

leading to the KNUT's decision included: harassment of teachers, government threats to decertify the union, government refusal to remit union dues to KNUT, and increased parental pressure as the strike approached national exam time.

KNUT leaders met with President Moi, who has agreed to honour the earlier agreement granting significant increases to teachers' salaries, but only when Kenya's economic situation improves. Union dues once again are being remitted to KNUT, and further discussions will take place.

— Nancy Knickerbocker

## Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

**1 Snow Science.** Susan Martin, K-7 Science Co-ordinator 1996-97, BCTF 13p. ©1996. This unit includes 12 suggested snow activities, questions for investigation, activity sheets, a quiz, and reference material. K-7. LA 8560—\$2.25

**2 Off and Running: 100 Word Processing Activities for Elementary Students.** Linda Harrison, 127p. 1986. Includes word processing activities universal to all computers and all word processors. Designed to help teachers understand and teach the concepts. Minimal teacher prep and activities are presented in language arts, social studies, science, and arithmetic. Many activities are suitable for ESL students. K-7. LA 2102—\$8.25

**3 The Young and the Rightless.** Pat Clarke, Judith Coffin, Michele McManus, Ramona Sousa. 41p. 1995. This co-operatively planned global education unit, for Grade 9 social studies, is about child labour from the Industrial Revolution to the present. Includes four activities and variety of handouts. Grade 9. LA 2061—\$4.50

**4 How did it feel to be a pioneer child?** A language unit for later primary to support the study of B.C.'s past. Wendy Patrick. 21p. 1990. This history study uses a holistic process so that the student is immersed in pioneer life. Content and resource materials enhance the student's level of language development. Unit outlines four lesson plan overview charts and a role-drama. LA 8233—\$4

**5 Map Reading: Skills and Activities for Intermediate Grades.** Alice Tiles. 125p. 1983. Sequential development of basic map reading skills, starting at the concrete level and moving to the abstract. Students progress to simplified maps. Students engage in activities involving their surroundings and objects familiar to them. Seventeen lessons and a map-reading skills test are included. Grades 4-6. LA 9287—\$10

**6 Expanding Horizons—An Integrated Renaissance and Enlightenment Unit.** Terry Olson. 100p. ©1998. Student Centered Publications. Includes over 100 individual and group activities suitable for Grade 8 social studies and humanities teachers. Instructional processes are consistent with strategies of student-centred learning, self-directed learning, and outcome-based learning. Designed for students to explore the change that occurred as the Modern Age emerged from the Middle Ages, with independent learning station format for groups to work together and individually. Grade 8. LA 9238—\$19.95

**7 The Problem Solver.** Chris Alexiou. 68p. ©1998. Includes 10 problem-solver

story cards, questions, and blackline masters. A poster of 20 ways to solve problems without fighting is included. Designed to teach children to solve problems peacefully, make appropriate decisions, control their anger and impulsive behaviour, and develop empathy for others. Activities are based on actual events and each plot is a situation that most children will encounter during their elementary school years. K-3. LA 2327—\$19.95

**8 Weather Theme Unit.** Darlene B. Davis. 128p. ©1996. Designed to study weather and the role weather plays in our daily life. Hands-on approach encourages children to explore and ask why. The theme is connected to the curriculum, is to be presented over a four- to five-week period, and includes 37 lessons and hands-on activities. Grades 2-3. LA 8564—\$9.50

**9 Talk to Me.** Susanne Tabata. 45 min. VHS videocassette ©1995. Ten high school students from diverse racial, gendered, and socio-economic backgrounds discuss sensitive issues of race, gender, and class in a personal narrative format. Designed to open discussion and get students to critically think and talk about stereotypes, discrimination, and difference. Sections on racism, racism and immigration, racism and first nations, gender stereotypes, gender inequality, homophobia, and class/privilege. Discussion guide included. Secondary. LA SR300—\$24.95

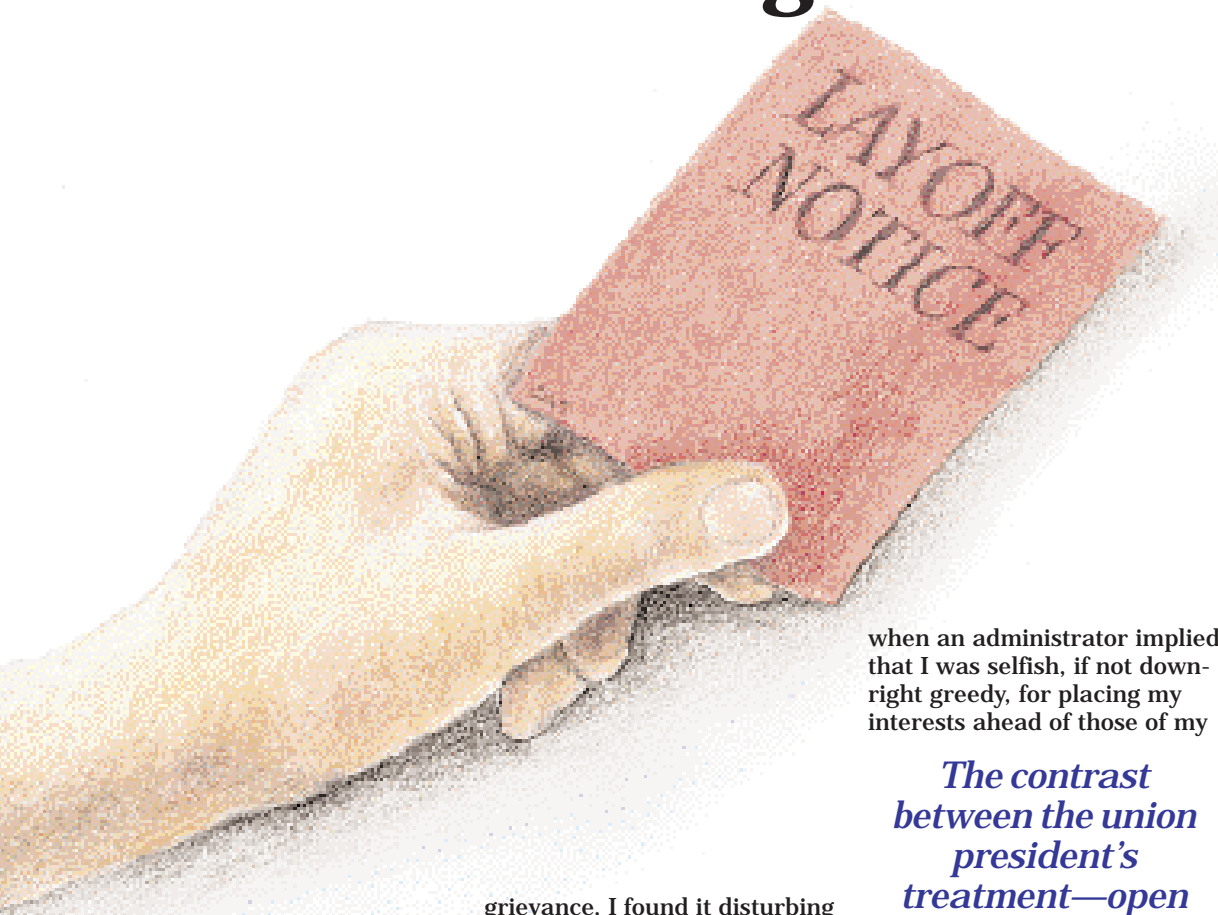
**10 Job Smart—Instuctor Kit.** Canadian Labour Congress ©1997. This kit is for young adults on rights and responsibilities in the workplace. Designed to be offered to a class of similar ages, and to be participant centred. The course will assist participants in understanding the different types of legislation that govern their rights in the workplace and give them the skills to interpret and respond appropriately to situations that arise in their own workplaces. Covers: minimum standards, health and safety, human rights, sexual harassment, unions, organizing young workers, collective agreements, child labour, and building solidarity. Material is organized into eight one-hour modules and a one-hour conclusion exercise. Modules can be taught separately or in combination. Ages 15-24. LA 2213—\$18

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.



# Reflection on a grievance



when an administrator implied that I was selfish, if not downright greedy, for placing my interests ahead of those of my

*The contrast between the union president's treatment—open ended, informative, and responsive—and the patronizing and "guilting" approach of the administrator was clear.*

fellow teachers and the students in the district. The contrast between the union president's treatment—open ended, informative, and responsive—and the patronizing and "guilting" approach of the administrator was clear.

We won the grievance. Now senior teachers know that they can choose whether to accept less than a 1.0 FTE or a severance package. Doubtless the game will change, as jobs continue to decline and competition for them increases. But the rules, as laid out in our collective agreement, won't permit the tailoring of jobs as blatantly as in the past. Senior staff can have some security in the face of continued declining enrolment.

I feel stronger about myself in relation to the hierarchy in school systems. It is clear to me that those in power may try to shame us to maintain their power. It raises questions for me as a teacher, about the means by which we maintain power in the classroom. Are we providing opportunities for children to exercise their choices? Is there hope for democracy in schools?

Above all, I am deeply grateful to Ken, who as local president provided respectful and informed support. It is not easy, after 45 years of being immersed in the subtle power relations in schools, first as a student, then as a teacher, to stand up and assert my interests. I am lucky, and so are we all, to have the dedication and skill of those who are our representatives in that struggle. They are protecting far more than a collective agreement. They are creating a space within which we can challenge an unhealthy need to comply.

*Kelly Murphy teaches in SD 68 (Nanaimo).*

grievance, I found it disturbing to be in conflict with the dominant authority in the local system. I had to place myself outside the comfortable relationship with those in authority. It was unsettling. I felt uncertain that I could separate myself from needing to be in agreement with the board and their executive. The power structure has been deeply embedded in my consciousness since childhood and reinforced throughout all the years of teaching.

Once I decided to explore the grievance procedure, Ken Zdyk, my local union president in Alberni, was a model of respectful support. He provided information and an interpretation of the contract that seemed to be consistent with what I understood, and then he let me decide what I would do.

I initiated a formal grievance. Anxiety continued. What will my employers think of me? What will this mean for my reputation as an educator? Am I being fair to all? Principally, the question was, "Is it OK for me to place my interests ahead of those espoused by the board?"

*The process was empowering and illuminating.*

Challenging authority seemed a risky business. It would be very interesting to understand the dynamics of that response. Where are the boundaries for people who have spent most of their lives in an institution that perpetuates compliance with and approval from authority?

Again, Ken provided a broad picture of the situation and then coloured it in with specific examples of what the grievance could mean for me and for others. At no time was he directive or judgmental.

The process was empowering and illuminating. The more I read our contract and then compared the experience leading to the grievance with what the contract outlined, the more evident it became that a grievance was both appropriate and timely.

The turning point came

by Kelly Murphy

Schools teach the values of the dominant society. They exist to inculcate those values in young people, to teach skills and to transmit socially acceptable behaviours. Of all those tasks, transmitting values is the least examined throughout the students' experience of school. For example, the unspoken structure of schools places students at the bottom of a hierarchical pyramid. At the top are boards and their executive wings. To "get along," one has to be on good terms with those in power. That is as true of teachers as it is of students.

Teachers, too, are immersed in institutionalized dominant values. We carry them around in our heads, sometimes consciously, sometimes not. Our behaviour in the classroom models social values. The materials we use, the curriculum delivery models—all of the art and science of teaching—pass on to young people what our society currently believes to be necessary. Much has been written about the "hidden curriculum" of schooling. There is general acceptance that it exists and it is us.

Last spring, the district in which I was employed began reducing staff. It is a declining district, affected by the downturn in traditional primary resource industries. Mills have closed; people have been leaving and taking their school-aged children with them. The board issued layoff letters to many of us who had years of experience, expecting that we would hang in for less than a 1.0 FTE, and "tailoring" postings so only the junior staff could actually apply for them. Some very odd jobs appeared on the "bumping" list. I felt a good deal of anxiety about job security and watched as others senior to me were also treated shoddily.

So when I had to decide whether or not to initiate a

## Social justice: the BIG picture

by Pat Clarke

Teachers are among the first in our society to see the repercussions of the denial of social, economic, and cultural rights. Teachers face hungry children in the classroom who are not only robbed of their energy and ability to learn but also robbed of their sense of security and worth as valued members of the human community. Teachers see the sell-off of children's right to learn. Instead of the school being a place to learn, a place to think and develop freely, the school becomes a marketplace opportunity, and children's minds, a commodity to sell to corporations."

*Teachers can play a key role in putting human rights and social justice back on the agenda.*

With that stirring description of how teachers can be part of society's conscience, Kathleen Ruff, a renowned social-justice and human-rights activist, opened the BCTF Social Justice Conference, attended by 250 local presidents and social-justice contacts. She set out a formidable but essential challenge for teachers and our unions: Teachers can play a key role in putting human rights and social justice back on the agenda. Our communities are alive with youth programs, literacy projects, and social-justice agencies like End Legislated Poverty, that would welcome the forceful role teachers' unions can play in working for social justice.

Ruff explained that the increasingly crucial understanding for teachers, indeed for any citizens with concern for social justice and human rights, as set out in the 50-year-old UN Declaration of Human Rights, is that human rights are interdependent and interconnected. Denial of social and economic rights brings denial of civil and political rights, and vice versa. Because of that, social justice activists need to look at the big picture. What is the climate and context in which we are working? What values and agendas are being propagated by those who hold power but have little enthusiasm for social justice?

Kathleen Ruff's speech focussed the conference on the central question: How can a teachers' union become an effective agent for progressive social change? How can we play a visible and co-operative role in making our communities places where equity prevails and discrimination is unknown?

The conference tried to answer these important but complicated questions. Participants heard presentations from community groups such as End Legislated Poverty, other unions that have worked on social-justice issues, and community activists who have

long experience with progressive community development.

Linda Moreau, of End Legislated Poverty, spoke of how ELP had worked with the BCTF to form a community coalition to develop action plans on ending poverty and lobbying government for more progressive social legislation. She explained how teachers and their organizations can be an important source of support for social agencies such as ELP. She outlined ways that local unions can connect and work with antipoverty groups in their communities.

Michael Clague, a former director of the Social Planning and Research Council, explained community development and how schools and teacher organizations are connected to community development processes that advance social justice. He spoke of the useful role teachers can play in involving youth in community development. His examples of issues teachers had helped students understand and act upon ranged from sustainability issues to access to community services for youth and projects to enhance opportunities for young single mothers.

In addition to those presentations, a number of "best-practice" sessions highlighted the work of teachers and community workers who had developed practical and successful social-justice projects or had undertaken successful actions for social change. One of the best known is the Macdonald Elementary School action, taken during the 1996-97 school year. Barb Parrott and Mel Lehan presented the Macdonald story. They gave a fascinating and inspiring account of how the local (Vancouver Elementary) with the support of the BCTF had worked to build a coalition of teachers, parents, and community activists to address the effects of poverty at the school and press the Vancouver School Board into dedicating more resources to what had become a school in crisis.

*"Teachers have the power. You are connected to information, knowledge, ideas."*

The conference was the first step in what will be a long and complex process of making the Federation a true social-justice union, a union that not only serves the economic and professional interests of its members but also plays an active role in community-based partnerships and coalitions aimed at building equitable and sustainable communities. As Kathleen Ruff said, "Teachers have the power. You are connected to information, knowledge, ideas. You are the opposite of silence and suppression."

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



# School boards must maintain independence of school from church

The B.C. Supreme Court has ruled that the Surrey School Board contravened the School Act when it decided to ban three children's books that feature same-sex parents. The ruling by Justice Mary Saunders overturned a board resolution that banned the books *Asha's Mums*, *Belinda's Bouquet* and *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads* from Surrey classrooms. As well, it overturned another board resolution that disallowed resources by the Gay and Lesbian Educators of B.C. Lawyer Joe Arvay, who represented teachers James

Chamberlain and Murray Warren as well as parents and students who launched the court challenge, said he was thrilled with the December 17, 1998, decision. In her 52-page written decision, Saunders reviewed the history of public schooling in B.C. as a non-denominational system "based upon an independence of school from church." She concluded that the board was "significantly influenced by religious considerations" when it banned the three books, and therefore was in contravention of the *School Act*. The judge noted that "freedom of religion

includes freedom from religion." Although Saunders did not order that the books be allowed into the classroom, she referred the matter back to the board to reconsider in light of her reasons. And she made it clear she does not agree with the board's contention that the books raise issues of sexuality and sexual practices. "All parties concede such issues are inappropriate for kindergarten and grade one classes. In this case, however, the books simply do not raise these issues," she wrote. The board had argued that

the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects homosexual persons, not homosexual conduct. "On this reasoning, the School Board says that it sought to balance tolerance for homosexual persons with the views of some parents that homosexual conduct is not acceptable." Saunders responded to that argument, saying, "The protection of the Charter is not intended to be hollow. Where a defining characteristic of a person is his or her conduct and the conduct is not unlawful, Section 15 of the Charter protects equality rights for that person complete

with his or her conduct." The superintendent of schools in Surrey was asked about the message contained in the books and, according to the judge, he gave an accurate description when he said "that there are alternative family models, that these family models include same-sex parents, that these ought to be valued in the same way as other family models, that they are peopled by caring, thoughtful, intelligent, loving people who do give the same warmth and love and respect that others families do." - Nancy Knickerbocker

## Exploring literacy—a BCTF research project

by Janet Amsden

"We want parents to know that children learn to read more easily if they have been read to at home," said Patricia Porter, teacher at Vancouver's Queen Alexandra Elementary School. "We also want them to know that it doesn't matter what language they read. In fact, it's fine if they don't even read, but just make up a story to go with the pictures. The important thing is that they sit with their child and share a book."

Pat and colleagues Nicole Roy (Tennyson Elementary School), Sally Boschung, (Douglas Annex), and speech/language pathologist Marilou Carrillo, in a unique partnership with three parents (C.C. Duncan, Polly Jang-Wong, and Deborah Fenske) and BCTF Researcher Charlie Naylor, developed a way for teachers and parents to work together to support early literacy. The team is sharing what it learned, in the new BCTF research publication *Early Literacy*. *Early Literacy* is a binder of information and resources.

There are five sections to the (190-page) binder:

1. Ideas and Strategies for Collaboration: Ten Ways To Develop Home-School Links
2. Locally developed programs and workshops
3. Avoiding conflict when parents volunteer in schools
4. Local teacher research papers
5. Other parent-teacher literacy resources

As well as general strategies for teachers working with parents, the binder shows ways that parents with limited literacy in English or in their first language can support

their children's reading. After initial distribution to locals, the binder will be available through Lesson Aids. With the publication of the binder, the first phase of this project is complete. In the second phase, BCTF Research proposes to use the binder as a basis for its authors to present the research findings for teachers and parents. Five sessions are proposed for the following locations between February and June 1999:

- Metropolitan Vancouver (2)
- Vancouver Island
- Kelowna
- Prince George

In addition to the five research findings sessions, BCTF Research will explore collaborations with local teacher associations and school districts to offer similar workshops that promote teacher-parent collaborations to support children's literacy. For further information, contact Charlie Naylor at BCTF Research (604) 871-2254, F: (604) 871-2294, [cnaylor@bctf.bc.ca](mailto:cnaylor@bctf.bc.ca) Janet Amsden is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division.

## Occupational health and safety

by George Taylor

The health and safety of the people in our workplaces depends on a variety of factors: the nature of the work, the level of training, the condition of equipment, the hazards of materials used, the condition of building facilities, and many others. Most of all, health and safety depends on the effort of each of us to make the workplace healthier and safer. Safety is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace: teachers, support staff, custodial staff, administrators, and employers. Employers have the ultimate responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. The basic principles that guide health-and-safety activities in every workplace are outlined below:

### Workers' responsibilities

All workers are required to:

- avoid horseplay
- ensure ability to work is not impaired
- follow safe work procedures; e.g., use ladders, not chairs and desks, when putting up displays
- refuse to carry out work when there is an undue risk to the health and/or safety of any person
- report unsafe equipment and conditions to administrator(s) and document it
- report to the administrator(s) all work-related

injuries and/or illnesses and document the report

- use safety equipment.

### Employers' responsibilities

Employers must:

- ensure that all equipment is safe, and complies with regulations
- ensure that workers are properly trained in safety procedures; e.g., how to handle violent students effectively
- inform workers about the potential hazards in a workplace and how to minimize the risk
- inspect the workplace regularly
- record all injuries reported, and report accidents and injuries to WCB
- take all reasonable precautions to prevent accidents, injuries, and occupational diseases
- take immediate steps to eliminate or minimize workplace hazards.

At the recent BCTF leadership training course on occupational health and safety, a group of presidents brainstormed all the hazards they thought could affect the health and safety of their members. They looked at the hazards, at the risk levels, and at ways to prevent or minimize the hazard. In thinking about hazards and the level of risk, consider this: The hazard of crossing a road is possible injury, even death; the risk of

crossing a country road is much lower than that of crossing a freeway. Each workplace and hazard requires a different approach to dealing with the hazards. The following list shows the hazards only, and you can think of the risk level in your school and ways of eliminating or minimizing the hazards. The list, by no means exhaustive, will give you some idea of the potential hazards teachers and other workers may have to deal with in the education system.

### Hazards

Allergies  
Animal bites  
Asbestos  
Bomb threats  
Broken chairs  
Broken hand railings  
Carpeting—not cleaned properly  
Ceiling material falling down  
Chemical spills (labs)  
Chemicals (paints, cleaners)  
Coaches driving mini-buses  
Coaches, etc., injured after school

Cooking accidents  
Darkness in parking lots  
Deliberate contamination of teachers' food/drink  
Diseases—chicken pox, measles, mumps, etc.  
Driving to work sites for itinerant teachers  
Earthquakes  
Falls (putting up displays)  
Fires  
Floods  
Frayed electrical cords/plugs  
Gas leaks—no gas protection  
Harassment  
Hazards in labs/shops  
Hearing loss  
Holes in playground  
Ice, snow, mud  
Indoor air quality—moulds, fungus, toxic vapours, poor ventilation, CO, radon, etc.  
Infestations (rodents, etc.)  
Isolated portables  
Lack of cleanliness—toxic materials  
Laser lights—eye damage  
Lifting of students  
Moving trolleys and equipment from class to class  
Overcrowding  
Paper cuts  
PE teacher demonstrating or playing games with students  
RSI (repetitive strain injuries)  
Stairs  
Syringes  
Uneven concrete  
Unsecured shelving, storage  
Violence—colleagues  
Violence—parents  
Violence—strangers  
Violence—students  
Voice disorders  
Weapons—guns, knives, etc.  
Wet leaves causing slips

Worn and slippery flooring  
Year 2000 computer bug

If you are concerned about a health and safety problem, report it immediately to your administrator(s), to the staff representative, and to the occupational-health-and-safety representative (if your workplace has one). The employer must then investigate the complaint. If you believe you have been injured or made sick by an accident, a strain, or exposure to hazardous workplace material, report the resulting injury or disease to your administrator(s) right away, and if you believe it is necessary, seek medical treatment right away. Always report the injury or disease to your staff representative as soon as possible, and always ask for help from your staff representative and/or president when filling out a WCB claim. You do have one year in which to file a claim, but the claim is stronger if it is made early. WCB will usually question a claim that was not filed right away. The local association/ union and the BCTF will help make the process as stress-free as possible. Remember, occupational health and safety is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace. George Taylor is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division.





# Assessment

**What are we looking for?**  
*by Susan Close, Susan Clayton, and Sue Elliott*

In designing a five-day institute for teachers in the Peace River North School District, we were challenged to synthesize the research on assessment, teaching, and learning. Our journey through the literature and through recent professional experiences, led us to a number of wonderful resources. One in particular, published by the University of London, deepened our understanding of assessment as an inextricable part of effective learning.

The assessment process can begin with the question, What are we looking for? As we observe, notice, sit beside a student, we ask, How effective is his/her learning? That leads us to a bigger question, What is effective learning? What will we see, hear, notice, feel if the learning is effective?

From the article "Effective Learning" (Watkins, 1996), we've come to appreciate that effective learning has its own outcomes and processes.

Effective learning involves outcomes such as:

- Deepened knowledge
- Enhanced sense of self
- Further learning strategies
- Greater affiliation to learning
- Higher-order skills, strategies, and approaches
- More sense of connection with others
- Personal significance through a changed "meaning of experience"
- Positive emotions, excitement, and enthusiasm.

Effective learning involves processes of:

- Engaging with others in learning
- Exploring how the learning contexts have helped make the learning effective
- Making connections about what has been learned in different contexts
- Reflecting about one's learning and learning strategies
- Setting further learning goals.

Feedback from the assessment gives both the student and the teacher information. The student uses the information to reflect on learning and to set new learning goals. The

teacher uses the information to design further learning experiences. References cited in the article suggest there are criteria for effective teaching-learning processes. This research supports and extends the three principles of learning cited in the K-12 Plan and in each IRP.

*Susan Close, Langley; Susan Clayton, Peace River North; and Sue Elliott, West Vancouver, organized and facilitated the summer institute in Ft. St. John for 30 K-10 Peace River teachers.*

Excerpted from "Assessment—What are we looking for?" *Primary Leadership*, journal of the B.C. Primary Teachers' Association, Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1998.

## PLAP update

The BCTF has requested the Ministry of Education to conduct a full review of the May 1998 Reading and Writing Assessment (PLAP). In our submission to the ministry, we raised serious questions about the fairness, validity, and reliability of the PLAP assessment. Charles Ungerleider, deputy minister of education, has confirmed that he has initiated a review of the May 1998 PLAP assessment.

In response to concerns about the writing assignment related to home life on the PLAP assessment, the Privacy and Information Commissioner of B.C. has initiated an investigation. The BCTF is pleased that the commissioner will be investigating the matter.

The BCTF is also advising that future PLAP assessments adhere to the following principles:

- The purpose of the PLAP be for program review only and not for individual student or school assessment.
- The PLAP be administered on a sample, not census, basis.
- No coding methods be used on PLAP instruments to identify individual students.
- All aspects of the PLAP assessment be developed by a team consisting of education researchers, ministry staff, and teachers appointed by the BCTF.

— Mike Lombardi

For more information about PLAP, contact Mike Lombardi or Anita Chapman, BCTF PD Division.

## Manitoba classroom teachers to mark provincial tests

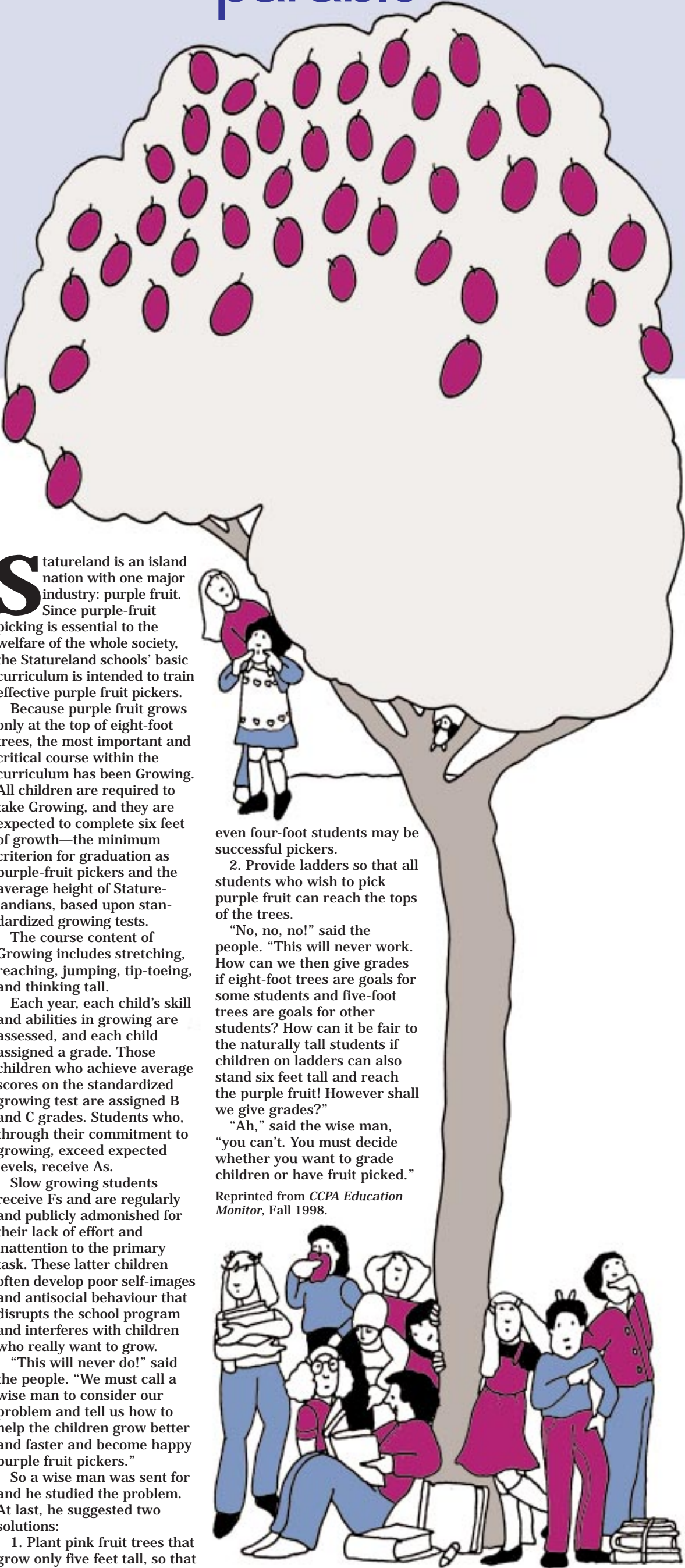
Manitoba teachers were surprised by a directive from the deputy minister of education in July making classroom teachers responsible for marking several Grade 6 and Senior 1 provincial standards tests. In the past, teachers administered the tests locally, but the tests were marked centrally by teachers compensated for their time.

"The Department of Education is only about halfway

through implementing their planned changes to assessment and evaluation. Now it is downloading marking these standards tests onto classroom teachers," said Ian MacIntyre, president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. "Is this the thin edge of the wedge? Will teachers eventually be marking all of the province's exams?"

Reprinted from *The Manitoba Teacher*, Newsmagazine of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, October/November 1998, Volume 77, No. 2.

# The purple-fruit-picking parable



Statureland is an island nation with one major industry: purple fruit. Since purple-fruit picking is essential to the welfare of the whole society, the Statureland schools' basic curriculum is intended to train effective purple fruit pickers.

Because purple fruit grows only at the top of eight-foot trees, the most important and critical course within the curriculum has been Growing. All children are required to take Growing, and they are expected to complete six feet of growth—the minimum criterion for graduation as purple-fruit pickers and the average height of Staturelandians, based upon standardized growing tests.

The course content of Growing includes stretching, reaching, jumping, tip-toeing, and thinking tall.

Each year, each child's skill and abilities in growing are assessed, and each child assigned a grade. Those children who achieve average scores on the standardized growing test are assigned B and C grades. Students who, through their commitment to growing, exceed expected levels, receive As.

Slow growing students receive Fs and are regularly and publicly admonished for their lack of effort and inattention to the primary task. These latter children often develop poor self-images and antisocial behaviour that disrupts the school program and interferes with children who really want to grow.

"This will never do!" said the people. "We must call a wise man to consider our problem and tell us how to help the children grow better and faster and become happy purple fruit pickers."

So a wise man was sent for and he studied the problem. At last, he suggested two solutions:

1. Plant pink fruit trees that grow only five feet tall, so that

even four-foot students may be successful pickers.

2. Provide ladders so that all students who wish to pick purple fruit can reach the tops of the trees.

"No, no, no!" said the people. "This will never work. How can we then give grades if eight-foot trees are goals for some students and five-foot trees are goals for other students? How can it be fair to the naturally tall students if children on ladders can also stand six feet tall and reach the purple fruit! However shall we give grades?"

"Ah," said the wise man, "you can't. You must decide whether you want to grade children or have fruit picked."

Reprinted from *CCPA Education Monitor*, Fall 1998.



L'idolâtrie des Tests

Depuis quelques années on perçoit une tendance qui favorise une augmentation de l'importance des tests uniformisés, tel que l'examen du Programme provincial d'évaluation des apprentissages (PLAP), comme une façon d'assurer l'imputabilité des programmes d'éducation publique. Dernièrement, le gouvernement a poussé la publication des résultats par école et veut même qu'on utilise les résultats dans l'évaluation sommative des élèves, de sorte que les écoles se sentent jugées par les résultats des PLAPs ce qui est une aberration.

Dans les milieux de l'éducation en français ceci est un thème particulièrement sensible, étant donné l'utilisation que la presse a fait des résultats du PLAP de Sciences humaines en 1997 et du silence sur les résultats du PLAP d'Anglais en 1998. Tout en reconnaissant le besoin d'imputabilité en éducation, les enseignants.es se demandent si les tests uniformisés sont la meilleure façon de le faire car eux, pour mesurer le progrès des élèves ils utilisent toute une batterie de procédures en plus des tests.

Cette année le Ministère prépare un nouveau PLAP pour les Maths, la compréhension de lecture et l'écriture, à être administré en mai 1999. Les enseignants.es directement contactés pour les recruter à la tâche de rédaction se sont fait dire qu'une réponse négative de leur part entraînerait l'option de faire tout simplement traduire l'examen en anglais. Traduire une lecture de l'anglais pour mesurer la compréhension de lecture en français? Cette possibilité absurde a donné la berlue à plus d'un collègue.

Les tests PLAP sont conçus normalement en détresse; des items sont traduits de l'anglais; et les items ne subissent pas toujours d'expérimentation pour assurer leur validité.

Ces examens PLAP coûtent au contribuables des sommes considérables d'argent. Elles coûtent à l'éducation publique beaucoup plus en prestige.

L'examen PLAP fut conçu comme une évaluation des programmes et non pas des élèves. Se sentant au pilori, quelques directeurs visitent les classes pour entraîner les élèves sur des techniques pour répondre un examen uniformisé "dans le cas improbable que ça pourrait jamais arriver." Des fois, des mystérieux anges gardiens dénichent des copies pirates de vieux PLAP et les mettent dans les boîtes des enseignants.es.

Avec une telle approche on apprend très peu sur ce que les élèves apprennent; sur ce qu'ils font dans leur salle; sur ce dont ils ont besoin. Espérons que dans l'avenir le gouvernement révisé sa politique d'imputabilité afin que l'éducation publique puisse continuer sa course vers l'excellence basée sur des données réelles.

- Teachers in French programs are worried by use of PLAP results.
- French versions of PLAP do not always measure students' knowledge.
- PLAP results tell us very little at a very high cost in money and prestige.

- Guillermo Bustos

Canada's taxes comparatively low

by Murray Dobbin

It is almost impossible these days to pick up a newspaper or listen to a newscast without hearing the corporate mantra that Canada must lower its taxes to become more competitive. Yet for all the propaganda, the claim that our taxes make us uncompetitive is just dead wrong.

Figures from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for the 29 industrialized countries for 1996 show that Canada is below the OECD average (and well below the European Union average) in terms of total tax revenues as a percentage of GDP, with a ranking of 18th.

Canada is below the OECD average (and well below the European Union average) in terms of total tax revenues as a percentage of GDP, with a ranking of 18th.

With respect to almost all the taxes that are commonly identified as making Canadian business uncompetitive, we are virtually equal to the U.S. or actually lower. Our corporate income taxes are competitive with those in the U.S. and elsewhere. Canadian payroll taxes are about two-thirds of the U.S. rate, and our property taxes are also lower.

Only in consumption taxes are we significantly higher.

But Canada's strong competitiveness goes beyond taxation. For three years running, the Canadian accounting firm KPMG has compared cities in the U.S. with those in Canada to determine where it is

...the cheapest American city was still more costly than the most expensive Canadian location as to labour, electricity, and cost of borrowing.

cheapest to do business. In all these surveys, the cheapest American city was still more costly than the most expensive Canadian location as to labour, electricity, and cost of borrowing. Canada's competitive advantage would disappear only if our dollar rose to 87¢ U.S.

Another KPMG study compared Canada with six other industrial countries: the U.S., the U.K., Italy, France, Germany, and Sweden. Again, Canada was the cheapest location in which to do business. Most significantly, with respect to effective, combined corporate income tax—that is, federal and provincial income taxes—Canada's rate was 27.4% compared with a U.S. rate of 40%.

The call for tax cuts is simply another front in the ideological war on govern-

ment. Ultimately, slashing taxes means that we would have less revenue for public education, universal medicare, and a modern infrastructure—the very aspects of the Canadian economy that make us competitive.

The OECD's figures also demonstrate that Canada has one of the most regressive tax systems of any industrialized nation. While our highest tax rate is equivalent to the European Union average and slightly higher than the OECD average, our lowest tax rate is much higher than either the EU or OECD average. In other words, our tax system favours the wealthy, who invest their extra income (often in unproductive speculative investments) while it penalizes working Canadians, who spend virtually every extra dollar they earn. What Canada really needs is tax reform—a shifting of the tax burden from poor and modest-income Canadians to those who have been getting more than their fair share of Canada's collective wealth.

The issue of tax reform relates closely to the financial crisis now facing the global economy. For 15 years, governments have been transforming the Canadian economy and society, gearing both for competition in the global economy, an economy that was assumed would always continue to grow.

We are now paying the price for that false assumption. To gear up for the global economy, Canadian governments savaged the domestic economy. They implemented a policy of

permanent recession: deliberately high unemployment aimed at dramatically lowering labour costs. This policy, coupled with slashes to UI and welfare rates, declining real minimum wages, and a huge shift in taxes onto working Canadians, has taken billions of dollars out of the domestic economy.

With the global economy severely weakened, Canadian governments must now devise policies aimed at strengthening the domestic economy—the one we can influence. We can implement policies of full employment, boost wages, promote small and medium-sized businesses, strengthen public services, and pursue progressive tax reform.

What Canada really needs is tax reform—a shifting of the tax burden from poor and modest-income Canadians to those who have been getting more than their fair share of Canada's collective wealth.

Murray Dobbin is an author and broadcaster, and a research associate with the B.C. office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. His most recent book, *The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen*, is available in bookstores. ([www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca))

Arnold and me

by Thomas P.J. Crean

I don't think I shall ever forget the day Arnold Schwarzenegger entered my life "for real." My family and I were having a quiet drive in the country when my five-year-old son squashed a bug against a window, saying, "Terminator! I'll be back." That was just the beginning; Arnold is but one of a host of characters we have dinner with each evening.

There is nothing new in kids' having heroes. Kids need heroes. But what happens when those heroes are intentionally offensive—especially to the people responsible for the child's upbringing? What happens when the possible effect of the programming becomes the destruction of the child's own confidence in the future or in himself/herself?

The arguments in favour of shock programming are economic. It's cheaper to shock people than skillfully entertain them. Violence sells better than love in the international entertainment markets. The problem, of course, is the effect that these images have over the long term on our attitudes and behaviour.

The eventual outcome of this seamless metamorphosis from electronic media programming into our subconscious mind may well be as dramatized in the movie "Scrooged." Bill Murray, playing the youngest

television network president in history, is taken back in time by the "Ghost of Christmas Past" only to find that all his childhood memories were TV shows he'd watched. Heaven help us if Kalle Lassn (*Adbusters*) is right: "We are what we watch."

Teachers have been in search of antidotes to the increasingly hostile world of video and television for at least three decades. What is curious is the notable lack of presence in this movement on the part of most of us: the parents.

After owning a video production company for several years, I do not have the luxury of believing that shock entertainment is an accident or that it will cure itself. It is an economic problem that requires an economic antidote. I have a suggestion. In most industries, there are far more small businesses than there are big businesses. Most small-business people with families are parents first and executives second. Just like all parents, these people need the empowerment of media literacy. They can't teach their children to manage a media environment they can't manage themselves.

Encouraging a parent who may be the local dry cleaner to organize a letter-writing campaign or to raise money to

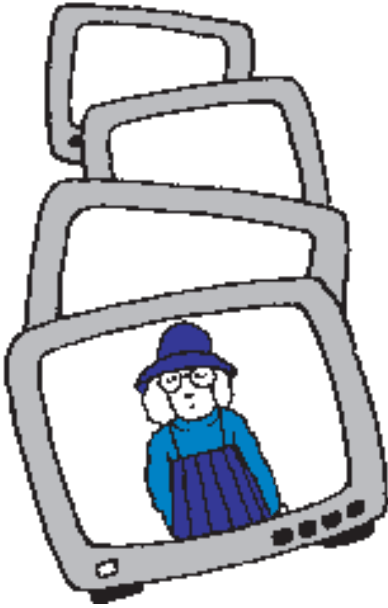
broadcast Media Foundation (*Adbusters*) ads, for example, will further the cause of media education. And parents working in media can provide leadership within their profession while helping to exert pressure on regulators. The opportunities are endless when you start to connect and organize small businesses. Big business's response to the superior efficiency of small business over big is called "downsizing." Small businesses get things done.

Neil Postman said at the Media Sciences Institute at Harvard in 1993 that "education is the only information system to survive commercialization." We know that this oversight is in the process of being corrected!

Studies show that our children absorb media images uncritically until they are 12 years old. If empowered, teachers can play an integral role in helping parents to recognize the need to take control of their home media environment. As more and more of our children shoot each other, what could be more important?

Thomas P.J. Crean is a parent, small business person, and a member of the board of directors of CAME (Canadian Association of Media Educators).

Source: CAME Newsletter, April 1998.



Shame permeates my pores

In My House We Have Four TVs.

There are four of us. We Are Thinking Of Getting Another One Because one of them is too small.

- Catherine Green Grade 9



PART II

# Classrooms and other commodities

by Erika Shaker

## The Second Annual Canadian Education Industry Summit

In spite of the enormous implications of the event, including participation by Federal Minister of International Trade Sergio Marchi, the Second Annual Canadian Education Industry Summit took place on October 7, 1998, in Toronto virtually unnoticed by mainstream media. According to organizer Charles Ivey, the summit was a forum for enterprising educational institutions and investors alike to benefit from a climate of “government cutbacks, and the onset of competitive mentalities and demanding stakeholders.”

Gerald Odening, of SmithBarney, explained how the education industry is divided into three sections—education-management organizations (EMOs), training and development providers, and educational products (software, desks, chairs). See sidebar EMOs and HMOs. While private funding of education has been in practice for many years, he informed participants, there has been a shift in both public and corporate sentiment, driven by technological progress; the knowledge that, unlike 30 years ago, a liberal-arts education is no longer enough—we now require applied skills and technology; and pure demographics, which has resulted in a crush of new students moving toward graduation—and directly benefiting the post-secondary education industry.

John McLaughlin, editor of *Education Industry Report*, told participants that the education industry is a global event, a mega-trend—a world search for knowledge. With the advent of charter schools and EMOs, home schooling, and world-wide corporate universities, education is evolving into a product that

transcends national borders. Britain will be holding 25 action summits for education; the American-based Edison Project will be bidding on several British schools; the South African-based Educorp owns a majority share in International Business Schools. We can also look forward to the Internet providing U.S. and Canada quality education on an international scale. Clearly, the rules have changed, with the World Bank taking a much more active role in education reform and private initiatives. Perhaps Canada should re-evaluate to determine why it's

*McLaughlin said we have to look at how social changes are creating a climate more friendly to privatization.*

proportionally lagging so far behind this tidal wave of reform.

McLaughlin said we have to look at how social changes are creating a climate more friendly to privatization. Education was never intended to care for children as moms went back to work—the private sector has stepped into this area and has not been criticized. The at-risk market (students with special needs) is politically safe because people are eager to get rid of students notoriously difficult to teach.

Education is moving toward consumer-based choice, and not just for those who can “afford” it. But we must always remember, cautioned McLaughlin, that education is a transforming product and a societal influence. To ignore this will result in public criticism.

The final presentation was by Federal Minister of

International Trade Sergio Marchi. The minister, a big promoter of international education and export opportunities, said *education industry* is a term that would have been unthinkable not so long ago, but it is an industry and we must bring to it the same ideas and approaches we do to other industries.

We have an obligation to promote the education industry abroad, to open up new markets, and create a “fair playing field.” Clearly, the federal government has made education a top priority, with the goal of exporting education. (This was made clear in the underpinnings of the February budget with the Scholarship Fund.)

Internationalizing Canadian education is a top priority. An upcoming roundtable at York University will bring together all aspects of the education community to formulate a “strategy” for doing this. There's even a special unit in the Department of International Trade dedicated to helping Canadians market

*The minister explained that, while we have an excellent system internationally, nationally it needs improvement and that's where reform comes in.*

education products internationally and attract foreign students. Currently, there are Canadian education centres around the world, and education representatives formed the second-largest sector for Team Canada. The Education Market Advisory

Board is providing advice to the minister about strategies to export education.

Marchi praised Canadian graduates and the quality of our labour force on an international scale. Education shapes our future Canadian leaders, he maintains, and our students have been excellent international ambassadors. Education has become a valuable economic resource. It's not just good business; it's big business.

At a brief press conference following the summit, Minister Marchi was asked about the apparent contradiction in his speech. Do we have an excellent education system or one that, according to the provincial ministries and the

business community, needs to be reformed because it is substandard? The minister explained that, while we have an excellent system internationally, nationally it needs improvement and that's

*In other words, it's good enough to export, but not good enough for us.*

where reform comes in. In other words, it's good enough to export, but not good enough for us. Either way, the education industry profits.

*Erika Shaker is a researcher with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).*

## EMOs and HMOs

Essentially, an EMO (education-management organization) is a for-profit school. According to Montgomery Securities, “the emerging investment opportunity in education,” “EMOs are engaged in the management of educational instruction to the Kindergarten-to-post-secondary and adult markets. EMOs can own or lease facilities, or manage facilities owned by other institutions through service contracts.

An HMO (health-maintenance organization) is similar in that it is a for-profit hospital (or chain of for-profit hospitals). According to Colleen Fuller, in *Caring for Profit*, “the HMO capitated system...rewards physicians who ‘underutilize’ or deliver less care and penalizes those

who provide levels of health care that dig into the pockets of the insurer.” (p. 202) In the HMO system, “the delivery of care—including decisions on what kind of care and how much—is controlled by insurers.”

The striking similarity between HMOs and EMOs (EMO is actually derived from HMO, as “education industry” is based on “health care industry”) is that they both profit by limiting the number and intensity of services delivered to the “customer” (patient or student), which devastates both health care and education and sets up a system where the quality of service one receives directly results from ability to pay the fees.





# Adventures in computer literacy

Some observers have likened computer literacy to a fad, one that seems to change as rapidly as does information and communications technology. According to Douglas Noble, “corporate strategies for the marketing of computer-based education are chameleonlike, changing colors to meet the needs of every educational fad or government invitation or technological innovation that comes along.” He lists a succession of “rapid-fire changes in the prevailing wisdom of educational technology experts” observed over the past decade or so:

“In 1983 teachers were told to use computers to teach students to program in BASIC, because ‘it’s the language that comes with your computer.’ In 1984 they were told to teach students to program in LOGO in order to ‘teach students to think, not just to program.’ In 1986 they were told to teach with integrated drill-and-practice systems in computer labs to ‘individualize instruction and increase test scores.’ In 1988 they were told to teach word processing because children should ‘use computer tools as adults do.’ In 1990 they were told to teach with curriculum-specific tools...to ‘integrate the computers into the existing curriculum.’ In 1992 they were told to teach hypertext multimedia programming because ‘students learn best by creating products for an audience.’ In 1994 they were told to teach with Internet telecommunications to ‘let students be part of the real world.’”

## The future of corporate school sponsorship

**From:** Board of Trustys SD#52 (Carbonated Beverages)

**To:** Department of Consumer Preferences Shareholders’ Overview Committee

**Re:** Annual Report for 2005-06

**Distribution:** Not for release to consumers

**Summary:** As required by Corporate Law, this report encompasses four parts: 1. Financial Report, 2. Problems affecting the bottom line, 3. Problems affecting the district, and 4. Positive aspects.

1. The Trustys are pleased to report a 5% increase in profits this year. While the increase is below the provincial average, we believe it is a reasonable achievement, given the problems we face.

2. (a) Once again the Trustys of SD #52 (Carbonated Beverages) ask that this district be renumbered as SD #73 (Light Trucks). #52 is the former Cariboo-Chilcotin SD, and we are fighting against ingrained attitudes. Too many students are buying pick-up trucks and moving to the nearest SD numbered in the 70s (Personal Transportation).

Is this really about the effectiveness of using technology to improve students’ learning? Not according to Noble, who concludes that “...after 30 years, the implementation of computer-based technology in schools is highly experimental, despite the billions spent annually. More important, [these changes] reflect powerful, unrelenting pressure from corporate marketers and their government ideologues to get computers into the schools, one way or another.”

Source: Douglas D. Noble, “Mad Rushes into the Future: The Overselling of Educational Technology,” *Educational Leadership*, Nov. ’96.

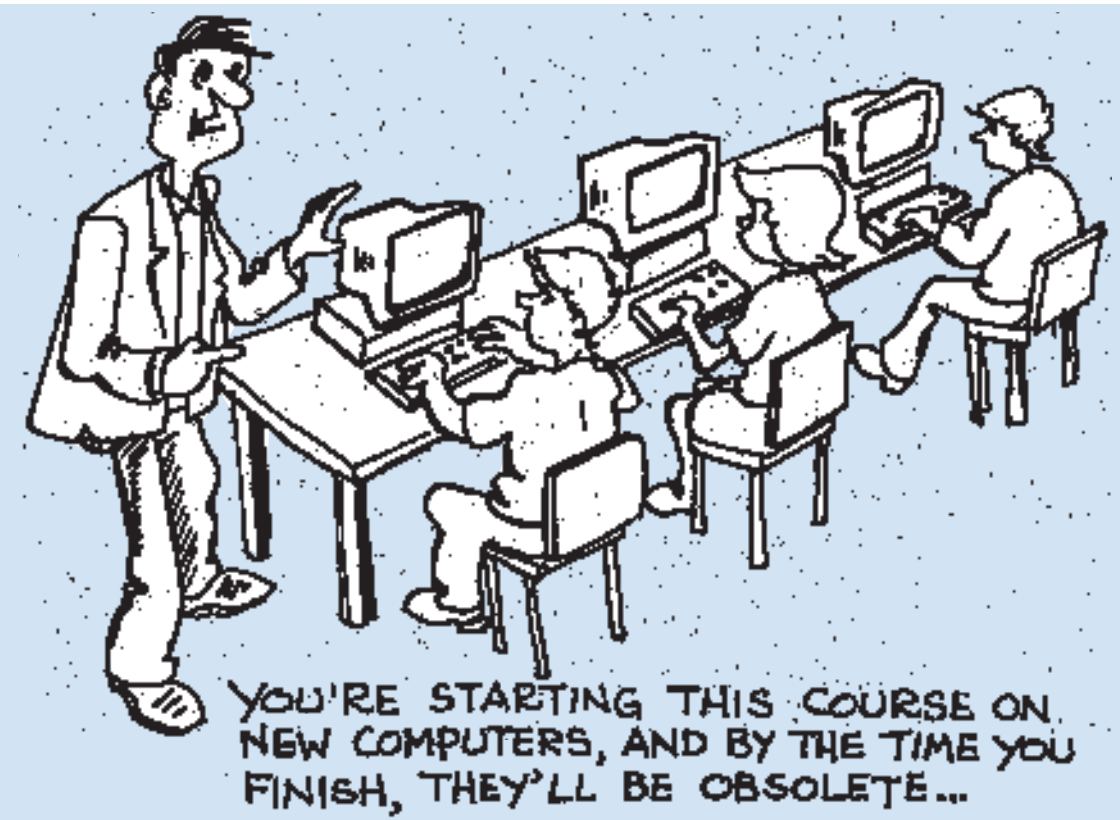
– Canadian Teachers’ Federation, Power Info

## Computers and our children

**The Child and the Machine: Why Computers May Put Our Children’s Education at Risk,** Alison Armstrong and Charles Casement

Do computers really help children to learn? The authors of this book respond with a resounding No. Although the schools throughout North America and Europe have spent vast sums of money bringing computers into the classroom, the latest research indicates that that may be a waste of resources and students’ time.

Based on research and interviews with national and international authorities in the U.S.A. and Canada, *The Child and the Machine* shows how the uncritical rush to use computers in education



ignores the developmental needs of the child. Focussing on children from Kindergarten through Grade 8, the book carefully examines how computers affect all areas of child development, including literacy, math, and science. *The Child and the Machine* draws on hundreds of studies from North America, Europe, and Japan, bringing to light what is known about the problems associated with the technology.

- There is no evidence at all that the use of computers improves reading or writing skills. The reverse is often more likely.
- The real dollar costs are far higher than people realize

and far higher than many school boards and ministries of education seem to realize. In so-called “leading-edge” computerized schools from California to Ontario, the authors found banks of shrouded, broken computers and talked with teachers who spent much of their time repairing equipment instead of teaching children.

- The preponderance of “new emerging technology” is used in pursuit of trivial ends, because teachers are untrained or because no one has been able to figure out a way in which it can be usefully employed.
- The rush to use computers

all too often ignores the very real risk of eyestrain and repetitive-strain injury, with potentially tragic results.

- Adding the Internet to a school library may result in a decline in research skills and in the quality of the material that children read.

*The Child and the Machine* looks at what happens to a school when it places huge emphasis on computer technology. It then shows other ways of improving education that are more beneficial for children, such as decreasing class sizes and including a strong arts-based curriculum.

– Janet Amsden

## On the light side

They, therefore, do not have the money to purchase the 6,000 litres of carbonated beverage they need to consume in order to receive their Cola Graduation Certificate here. Instead, they move elsewhere and graduate with the Domestic Light Truck Certificate.

As our Christmas bonuses depend on the percent of acceptable consumers our schools produce, we renew our request for amending our SD’s emphasis.

(b) There has been no reduction in the problem of parents’ sending their tiny consumers to school with milk to drink at lunch. This has affected our efforts to instill beverage brand loyalty at an early age. We recommend that the Ministry of Consumer Information order the local media to run only pro-carbonated-beverage opinions.

(c) The recent loss of the book-banning court case in SD #14 (Tourist Services/Accommodations), formerly Surrey SD, has increased pressure on Trustys. The judge’s ruling, that students are allowed to read books from other than client publishers, has led to parent groups all over the province trying to get rival products into schools. In our

district, for example, parents from the Diet Soda Pre-Apprenticeship Job-Training Site (parents and teachers continue to use the outdated terminology, Lake City Elementary School) have been trying to force us to supply nutritious food in the vending machines. This would be at the expense of higher mark-up prices, such as doughnuts.

However, the Trustys feel that this problem will be alleviated once the Entertainment Conglomerate finishes its takeover of the RCMP. The RCMP can then be moved away from its atavistic pro-justice bias and returned to its historical roots as a business strike force—anti-strike force, if you prefer. Following this, parent groups can be infiltrated and subverted by CSIS (Canadian Spies for Industrial Stability) agents.

(d) A warning note: As in other districts, parents here are fighting the latest initiative from the Ministry of Business Income. Charging parents for babysitting their children at school has been massively rejected.

3. There are mixed reviews on the teacher front. Despite the College of Teachers punishing those who stray from the new curriculum, we are

still finding recidivism in our SD. This includes social studies teachers’ presenting “The Cola Wars” with a distinct Canadian bias, science teachers’ sneaking in use of the Scientific Method instead of focussing on the benefits of new model appliances, and PE teachers’ trying to inculcate teamwork and life sports instead of the mandated concept of students being as fit as necessary to be good consumers.

Fortunately, teacher resistance is collapsing. The

**Advertising is powerful and pervasive**

A new GenerAsians survey asked 5,700 children, between the ages of 7 and 18, in 18 cities in 12 Asia-Pacific countries, about their activities, aspirations, food, drink, and entertainment. The survey was sponsored by Turner Broadcasting’s Cartoon Network, and conducted by ACNielsen in March and April of 1998.

**Food & Drink:** “What’s your favourite fast-food restaurant?” “What’s your favourite soft drink?”

**Australia:** McDonald’s, Coca-Cola

**China:** McDonald’s, Coca-Cola

implementation of the “Thinkstoppers Hotline” is forcing teachers to co-operate. Students phone in, report disloyal teachers, and collect \$10 in company vouchers. An unexpected benefit of Thinkstoppers is the early retirement of older teachers. This attrition has allowed us to reach a more efficient PTR of 42:1.

4. All schools have moved to the mandated department structure. Each now has only two departments: Supply and Demand.

**Submitted by Fred Cashcow, Trusty President.**

“On the light side” was written by Garth Holmes, Cariboo-Chilcotin.

**Hong Kong:** McDonald’s, Coca-Cola

**India:** Suvarna Bhuvan, Coca-Cola

**Indonesia:** McDonald’s, Coca-Cola

**Japan:** McDonald’s, Coca-Cola

**Malaysia:** KFC, Coca-Cola

**Philippines:** Jollibee, Coca-Cola

**Singapore:** McDonald’s, Coca-Cola

**S. Korea:** Lorreria, Coca-Cola

**Taiwan:** McDonald’s, Coca-Cola

**Thailand:** KFC, Pepsi

Source: *Adbusters*, No. 24, Winter ’99.





PRACTICUM from page 1

like learning. I like to keep in touch with what's current."  
"Even though you're surrounded by children all day long, you're not really having a lot of minute-to-minute

*...student teachers expect the sponsor teachers to provide guidance and support for their teaching...*

contact with adults, and I think it's a wonderful chance to be able to have somebody, another pair of eyes, in the room, to get another person's perspective. I've always learned something from the student teachers."

- How do teachers feel about their role as a sponsor teacher? A teacher replied: "I've enjoyed it, I've learned a lot. I get a chance to watch my class. I learn a lot from myself because it makes me question what I do. When I give instructions to the student teacher, I have to think about why I do this and if there is a good reason. It helps me keep the quality of my teaching up."
- Do student teachers hold a similar view about the sponsor teacher's role? A future practicum student shared her thoughts:

"Definitely to guide the practicum student in what the curriculum is supposed to be. To...be there for questions if I'm having discipline problems, or, because obviously with being a new student, children might take advantage of that and...I would hope and expect that...the teacher would be able to guide me and to give me feedback. Also to give me information about the students and about each individual child and what...works with them and what doesn't work with them and ideas that I could try... To be supportive of the fact that I'm doing this sort of cold, you know. I'm going to need support. I hope that happens."

- What advice do future practicum students have for sponsor teachers about the

supervision of student teachers?  
"Give student teachers the chance to show themselves as individuals and to show their creativity and their knowledge, but also to help guide them if they're going off track or if they're maybe missing something or if the teacher knows there are certain children in the class that just won't understand what the student teacher's doing. Help them with that and show that maybe this child might need a little bit of extra time or this child might need to see things differently..."  
Sponsor teachers, however, receive little support, and student teachers who are entering practicum teaching are apprehensive about practicum supervision.

*...sponsor teachers perceive the experience to be an opportunity for enjoyment and professional growth for themselves.*

The results to date suggest the positive experience of sponsoring practicum students. Practicum students and sponsor teachers seem to have different expectations for practicum supervision. While the student teachers expect the sponsor teachers to provide guidance and support for their teaching, sponsor teachers perceive the experience to be an opportunity for enjoyment and professional growth for themselves. It appears that both sponsor teachers and practicum students need institutional support.  
When the study is completed, the main points of the results will be shared with the teacher community in the hope that the conditions of the sponsor teachers would be improved and practicum teaching would be a more successful experience for teachers in training.  
*Dr. Lily Dyson is an associate professor, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria.*

# Reciprocal coaching— an ideal practicum

by Joe Ranallo and  
Marlane King

Throughout our brief, nine-year, history as the UBC West Kootenay Teacher Education Program based at Selkirk College in Castlegar, we have been privileged to witness many effective, creative school-advisor/student-teacher practicums. One of our most memorable occurred in 1990–91, the first year of the program. Our then elementary student teacher, Jan deHaan, was placed in a Grade 7 class with teacher Gordon Brown at Perley

Elementary School, in Grand Forks.  
As the extended practicum progressed, deHaan and Brown developed a remarkable level of professionalism and trust. When deHaan taught, Brown sat at the back of the room and took notes. When Brown taught, deHaan took notes. At the end of the day, the two sat down and exchanged insights.  
The teacher and the student learned much from each other. Their experiences and sharing sessions led to an outstanding practicum for deHaan and an exhilarating and satisfying professional experience for Brown. Brown continues to

teach at Perley Elementary School, and deHaan started his teaching career at the Boundary Secondary School, in Midway, then a few years ago, he moved to Grand Forks Secondary School, where among other responsibilities, he teaches and manages an innovative state-of-the-art media program. deHaan credits Brown's risk-taking, novel supervision for much of his professional success as an educator.  
*Joe Ranallo is an instructor and Marlane King is co-ordinator for the UBC West Kootenay Teacher Education Program, Selkirk College.*

## 13 Weeks to fall in love

by David Nicks

The morning my 13-week teaching practicum was to begin, I awoke with a start at 06:00, momentarily thinking I had overslept. By the time I arrived at Prince of Wales Senior Secondary School, in Vancouver, a full hour before classes were to start, my adrenaline was pumping. I would be teaching the first block of my first day, and I was ready—except for the overheads I required for the lesson. I wanted to beat the Monday-morning photocopier rush, so I made my way straight to the machine reserved for teaching staff use, loaded my original and the transparency, and pressed "Start." Nothing. I lifted the lid—no problem there. I looked into the feeder—the transparency was gone. I checked the sorter. Hmm. Nothing. Then I smelled it. Burning plastic. And so I faced the first ethical dilemma of my teaching career. Sneak away or, as I eventually did, skulk to the office with my tail between my legs. So began the three-month job interview we call a practicum.

Thirteen weeks, twelve migraines, eleven complete unit-plan revisions, ten



moments of connection with students, nine panic attacks, eight detentions, seven brilliant lessons, six parent conferences, five tons of homework, four sponsor teachers, three lessons that fell flat, two students who got under my skin, and one videotape destroyed in a fire—then it was all over, and I was in love with teaching.  
I began the practicum concerned that I had four sponsor teachers. I had visions of a schizophrenic scramble to please a group of individuals with markedly different teaching styles. My major

concern was to come through the experience with recommendations that would get me hired somewhere. But for all my concern, my experience was exactly what I needed—an intensive introduction to

*The most important gifts my sponsor teachers...gave to me during the practicum were encouragement, positive feedback, and the freedom to develop my own teaching style...*

school politics, intensive planning and marking, thinking on my feet before a class, and establishing relationships with 150 students. The most important gifts my sponsor teachers and faculty advisor (and others at the school) gave to me during the practicum were encouragement, positive feedback, and the freedom to develop my own teaching style—necessities for a beginning teacher.  
*David Nicks is a TOC in the Vancouver School District.*

## Student connects with sponsor teacher

by Darrell Brewer

My student teacher came in with a shy smile on her face, eager, anxious, and probably feeling awkward. This was Lynette Brook's student practicum through University College of the Cariboo. The first two-week practicum saw this fearful, frozen person melt and bloom into someone who radiated happy confidence. By the 13-week practicum, I knew we were onto something special. Is it always so refreshing to be around young people? Is "no" even in their vocabulary? Brook said "yes" to everything. She walked in my

busy footsteps, from classroom, to prep, to noon-hour cross-country club and volleyball. Always a smile, always a willing hand, and still another idea and another way to attempt something different.  
As my own teaching has evolved over the past 27 years, I'm rediscovering over and over that real learning happens if you listen to your students, take their ideas, and go with them. Brook was my student. Who has benefited more from this relationship? I feel I have. I hope I have modelled excitement for learning as well as love for children.  
I have an old brass bell

shaped like an apple, which I've used in my class forever. I discovered the same bell in an antique shop and bought it. As Brook leaves me, I'll give her the bell as a parting gift. It is inscribed "...listen...learn... love." Our time together can be summed up in those three words. There will be tears when she has taught her last lesson here. This experience has been unforgettable and positive for me and my students—an experience to be reflected on always in fond remembrance.  
*Darrell Brewer teaches Grade 3 at John Allison Elementary School, Princeton.*



## Reflections on my practicum

by Linda Irwin

When I think of my practicum, I recall the relentless pace, the fun I had with the students, the laughs that I had with my school advisor, and the incredibly steep learning curve. The practicum is a mixed bag of experiences, many of them intense. As with parenting, no words could fully prepare me for the experience. Nevertheless I offer the student teacher a few ideas on what to expect, and how to benefit most, from the practicum.

*Try to remember that your school advisor is your mentor; someone who wants to help you become the best teacher you can be.*

Expect to form a lovely bond with the students in your practicum class. The students in my practicum class had experienced other student teachers, all of whom they excitedly received whenever they visited. I now work in the school where I did my practicum, and I have a special fondness for those first students of mine.

Expect the practicum to be intense. Do not be surprised if your days alternate between incredible pleasure regarding what you are creating in the classroom and utter despair regarding your abilities as a teacher. That was certainly true for me. Warn your family and your support systems that you may be unavailable during your practicum. I did, hoping that my words would turn out to be unnecessary, but wanting to prepare my family just in case. I think the warning helped prepare my children (aged 9 and 11) and my partner for a very stressful period. What you are experiencing is typical.

Be open to critiques. I recall debriefing a particular art lesson with my school advisor, a lesson in which I was trying something new and delving into a curricular area about which I knew little. Nevertheless, I envisioned a great lesson (it is so easy to fantasize!). But the lesson fell flat. Even though I was aware that the lesson had seriously faltered, I was nevertheless shocked to read the comments of my school advisor. She was not hurtful or cutting, only honest; yet I felt entirely inadequate as a teacher at that moment (and many others). However, recalling it now brings no feelings of inadequacy—only the knowl-

edge that I built on my failure. Soon afterward, I tried a similar lesson that avoided the initial pitfalls. It was very successful. Moments of doubt are frequent during your practicum. Try to remember

*If I could revisit my practicum, I would play with the students more and worry less.*

that your school advisor is your mentor, someone who wants to help you become the best teacher you can be. Critique is part of that process. As a beginning teacher, I would love to be regularly mentored and critiqued now. Once you are employed, you lose such easy access to constructive criticism, advice, and mentoring.

If I could revisit my practicum, I would play with the students more and worry less. Some of my best moments were those during which I played, or just visited, with the students. Most student teachers do make it through the practicum. Needless worry doesn't improve teaching.

*Linda Irwin is teaching a Grade 4/5 class at Charles Dickens Elementary School, Vancouver.*

## Northern teacher education offers richest and most authentic experience

by Pamela den Ouden

Adam Baumann graduated in December 1998 from the Professional Development Program (PDP) of the Alaska Highway Consortium on Teacher Education (AHCOTE). The program is offered through Northern Lights College (NLC) in Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, in the northeastern corner of the province. Baumann looks back on his northern experience as a positive step toward his becoming a teacher.

Although he had a B.A. in history from SFU, Baumann was unable to get into the PDP at SFU. "I heard that SFU had other external PDP," said Baumann. "AHCOTE does their own admissions, so I called to find out about it."

The AHCOTE program is a consortium of SFU, NLC, University of Northern B.C. (UNBC), and three northern school districts: Peace River North, Peace River South, and Fort Nelson. For the past 10 years, it has offered a unique way for northerners to study in their own communities to become teachers. But in the

past few years, students have been admitted from Vancouver, Maple Ridge, and as far away as Thunder Bay. Applicants participate in an interview as part of the admission process, either in person or by telephone. "It would have cost a lot of money for me to fly up for an interview," said Baumann, "so I was very happy I could do it

*...the small community and number of students in the program allow for the "richest and most authentic" practicum experiences.*

by telephone. The friendliness of the people was refreshing."

Baumann especially appreciated the relationship with his faculty associate, Daniel Vecchio. "It was easy to touch base with Daniel; he was always around," said Baumann.

According to Baumann, the small community and number of students in the program

allow for the "richest and most authentic" practicum experiences. Students who enter the program with a degree take one semester preceding the professional year. Introductory education courses give them theory as well as time in district classrooms. This extra semester, coupled with additional personal attention and classroom experience, makes AHCOTE unique.

One of the highlights of the PDP year for Baumann was a four-day retreat to Cameron Lake with the other student teachers and faculty associates. "The purpose of the retreat is to build relationships. We could all feel the strong support of our peers."

For those who enjoy outdoor recreation, the Northeast presents many opportunities in all seasons. Baumann would have liked to do more hiking and back-country skiing while he was in Fort St. John. Back in Vancouver, Baumann looks ahead to his career: "I feel well prepared to enter the teaching profession."

*Pamela den Ouden is regional secretary for AHCOTE, Fort St. John.*

## Register now for the Beginning Teachers' Conference

The fourth annual BCTF Beginning Teachers' Conference offers something for everyone: classroom teachers, non-enrolling teachers, and TOCs.

The workshops cover assessment, wellness, and everything in between. A few titles:

- Assessing and evaluating student writing (K-12)
- Focus on bullying for elementary schools
- Stress and time management
- Enthusiasm, passion, and wellness
- Split up over splits?
- The Tao of teaching

The conference also provides a chance to meet with the Executive of the BCTF and with presidents of provincial specialist associations. Participants will have the opportunity to review resources from the Federation and commercial exhibitors. There will also be a student performance from the B.C. Safe School Centre.

The Beginning Teachers' Conference will take place February 12 and 13, 1999, at the Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre, in Richmond.

The registration fee—only \$50—is low in order to encourage as many new teachers to attend as possible.

And you can register on-line through the BCTF Web site: <http://www.bctf.bc.ca/career/beginning/conference/>

Come, meet other beginning teachers, attend workshops presented by teachers for teachers, have fun, and still get home in time to do your marking!

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



Are you receiving more than one copy of *Teacher*?

Some people have been receiving a copy of the newsmagazine at their home and one at their school. In 1999 we will discontinue sending a copy of *Teacher* to district staff and associated professionals who receive a copy at their place of employment.

Are you a retired teacher or a teacher on leave who no longer wishes to receive copies of the newsmagazine?

Please let us know, so we can amend our mailing lists.

Ph: (604) 871-1876, Toll free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1876), F: (604) 871-2289, or e-mail [newsmag@bctf.bc.ca](mailto:newsmag@bctf.bc.ca)

## MEMORIAL



### Tom Hutchison BCTF president 1968-69

by Bob Buzza

Tom Hutchison died of a massive stroke in the company of Noreen O'Haire and his sons and daughters November 10, 1998. Hundreds of his friends have since gathered in various cities to down a dram of Glenfiddick and share memories of this remarkable man.

Tom earned honours M.A. and M.Ed. degrees from the University of Glasgow, translated French for the military during Middle East service, emigrated to Canada, and taught in Cranbrook, Invermere, and Sparwood, B.C.

Always the activist, Tom held elected positions on the Invermere City Council and the East Kootenay Regional District, and he came close to toppling a long-serving Socred cabinet minister in a pivotal provincial election.

He served as a faculty associate in the UVic secondary-internship program and helped develop the professional component of it.

Tom held numerous association offices in the Kootenays and served on many BCTF committees and task forces. He was elected chair of the BCTF Pensions and Discipline committees and its Representative Assembly, and he served as BCTF president in 1968-69.

Tom was a truly dedicated teacher who never lost sight of the classroom and the teachers he served.

His varied assignments as a BCTF staff member fully utilized his exceptional advocacy and facilitation skills. As a colleague observed on Tom's retirement in 1988, "When he felt strongly on an issue, he felt with the power of 10."

We remember him with the power of 10.

*Bob Buzza is the former BCTF executive director.*

Memorial donations may be made to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, 10985-124 Street, Edmonton, AB T5M 0H9.

## Past presidents

Jim MacFarlan, BCTF assistant executive director, reports that two other former BCTF presidents have died: Douglas G. Chamberlain (1950-51) and Reginald B. Cox (1959-60).





# BCTF Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30, 1998

## President's comments

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the by-laws of the Federation and the provisions of the Society Act. They reflect the stewardship of the Executive Committee over the resources of the Federation and the committee's accountability to the membership for the effective management of those resources.

As shown in the 1997-98 financial statements, the General Operating Fund (GOF) expenditures exceeded revenues by \$302,000, resulting in the first operating deficit in the last eight years. For the 1998-99 budget year, the May 1998 Representative Assembly approved a GOF budget with a deficit of \$351,000. The Executive Committee will be recommending no increase in the total fee for 1999-2000.

The Collective Bargaining Defence Fund (CBDF) revenues exceeded expenditures by \$3.2 million for the 1997-98 year, improving the CBDF balance from \$13.2 million as at June 30, 1997, to \$16.4 million as at June 30, 1998.

The negative balance in the Legal Liability Fund of \$1.9 million as at June 30, 1997, has been eliminated, with the fund in a positive balance of \$141,000 at June 30, 1998. The Executive Committee is considering a recommendation from the Finance Committee to transfer this balance to the GOF.

The Provincial Bargaining Fund (PBF) revenues of \$1.1 million equalled expenditures for the 1997-98 year, leaving the PBF in a negative balance of \$452,000 at June 30, 1998. With expenditures of approximately \$0.2 million in 1998-99, which is an off bargaining year, and fee revenue of approximately \$1.1 million, the PBF will be in a positive balance at June 30, 1999. The intent of the PBF fee allocation is to streamline or equalize provincial bargaining costs over a number of years corresponding to the bargaining contract cycle.

The operations of the Salary Indemnity Fund reflect net revenue (surplus) of \$12.9 million for the 1997-98 year compared with net revenue of \$24.4 million for the 1996-97 year. The lower surplus in the 1997-98 year was due mainly to an increase in claim expenses paid and a decrease in membership fee revenue. The fund balance of \$37.6 million as at June 30, 1997, has now increased to \$50.5 million as at June 30, 1998. The 1998 AGM approved a fee of 1.40% for 1998-99, which is a reduction of 0.10% from the 1997-98 fee of 1.50%. The 1997-98 fee was a reduction of 0.10% from the 1996-97 fee of 1.60%.

- Kit Krieger

## Management Responsibility for Financial Statements

The accompanying financial statements and all other information contained in this annual report are the responsibility of the management of the Federation. The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and have been approved by the Executive Committee.

Preparation of financial information is an integral part of the ongoing operation of the Federation. A system of internal accounting controls is maintained to ensure that transactions are accurately recorded on a timely basis, are properly approved and result in reliable financial statements.

The Finance and Audit Committee reviews the financial statements and recommends them to the Executive Committee for its approval. In addition, the Finance and Audit Committee meets with the officers of the Federation and the external auditors, and reports to the Executive Committee.

The financial statements have been examined by the Federation's auditors who are engaged by the Executive Committee on recommendation of the Finance and Audit Committee and whose appointment was ratified at the Annual General Meeting. The auditors have free access to the Finance and Audit Committee, without management present, to discuss the results of their audit work and their opinion on the adequacy of internal accounting controls and the quality of financial reporting.

Elsie McMurphy  
Executive Director

Rob McLaren, C.A.  
Treasurer

## Auditors' Report

To the Members of  
British Columbia Teachers' Federation

We have audited the statement of financial position of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation as at June 30, 1998, the statement of changes in cash resources and the statements of revenue, expenses and fund balance of the general operating fund, collective bargaining defence fund and the contingency fund for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Federation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Federation as at June 30, 1998, and the results of its operations and the changes in its cash resources for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. As required by the British Columbia Societies Act, we report that, in our opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Chartered Accountants  
October 26, 1998

## STATEMENT 1 Financial Position as at June 30

|   | 1998           | 1997     |
|---|----------------|----------|
|   | (in thousands) |          |
| <b>ASSETS</b>   |                |          |
| <b>CURRENT</b>  |                |          |
| Cash and treasury bills   | \$ 5,021       | \$ 2,992 |
| Marketable securities (Note 3)  | 17,186         | 12,424   |
|   | 22,207         | 15,416   |
| Membership fees and other receivables                                   | 3,029          | 3,518    |
| Inventories and prepaid expenses  | 204            | 255      |
|   | 25,440         | 19,189   |
| <b>DUE FROM</b>   |                |          |
| Salary Indemnity Fund   | —              | 10       |
| <b>CAPITAL ASSETS</b> (Note 6)  | 888            | 1,114    |
| <b>INVESTMENT IN CO-OWNERSHIP</b> (Note 7)                              | 7,876          | 8,110    |
|   | \$34,204       | \$28,423 |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>  |                |          |
| <b>CURRENT</b>  |                |          |
| Accounts payable  | \$ 1,397       | \$ 1,162 |
| Deferred rent revenue   | 98             | 119      |
|   | 1,495          | 1,281    |
| <b>DUE TO</b>   |                |          |
| Provincial Specialist Associations                                      | 997            | 751      |
| Salary Indemnity Fund   | 288            | —        |
|   | 2,780          | 2,032    |
| <b>MEMBERS' RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>  |                |          |
| <b>General Operating Fund</b> (Statement 3)                             | 14,725         | 15,027   |
| <b>Collective Bargaining Defence Fund</b> (Statement 4)                 | 16,379         | 13,171   |
| <b>Contingency Fund</b> (Statement 5)                                   | 601            | 534      |
| <b>Legal Liability Fund</b> (Note 8)                                    | 141            | (1,953)  |
| <b>Provincial Bargaining Fund</b> (Note 9)                              | (452)          | (451)    |
| <b>William R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund</b> (Note 10) | 15             | 49       |
| <b>Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund</b> (Note 11)             | 13             | 12       |
| <b>Other Funds</b>  | 2              | 2        |
|   | 31,424         | 26,391   |
|   | \$34,204       | \$28,423 |

Approved by the Executive Committee





STATEMENT 2  
Statement of Changes in Cash Resources  
for the Year Ended June 30

|  | 1998           | 1997     |
|--|----------------|----------|
|  | (in thousands) |          |
| CASH FROM OPERATIONS   |                |          |
| Fees Received  |                |          |
| General Operating Fund   | \$19,795       | \$20,001 |
| Collective Bargaining Defence Fund                                 | 2,473          | 3,105    |
| Contingency Fund   | 446            | 443      |
| Legal Liability Fund   | 2,141          | 1,926    |
| Provincial Bargaining Fund   | 973            | —        |
| William R. Long Memorial   |                |          |
| International Solidarity Fund                                      | 375            | 378      |
| Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund                         | 33             | 33       |
|  | 26,236         | 25,886   |
| Expenses Paid  |                |          |
| General Operating Fund   | (18,572)       | (19,274) |
| Collective Bargaining Defence Fund                                 | (341)          | (411)    |
| Contingency Fund   | (410)          | (123)    |
| Provincial Bargaining Fund   | (1,059)        | (447)    |
| William R. Long Memorial   |                |          |
| International Solidarity Fund                                      | (410)          | (385)    |
| Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund                         | (32)           | (29)     |
|  | (20,824)       | (20,669) |
| Advances from Salary Indemnity Fund                                | 298            | 73       |
|  | (20,526)       | (20,596) |
| NET CASH FROM OPERATIONS   | \$ 5,710       | \$ 5,290 |
| CASH FROM INVESTING AND FINANCING ACTIVITIES                       |                |          |
| SOURCES  |                |          |
| Investment income received   | \$ 1,155       | \$ 815   |
| Proceeds from member loans   | 21             | 24       |
| Proceeds from staff computer loans                                 | 56             | —        |
|  | 1,232          | 839      |
| USES   |                |          |
| Purchase of fixed assets   | (151)          | (137)    |
| Staff computer loans   | —              | (77)     |
|  | (151)          | (214)    |
| NET CASH FROM INVESTING AND FINANCING ACTIVITIES                   | 1,081          | 625      |
| CHANGE in cash, treasury bills, and marketable securities          | 6,791          | 5,915    |
| CASH, treasury bills, and marketable securities, beginning of year | 15,416         | 9,501    |
| CASH, treasury bills, and marketable securities, end of year       | \$22,207       | \$15,416 |

STATEMENT 3  
General Operating Fund  
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance  
for the Year Ended June 30

|  | 1999<br>Budget<br>(Unaudited)<br>(Note 13) | 1998     | 1997<br>(Note 16) |
|--|--|----------|-------------------|
|  | (in thousands)                             |          |                   |
| REVENUE                                |  |          |                   |
| Allocation of membership fees (Note 4) | \$20,810                                   | \$19,866 | \$19,924          |
| Net investment income                  | 200  | 138      | 165               |
|  | 21,010                                     | 20,004   | 20,089            |
| DIVISIONAL OPERATING EXPENSES (Note 5) |  |          |                   |
| Management                             | 2,328                                      | 2,128    | 2,193             |
| Organization Support                   | 5,266                                      | 4,649    | 4,574             |
| Finance and Administrative Services    | 2,823                                      | 2,761    | 2,763             |
| Research and Technology                | 1,658                                      | 1,657    | 1,612             |
| Professional Development               | 3,351                                      | 3,409    | 3,113             |
| Bargaining                             | 1,408                                      | 1,835    | 1,759             |
|  | 16,834                                     | 16,439   | 16,014            |
| Grants to Locals                       | 4,527                                      | 3,867    | 3,867             |
|  | 21,361                                     | 20,306   | 19,881            |
| NET (EXPENSE) REVENUE                  | (351)                                      | (302)    | 208               |
| FUND BALANCE, beginning of year        | 14,725                                     | 15,027   | 14,819            |
| FUND BALANCE, end of year              | \$14,374                                   | \$14,725 | \$15,027          |

STATEMENT 4  
Collective Bargaining Defence Fund  
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance  
for the Year Ended June 30

|  | 1998           | 1997<br>(Note 16) |
|--|----------------|-------------------|
|  | (in thousands) |                   |
| REVENUE                                |                |                   |
| Allocation of membership fees (Note 4) | \$2,421        | \$3,093           |
| Net investment income                  | 1,128          | 881               |
|  | 3,549          | 3,974             |
| EXPENSES                               |                |                   |
| Support to locals                      | 261            | 322               |
| Adult educator negotiations            | 61             | 1                 |
| Successful strike vote                 | 17             | —                 |
| Guaranteed loans—legal costs           | 2              | 4                 |
| Third party dispute pay                | —              | 41                |
| Provincial bargaining                  | —              | 37                |
| Other                                  | —              | 6                 |
|  | 341            | 411               |
| NET REVENUE                            | 3,208          | 3,563             |
| FUND BALANCE, beginning of year        | 13,171         | 9,608             |
| FUND BALANCE, end of year              | \$16,379       | \$13,171          |

STATEMENT 5  
Contingency Fund  
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance  
for the Year Ended June 30

|  | 1998           | 1997  |
|--|----------------|-------|
|  | (in thousands) |       |
| REVENUE                                |                |       |
| Allocation of membership fees (Note 4) | \$448          | \$442 |
| Net investment income                  | 29             | 19    |
|  | 477            | 461   |
| EXPENSES                               |                |       |
| Grant to CTF Defence Fund              | 300            | —     |
| Grant to United Labour Campaign        | 66             | —     |
| Grant—bigots ban books case            | 40             | —     |
| School district amalgamation           | 4              | 4     |
| Legal costs                            | —              | 101   |
| Sir William Macdonald School grant     | —              | 13    |
| Programme Cadre                        | —              | 5     |
|  | 410            | 123   |
| NET REVENUE                            | 67             | 338   |
| FUND BALANCE, beginning of year        | 534            | 196   |
| FUND BALANCE, end of year              | \$601          | \$534 |





Notes to Financial Statements  
Year Ended June 30, 1998

1. BACKGROUND AND BASIS OF COMBINATION

The British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (the BCTF or the Federation) is incorporated as a society pursuant to the Society Act, and is a trade union pursuant to the Labour Relations Code of B.C. and the Public Education Labour Relations Act. The Federation is exempt from income tax.

The financial statements of the Federation include the results of the seven restricted funds described below.

**General Operating Fund:** The purpose of the fund is to meet the goals of the Federation through program expenditures planned in advance and approved by the Representative Assembly.

**Collective Bargaining Defence Fund:** The purpose of the fund is to pay costs directly related to strikes, lockouts, the honouring of picket lines in third-party disputes, and contract enforcement in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Representative Assembly.

**Contingency Fund:** The purpose of the fund is to meet, without delay, special or emergent expenses that could not reasonably have been anticipated and to promote the cause of public education by providing the financial means to respond effectively to any crisis in education. Expenditures from the Contingency Fund are made in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Representative Assembly.

**Legal Liability Fund:** The purpose of the fund is to meet legal liabilities of the Federation.

**Provincial Bargaining Fund:** The purpose of the fund is to pay costs related to provincial contract negotiations. Expenditures from the fund are planned in advance and approved by the Representative Assembly.

**William R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund:** The purpose of the fund is to improve public education in developing countries.

**Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund:** The purpose of the fund is to promote socially responsible teaching practices.

The **Salary Indemnity Fund** is reported to the membership in a separate set of financial statements and is not included in these financial statements. The purpose of the Salary Indemnity Fund is to meet the obligations of the Salary Indemnity Plan which provides income benefits to members disabled from employment as a result of illness or accident. The total fee allocated to the Salary Indemnity Fund was 1.50% of gross salary for the 1997-98 membership year. Any fund deficiency is the responsibility of the Federation. The financial statements of the Salary Indemnity Fund should be read concurrently with these financial statements.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Significant accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial statements are summarized below. These policies are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the recommendations of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

a. Fund Accounting

The Federation follows the restricted fund method of accounting for membership fees.

b. Revenue Recognition

Restricted membership fees related to general operations are recognized as revenue of the General Operating Fund in the year the related expenses are incurred. All other restricted membership fees are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund.

Investment income from the Federation’s investments (including those of the Salary Indemnity Fund) is recognized as revenue as earned and allocated to the appropriate restricted funds based on the investments held for the funds.

c. Marketable Securities

Marketable securities are originally recorded at cost. When the market value of the portfolio has declined below cost an adjustment is made to reflect the decline in market value. This is known as the carrying value. If there is a further decline in market value, this becomes the new carrying value. The carrying value is not increased to reflect any subsequent increase in market value.

d. Inventories

Inventories of lesson aid materials and stationery supplies are valued at cost or net realizable value, whichever is the lower.

e. Capital Assets

Capital assets are recorded at cost. Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line method based on anticipated useful lives:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Furniture & equipment  | 3 to 15 years                          |
| Computer hardware      | 3 to 5 years                           |
| Leasehold improvements | until the year 2004<br>(9 to 10 years) |

f. Staff Pension Plan

The cost of the Federation’s defined benefit pension plan is determined periodically by independent actuaries. Pension expense is charged annually to operations and represents the cost of pension benefits provided in exchange for employees’ services rendered during the year, as calculated using the accrued benefit method prorated on services.

3. MARKETABLE SECURITIES

The market value of marketable securities at June 30, 1998 was \$18,279,370 compared to a carrying value of \$17,185,720 (June 30, 1997 market value—\$13,320,350; carrying value—\$12,423,995).

4. MEMBERSHIP FEE

The membership fee for the year ended June 30, 1998 was 1.47% of the gross salary of each member. For the year ending June 30, 1999 the 1998 Annual General Meeting approved a fee of 1.38%.

The following summarizes the fee allocations:

|                                    | 1997-98 | 1998-99 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| General Operating Fund             | 1.130%  | 1.160%  |
| Collective Bargaining Defence Fund | 0.135   | 0.135   |
| Contingency Fund                   | 0.025   | 0.025   |
| Provincial Bargaining Fund         | 0.060   | 0.060   |
| Legal Liability Fund               | 0.120   | —       |
|                                    | 1.470%  | 1.380%  |

The General Operating Fund allocates 1.86% of its fee revenue to the William R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund. In addition, the General Operating Fund allocates \$1 per member per year to the Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund.

5. DIVISIONAL OPERATING EXPENSES

The Federation allocates operating expenses of the General Operating Fund to individual programs, which are grouped within a divisional structure. The following listing of the major program areas within each division summarizes the specific programs that have been approved by the Representative Assembly.

|  | 1997-98<br>Actual | 1997-98<br>Budget<br>(Unaudited<br>Note 13) | 1996-97<br>Actual<br>(Note 16) |
|--|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|  |                   | (in thousands)                              |                                |

|                               |         |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Management</b>             |         |         |         |
| Management & Personnel        | \$1,285 | \$1,323 | \$1,316 |
| Internal Relations            | 201     | 247     | 237     |
| Canadian Teachers’ Federation | 642     | 637     | 640     |
|                               | 2,128   | 2,207   | 2,193   |

|  |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Organization Support</b>                              |       |       |       |
| BCTF Governance  | 1,924 | 1,934 | 1,741 |
| Leadership Development                                   | 470   | 476   | 433   |
| Communications   | 1,193 | 1,241 | 1,124 |
| Community & Labour Outreach                              | 214   | 234   | 393   |
| Organizational Field Services                            | 19    | 30    | —     |
| Task Force on Bargaining<br>Structures & Related Matters | —     | —     | 50    |
| Legal Services   | 643   | 673   | 660   |
| Membership—Records,<br>Recruitment, Retention            | 186   | 192   | 173   |
|  | 4,649 | 4,780 | 4,574 |

|  |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Finance and Administrative Services</b> |       |       |       |
| Treasury & Accounting                      | 617   | 625   | 624   |
| Administrative Services                    | 307   | 307   | 305   |
| Production Services                        | 132   | 111   | 127   |
| Purchasing & Building Management           | 1,459 | 1,463 | 1,463 |
| Pension & Benefit Plans                    | 246   | 248   | 244   |
|  | 2,761 | 2,754 | 2,763 |

|                                |       |       |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Research and Technology</b> |       |       |       |
| Research                       | 350   | 355   | 353   |
| Information Services           | 434   | 435   | 441   |
| Technology                     | 873   | 879   | 818   |
|                                | 1,657 | 1,669 | 1,612 |

|  |       |       |     |
|--|-------|-------|-----|
| <b>Professional Development</b>  |       |       |     |
| Teaching Rights & Practices  | 855   | 866   | 828 |
| Educational Leadership   | 898   | 889   | 840 |
| Social Responsibility  | 1,052 | 1,079 | 815 |
| Project Application & Adminis-<br>tration – Curriculum Services/<br>Professional Opportunities | 194   | 205   | 162 |

|   |       |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Continuing Education;<br>Lesson Aids, & Program<br>for Quality Teaching | 410   | 438   | 468   |
|   | 3,409 | 3,477 | 3,113 |

|                   |       |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Bargaining</b> | 1,835 | 1,828 | 1,759 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|

|                         |       |       |       |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Grants to Locals</b> | 3,867 | 3,848 | 3,867 |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|

|  |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
|  | \$20,306 | \$20,563 | \$19,881 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|

Within programs, expenditures are further classified according to type. The following is a summary of total program expenditures by type.

|  | 1997-98<br>Actual | 1997-98<br>Budget<br>(Unaudited<br>Note 13) | 1996-97<br>Actual |
|--|-------------------|---|-------------------|
|  |                   | (in thousands)                              |                   |

|                     |          |          |          |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Salaries & Benefits | \$ 8,834 | \$ 8,879 | \$ 8,798 |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|

|  |     |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| Table Officers’ Salaries,<br>Accommodation &<br>Expense Allowances | 423 | 406 | 359 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|

|  |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| LR, Executive & Staff Travel<br>AGM, RA, Summer Leadership<br>& Meetings | 422   | 429   | 404   |
|  | 1,926 | 1,992 | 1,912 |

|   |       |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Grants (includes all grants;<br>those to locals and others) | 4,819 | 4,805 | 4,314 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|

|   |     |       |     |
|---|-----|-------|-----|
| Printing, Distribution,<br>Photocopying | 980 | 1,080 | 989 |
|---|-----|-------|-----|

|                          |     |     |     |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Conference Costs         | 728 | 750 | 539 |
| Organization Memberships | 639 | 635 | 627 |

|                                 |     |     |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Consultant & Legal Fees         | 441 | 485 | 436 |
| Public Relations/Communications | 315 | 322 | 275 |

|   |     |       |     |
|---|-----|-------|-----|
| Equipment Rental,<br>Purchases & Maintenance              | 226 | 228   | 182 |
| Depreciation & Gain/Loss on<br>Disposal of Capital Assets | 595 | 599   | 617 |
| Property Taxes, Operating<br>Expenses, Insurance, Rent    | 983 | 1,000 | 971 |

|  |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| Miscellaneous                                  | 80    | 87    | 119   |
| Administrative Charges &<br>Overhead Recovered | (306) | (325) | (330) |

|  |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| Program Revenue (includes<br>Lesson Aids sales,<br>Teacher Newsmagazine ads<br>& subscription revenue) | (799)    | (809)    | (331)    |
|  | \$20,306 | \$20,563 | \$19,881 |

Curriculum Services/Professional Opportunities (CSPO) programs are funded through government grants or user fees and are not included in the divisional operating expenses of the Federation. The balances of these programs are included in accounts payable.

|  | 1997-98<br>(in thousands) | 1996-97 |
|--|---------------------------|---------|
|--|---------------------------|---------|

|                                    |        |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Funds unexpended beginning of year | \$ 189 | \$ 218 |
| Funds received                     | 253    | 858    |
| Funds disbursed                    | (269)  | (887)  |

|   |        |        |
|---|--------|--------|
| Funds unexpended end of year—represents the<br>net commitment for unexpired contracts | \$ 173 | \$ 189 |
|---|--------|--------|

6. CAPITAL ASSETS

|                        | Original<br>Cost | Accumulated<br>Depreciation<br>(in thousands) | 1998<br>Net Book Value | 1997<br>Value |
|------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------|---------------|
| Furniture & equipment  | \$1,090          | \$ (554)                                      | \$ 536                 | \$ 636        |
| Computer hardware      | 601              | (416)   | 185                    | 283           |
| Leasehold improvements | 288              | (121)   | 167                    | 195           |
|                        | \$1,979          | \$(1,091)                                     | \$ 888                 | \$1,114       |

Depreciation expense for the year ended June 30, 1998 was \$364,000 (1997—\$372,000).

7. INVESTMENT IN CO-OWNERSHIP

The investment in co-ownership represents the BCTF’s 50% undivided interest in land and building used for the Federation’s offices at 6th & Ash as summarized below:

|          | Original<br>Cost | Accumulated<br>Depreciation<br>(in thousands) | 1998<br>Net Book Value | 1997<br>Value |
|----------|------------------|---|------------------------|---------------|
| Land     | \$1,550          | \$ —  | \$1,550                | \$1,550       |
| Building | 7,147            | (821)   | 6,326                  | 6,560         |
|          | \$8,697          | \$(821)                                       | \$7,876                | \$8,110       |

Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line method over 30 years.

The BCTF has entered into a lease agreement which commits the Federation to annual lease payments of \$881,000 for a 10-year period commencing in March 1994. As co-owner of the property, the BCTF will receive 50% of all net revenues generated by this property.

8. LEGAL LIABILITY FUND

|                                 | 1997-98<br>(in thousands) | 1996-97   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Fund balance, beginning of year | \$(1,953)                 | \$(3,912) |
| Fee allocation (Note 4)         | 2,152                     | 2,121     |
| Expenditures                    | (58)                      | (162)     |
| Fund balance, end of year       | \$ 141                    | \$(1,953) |

9. PROVINCIAL BARGAINING FUND

|                                 | 1997-98<br>(in thousands) | 1996-97 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Fund balance, beginning of year | \$(451)                   | \$ —    |
| Fee allocation (Note 4)         | 1,076                     | —       |
| Expenditures                    | (1,077)                   | (451)   |
| Fund balance, end of year       | \$(452)                   | \$(451) |

10. WILLIAM R. LONG MEMORIAL INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND

|                                 | 1997-98<br>(in thousands) | 1996-97 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Fund balance, beginning of year | \$ 49                     | \$ 57   |
| Fee allocation (Note 4)         | 376                       | 377     |
| Expenditures                    | (410)                     | (385)   |
| Fund balance, end of year       | \$ 15                     | \$ 49   |

11. ED MAY MEMORIAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FUND

|                                 | 1997-98<br>(in thousands) | 1996-97 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Fund balance, beginning of year | \$ 12                     | \$ 8    |
| Fee allocation (Note 4)         | 33                        | 33      |
| Expenditures                    | (32)                      | (29)    |
| Fund balance, end of year       | \$ 13                     | \$ 12   |

12. THE BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS’ FEDERATION STAFF PENSION PLAN

The Federation maintains a contributory defined benefit final average pension plan covering the majority of its employees. Tri-annual actuarial valuations are prepared using the projected accrued benefit method pro-rated on service with the assets valued using market-related values, with 5-year averaging of investment income.

|                     | January 1, 1996 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Accrued benefits    | \$10,196,000    |
| Pension fund assets | \$11,371,000    |

13. BUDGET

The 1998–99 budget presented in Statement 3 is the budget as approved by the Representative Assembly. The 1997-98 budget presented in Note 5 is the budget as approved by the Representative Assembly and amended by the Executive Committee.

14. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The fair value of the Federation’s marketable securities is their market value as disclosed in Note 3. The fair value of the Federation’s other assets and liabilities that meet the definition of a financial instrument approximate their carrying value. These items include cash and treasury bills, membership fees and other receivables, due to Salary Indemnity Fund, accounts payable and due to Provincial Specialists’ Associations.

15. UNCERTAINTY DUE TO THE YEAR 2000 ISSUE

The year 2000 issue arises because many computerized systems use two digits rather than four to identify a year. Date-sensitive systems may recognize the year 2000 as 1900 or some other date, resulting in errors when information using year 2000 dates is processed. In addition, similar problems may arise in some systems that use certain dates in 1999 to represent something other than a date. The effects of the year 2000 issue may be experienced before, on, or after January 1, 2000, and if not addressed, the impact on operations and financial reporting may range from minor errors to significant systems failure that could affect an entity’s ability to conduct normal business operations. It is not possible to be certain that all aspects of the year 2000 issue affecting the entity, including those related to the efforts of customers, suppliers, or other third parties, will be fully resolved.

16. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Certain of the prior year’s figures have been reclassified for comparative purposes.



Salary Indemnity Fund

Auditors' Report

To the Members of British Columbia Teachers' Federation

We have audited the statement of financial position of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation Salary Indemnity Fund as at June 30, 1998, and the statements of revenue, expenses and fund balance and changes in cash resources for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Federation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Fund as at June 30, 1998, and the results of its operations and changes in its cash resources for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. As required by the British Columbia Societies Act, we report that, in our opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

PricewaterhouseCoopers Chartered Accountants October 26, 1998

STATEMENT 1 Salary Indemnity Fund Financial Position as at June 30

|                                 | 1998             | 1997             |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                 |                  | (Note 8)         |
|                                 | (in thousands)   |                  |
| ASSETS                          |                  |                  |
| CASH and treasury bills         | \$ 207           | \$ 1,350         |
| ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE             | 3,158            | 3,173            |
| DUE FROM General Operating Fund | 288              | —                |
| INVESTMENTS (Note 3)            | 149,966          | 128,796          |
| CAPITAL ASSETS                  | 27               | 40               |
|                                 | <u>\$153,646</u> | <u>\$133,359</u> |
| LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE    |                  |                  |
| ACCOUNTS PAYABLE                | \$ 260           | \$ 206           |
| DUE TO General Operating Fund   | —                | 10               |
| PROVISION FOR CLAIMS (Note 4)   | 102,913          | 95,548           |
|                                 | <u>103,173</u>   | <u>95,764</u>    |
| FUND BALANCE                    | <u>50,473</u>    | <u>37,595</u>    |
|                                 | <u>\$153,646</u> | <u>\$133,359</u> |

Approved by the Executive Committee



STATEMENT 2 Salary Indemnity Fund Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance for the Year Ended June 30

|  | 1998            | 1997            |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
|  |                 | (Note 8)        |
|  | (in thousands)  |                 |
| REVENUE  |                 |                 |
| Membership fees (Note1)                                    | \$26,360        | \$27,833        |
| Teachers' share of employment insurance premium reductions | 1,948           | 2,104           |
| Investment income  | <u>17,098</u>   | <u>11,830</u>   |
|  | <u>45,406</u>   | <u>41,767</u>   |
| EXPENSES   |                 |                 |
| Short term claims paid                                     | 7,475           | 6,815           |
| Pension contributions paid                                 | 948             | 860             |
| Long term claims paid                                      | <u>14,495</u>   | <u>12,365</u>   |
|  | <u>22,918</u>   | <u>20,040</u>   |
| Increase (decrease) in actuarial valuation (Note 4)        | <u>7,365</u>    | <u>(4,983)</u>  |
| Total claim and pension expenses                           | <u>30,283</u>   | <u>15,057</u>   |
| Excess of revenue over claim and pension expenses          | <u>15,123</u>   | <u>26,710</u>   |
| Administrative expenses                                    | 1,853           | 1,980           |
| Investment management and trust company fees (Note 5)      | <u>392</u>      | <u>319</u>      |
|  | <u>2,245</u>    | <u>2,299</u>    |
| NET REVENUE  | <u>12,878</u>   | <u>24,411</u>   |
| FUND BALANCE, beginning of year                            | <u>37,595</u>   | <u>13,184</u>   |
| FUND BALANCE, end of year                                  | <u>\$50,473</u> | <u>\$37,595</u> |

STATEMENT 3 Salary Indemnity Fund Statement of Changes in Cash Resources for the Year Ended June 30

|   | 1998             | 1997             |
|---|------------------|------------------|
|   | (in thousands)   |                  |
| CASH FROM (USED IN) OPERATIONS                                      |                  |                  |
| SOURCES   |                  |                  |
| Fees received   | \$26,411         | \$28,021         |
| Teachers' share of employment insurance premium reductions received | <u>1,912</u>     | <u>2,122</u>     |
|   | <u>28,323</u>    | <u>30,143</u>    |
| USES  |                  |                  |
| Advances to General Operating Fund                                  | (298)            | (73)             |
| Claims paid   | (21,970)         | (19,181)         |
| Pension contributions paid  | (948)            | (859)            |
| Administrative expenditures paid                                    | <u>(2,174)</u>   | <u>(2,369)</u>   |
|   | <u>(25,390)</u>  | <u>(22,482)</u>  |
| NET CASH FROM OPERATIONS  | \$2,933          | \$7,661          |
| CASH FROM (USED IN) INVESTING ACTIVITIES                            |                  |                  |
| SOURCES   |                  |                  |
| Investment income received  | \$ 7,685         | \$ 7,527         |
| Proceeds from sale of investments                                   | <u>164,808</u>   | <u>149,873</u>   |
|   | <u>172,493</u>   | <u>157,400</u>   |
| USES  |                  |                  |
| Purchase of investments   | (176,565)        | (165,030)        |
| Purchase of capital assets  | <u>(4)</u>       | <u>(17)</u>      |
|   | <u>(176,569)</u> | <u>(165,047)</u> |
| NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES                               | <u>(4,076)</u>   | <u>(7,647)</u>   |
| CHANGE in cash and treasury bills                                   | (1,143)          | 14               |
| CASH and treasury bills, beginning of year                          | <u>1,350</u>     | <u>1,336</u>     |
| CASH and treasury bills, end of year                                | <u>\$ 207</u>    | <u>\$1,350</u>   |

Notes to Financial Statements Year Ended June 30, 1998

- 1. BACKGROUND AND FEES**

The purpose of the Salary Indemnity Fund is to meet the obligations of the Salary Indemnity Plan which provides income benefits to members disabled from employment as a result of illness or accident.

The membership fee for the year ending June 30, 1998 was 1.5% of the gross salary of each member. For the year ending June 30, 1999, the 1998 Annual General Meeting approved a fee of 1.4% of the gross salary of each member.

The financial position of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation is reported to the membership in a separate set of financial statements and is not included in these financial statements. The financial statements of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation should be read concurrently with these financial statements.
- 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

Significant accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial statements are summarized below. These policies are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the recommendations of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

**a. Fund Accounting**

The Salary Indemnity Fund follows the restricted fund method of accounting for membership fees.

**b. Revenue Recognition**

Restricted membership fees related to the Fund are recognized as revenue of the Fund in the year they are earned.

Investment income on the Fund's net resources is recognized as revenue in the year it is earned.
- c. Investments**

Investments are originally recorded at cost since they are held as long-term investments. In the event of a permanent decline in market value, the investments are written down to reflect the decline in market value. The resulting balance is known as the carrying value. The carrying value is not increased to reflect any subsequent increase in market value.

- d. Capital Assets**

Capital assets are recorded at cost. Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line method based on anticipated useful lives.
- 3. INVESTMENTS**

The estimate of long-term investments as at June 30, 1998 was \$179,379,831 compared to a carrying value of \$149,965,597 (June 30, 1997 market value—\$150,282,413; carrying value—\$128,796,395).
- 4. CLAIM EXPENSES AND PROVISION FOR CLAIMS**

The estimate of accrued liabilities and provisions for claims is based upon an actuarial valuation as of June 30, 1998 performed in accordance with standards established by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries using data supplied by management of the Plan. This valuation uses standard claims tables modified to reflect Plan experience. In subsequent periods the accrued liabilities and provisions for claims are adjusted based upon actual Plan experience. These adjustments can be significant. The estimate of accrued liabilities and provisions for claims for the individual segments of the plan are set out below:

|                                    | June 30/98       | June 30/97       |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                    | (in thousands)   |                  |
| Pension contributions              | \$ 343           | \$ 388           |
| Short term claims                  | 2,823            | 3,109            |
| Long term claims                   | <u>99,747</u>    | <u>92,051</u>    |
| Total provisions for future claims | <u>\$102,913</u> | <u>\$ 95,548</u> |

As a result of the current period's actuarial review, adjustments were required for claim benefits and pension contributions attributable to prior periods. These adjustments are included in the operations of the current period.

|  | June 30/98       | June 30/97       |
|--|------------------|------------------|
|  | (in thousands)   |                  |
| Increase related to current period           | \$ 4,150         | \$ 5,663         |
| Increase (decrease) related to prior periods | <u>3,215</u>     | <u>(10,646)</u>  |
| Total change in provisions for claims        | <u>7,365</u>     | <u>(4,983)</u>   |
| Opening provisions for claims                | <u>95,548</u>    | <u>100,531</u>   |
| Closing provisions for claims                | <u>\$102,913</u> | <u>\$ 95,548</u> |

- 5. INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT AND TRUST COMPANY FEES**

The investments of the Salary Indemnity Fund are managed by independent investment management firms in accordance with investment restrictions as established by the Federation and the Trustees' Act (B.C.) and are lodged for safekeeping with a trust company.
- 6. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

The fair value of the Fund's investments is their market value as disclosed in Note. 3. The fair value of the Fund's other assets and liabilities that meet the definition of a financial instrument approximate their carrying value. These items include cash and treasury bills, accounts receivable, accounts payable, due from General Operating Fund and provisions for claims.
- 7. UNCERTAINTY DUE TO THE YEAR 2000 ISSUE**

The year 2000 issue arises because many computerized systems use two digits rather than four to identify a year. Date-sensitive systems may recognize the year 2000 as 1900 or some other date, resulting in errors when information using year 2000 dates is processed. In addition, similar problems may arise in some systems that use certain dates in 1999 to represent something other than a date. The effects of the year 2000 issue may be experienced before, on, or after January 1, 2000, and if not addressed, the impact on operations and financial reporting may range from minor errors to significant systems failure that could affect an entity's ability to conduct normal business operations. It is not possible to be certain that all aspects of the year 2000 issue affecting the entity, including those related to the efforts of customers, suppliers, or other third parties, will be fully resolved.
- 8. COMPARATIVE FIGURES**

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform with the current year's presentation.





B.C. teacher to serve on Education International board

One of B.C.'s teachers, Jan Eastman, president of the Canadian Teacher's Federation, has been appointed to the executive board of Education International to represent the North American and Caribbean region. She has been active on the BCTF Executive and on committees at the local, provincial, and national levels. Eastman stresses that "my main role will be to work on behalf of teachers and educational workers all over the world by helping to further the objectives of EI, in particular, education for all." She believes Education International is a strong and influential organization capable of making a difference worldwide, a difference for children, for teachers, and for public education.

Education International represents over 23 million members worldwide.

- Kathleen Smith

School supplies for Cuba campaign

Once again, the BCTF, with assistance from CoDevelopment Canada, is collecting new notebooks and pencils for use by Cuban students. Last year, the response from B.C. schools was overwhelming: 20,000 new notebooks and 20,000 pencils were collected, and we hope to top that number with the current campaign.

Teachers and students are encouraged to launch collections in their classrooms, which should take place before Spring Break 1999 in order to meet the deadline for transport to Cuba.

Although the U.S. blockade on Cuba continues to create hardship for the country, the Cuban people are determined to maintain the high-quality public education that they view as every citizen's right. Canadians can support Cuban students by collecting needed supplies for this effort and know that their contribution will really make a difference.

For more information about how to organize a collection in your school, call Leona Dolan at the BCTF (604) 871-2283 or Cyndi Mellon at CoDevelopment Canada (604) 708-1495. Additional information on the campaign will be included in the January mailout to all schools.

- Leona Dolan

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Fri. May 7 - Coast Canadian Inn, **Kamloops, BC**

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**Workshop Fee:** \$145.00 (includes materials, printed materials, personal reference material & supplies) \$145.00 (includes materials, printed materials, personal reference material & supplies) \$145.00 (includes materials, printed materials, personal reference material & supplies) \$145.00 (includes materials, printed materials, personal reference material & supplies)

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- **Tuesday, February 2**  
Abbotsford Jr. Secondary, 2222 West Rd., ABBOTSFORD, BC
- **Wednesday, February 10**  
Minor Education Centre, 6256 Glover Rd., LANGLEY, BC
- **Monday, February 15**  
Seymour Secondary School, 1785 - 46 St., SURREY, BC

For more information contact:  
Fosémarie Janssen, Langley Site Administrator, Ph: (604) 536-2825  
or Barbara Adams, School of Education, University of Portland,  
Ph: 1-604-546-5632 Fax: (503) 878-8042



Is this Accord for you?

You may be seeking details on Accord '99. If you are over 55, the question is Can you afford to retire? If you are under 55, Do you have resources to tide you over to 55, and can you then afford to retire?

If you intend to retire, check your 1997 pension statement for the most recent estimate of your pension earnings. Your statement gives estimates of pension amounts at various ages.

The Accord is going to work for you financially only if you were already contemplating retirement in 1999 or the year 2000.

Why?

If the Accord gives you a total payout of \$20,000, you need to put it into equivalent monthly dollar terms to your pension. You can do this by dividing your Accord total by 200. In the case of the \$20,000 amount, this gives you \$100 per month indexed. Indexed means, that as inflation increases, you can afford to pay yourself an increase.

Let's look at an example to see how this fits into the pension calculation.

Linda has worked in the system for 28 years; she wants to know the cost benefit of taking the Accord versus teaching until 2001.

Option 1

Take the Accord in June 1999.

- Age 55
- Highest average salary: \$4,800
- Contributory service: 28 years (including one year of child rearing)
- Pensionable service: 27 years
- Work up to June 1999

Pension: (2% x 27 x \$4,800): 15% reduction = \$2,203 less bridge benefit @ age 65 = 581 Lifetime portion of her pension = \$1,622 The income to age 65 from TPP is \$2,203; after age 65, \$1,622.

Option 2

Wait until June 2002.

- Age 58
- Highest average salary: \$4,800
- Contributory Service: 31 years (including one year of child rearing)
- Pensionable service: 30 years
- Work up to June 2002

Pension: (2% x 30 x \$4,800): 3% reduction = \$2,794 less bridge benefit @ age 65 = 646 Lifetime portion of his/her pension = \$2,148 The income to age 65 from TPP is \$2,794; after age 65, \$2,148.

Analysis: If we add \$100 per month to Linda's 1999 pension attributable to the Accord, she is still \$400+ short of what her pension would be if she taught for another three years. Her financial decision to take the Accord will be based on her assessment that she can retire on her 1999 retirement income, not her assessment that the Accord is going to fill the gap in her pension. Even with the most optimistic estimate of the Accord benefit, that is not going to happen.

Let's look at another example, that of someone under age 55 in June 1999.

At age 53, Bob is thinking of starting a little consulting business. Assuming that Bob can bridge himself to 55 with the revenue from his consulting business, let's see the impact a decision to leave the system would have on his pension:

Option 1

Take the Accord. Draw pension in 2001.

- Age 53
- Highest average salary: \$4,800
- Contributory service: 28 years
- Pensionable service: 27 years
- Work to June 1999

Pension: (2% x 27 x \$4,800): 25% reduction = \$1,944 less bridge benefit @ age 65 = 581 Lifetime portion of his/her pension = \$1,363 The income to age 65 from TPP is \$1,944; after age 65, \$1,363.

Option 2

Keep teaching to age 55. Draw pension in 2001.

- Age 55
- Highest average salary: \$4,800
- Contributory service: 30 years
- Pensionable service: 29 years
- Work to June 2001

Pension: (2% x 29 x \$4,800): 15% reduction = \$2,366 less bridge benefit @ age 65 = 624 Lifetime portion of his/her pension = \$1,742 The income to age 65 from TPP is \$2,366; after age 65, \$1,742.

Why is there such a dramatic difference between the two options? Under the rules of the pension plan, Bob can't receive a pension until age 55. Given that he has to resign before age 55 in order to get the Accord, his pension is now subject to the reduction rules of 5% per year for each year below age 60 or factor 90 (age plus contributory service). For Bob, that means a 25% reduction to his pension. By taking the Accord, Bob is getting \$100 per month added to his retirement income, but giving up almost \$400 per month on his pension. That is a very high price to pay to get the Accord monies.

How do you size up your situation?

1. Undertake a review of your current expenses and your anticipated expenses in retirement.
2. Use your 1997 pension statement as a useful source of estimate information.
3. Attend a retirement seminar in your region.
4. Ask the Superannuation Commission for a retirement package and a pension-plan-options statement.
5. Speak to your school-board personnel staff about whether they are accessing Pension Online (the Superannuation Commission's pension estimator). If they are, they can produce unresearched pension estimates immediately.
6. Speak to BCTF staff concerning Accord '99 and your retirement income.
7. Access the BCTF Web site for a program description and an application form.

At the end of the day, the two questions remain: Can you afford to retire? Are you ready to retire?

Reminder: The deadline for applications is March 1, 1999.

- Al Cornes

Teachers and students open their hearts to victims of Hurricane Mitch



HABLEVOS CLARO, HONDURAS

by Nancy Knickerbocker

The week that Hurricane Mitch hit Central America, Brenda Kvist was teaching a unit on weather to her Grade 4-5 class at Livingstone Elementary School, in Vancouver. Naturally, she seized the moment and taught the class about how hurricanes are created. But Kvist soon realized her students wanted to help the children of Honduras, not simply learn about how such devastation could happen.

The class agreed to collect clothing for the growing relief effort. The children made posters and distributed them throughout the neighbourhood. Soon the donations began coming in. The students weighed the bags and incorporated their calculations into daily math lessons. At the end of two weeks, they had collected 660 kilograms of clothing.

Asked what they would say to children hurt by Hurricane Mitch, the students volunteered: "We're so sorry you lost your family and friends and homes and schools. We hope you like the clothes we are sending. We hope you can have a happy life again some day."

These messages of hope and caring were echoed around the province, as thousands of B.C. teachers and students demonstrated enormous generosity and creativity in response to the crisis.

The BCTF donated \$10,000 to Honduras and \$5,000 to Nicaragua. Donated through CoDevelopment Canada, the funds are doubled with the help of a matching grant from CIDA. Many locals of the BCTF sent additional separate donations. In a large local such as Surrey, for example, where members voted to send \$1 per FTE to both Honduras and Nicaragua, the donations amounted to \$8,200.

"The kids have been phenomenally responsive—very compassionate and concerned," said Michelle Metcalfe-MacFarlan. Students in her Spanish 12 class helped pack and cart boxes at the Hispanic Catholic Mission, where much of the relief work in the Lower Mainland was coordinated. They also worked with fellow students at West Vancouver Secondary School to organize a bake sale, a craft fair, a raffle, and a benefit rock concert at the local youth centre.

Barbara McCambridge, a teacher at Edward Milne Community School in Sooke, wants to build an on-going relationship with teachers and students in Honduras. She challenged the school staff and student council to raise the funds to rebuild a school and pay a teacher's salary for a year. They hosted a talent show, raffled a gingerbread house, sold crafts, had a cake walk, and raised almost \$1,000.

Sherry Norbury's Grade 7 class at Strawberry Vale Elementary School in Victoria, responded to a challenge from another school. Very quickly the students planned a school assembly to launch their fund-raising drive. "The assembly showed the kind of leadership students can demonstrate when we trust them," Norbury said. They raised \$1,103 in a single day.

Even when dollar values were more modest, the spirit of giving was priceless. For example, donations totalled \$162 at Adam Robertson Elementary, in Creston, after Santa Claus came and had his picture taken with students and staff. Students at Cawston Elementary School, in Kere-meos, filled dozens of shoe boxes with toys, books, paper, crayons, pencils, hard candy, socks, toothpaste, soap, etc.

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.

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                              |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 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

Notice from superannuation commission

The commission has advised the BCTF that teachers requesting pension-plan-options statements and estimates at the end of December can expect to wait up to three months.

Get your request for option statements in early if you are planning to retire in June.

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. It is necessary for you to apply to withdraw as the SIP does not have information about your age or contributory service.

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.



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**WHISTLER CREEK.** Tamarisk, 1 bd. condo sleeps 4, tennis, outdoor pool, F/P, sauna, summer/winter rates. Clara (604) 327-3840.

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October PD Day  
1999-2000      October 22



# SHARING STRUGGLES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

by Gavin Hainsworth

**A**t first they appeared to be garbage bags laid out under the harsh neon lights of the Mexican truck stop. They occupied a corner of the parking lot a little distance from the bus window that was my vantage point. As I looked closer, I saw that one was a small girl with a blanket over her head. Her eyes haunt me. She is standing sentry over her sleeping comrades, watching for dangers to her tribe on the outskirts of Mexico City's urban jungle.

I was in Mexico City to attend a conference of the Tri-National Coalition in Defence of Public Education, formed because of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The coalition's goal is to increase understanding among teachers and their organizations and to plan joint actions supporting quality public education.

Close to 70% of the people who live in this largest city in the world are under 18. The city's population, is estimated at 26 million (only a few million less than that of our entire country) and it grows by about 2,000 a day.

Primary School Raphael Angel De La Pena has about 400 students (Grades 1-6) and 19 teachers (15 group, 2 PE/sports and 2 support teachers). Class sizes range between 23 and 36 students, a substantial improvement from 32 years ago, when they ranged between 68 and 70, or even eight years ago, 50 students per class.

The school library consists of one bookcase, and the school's one TV and VCR is locked and hidden away in a black steel box bolted and banded to the library's ceiling.

The lack of resources for students with special needs integration means that the school's psychologist comes in only once a week. "In Mexico, our children are attended to equally, behavioural problems or whatever, but even so, our teachers don't have the training," said the school's principal.

*One recent poll found that 53% of teachers held two teaching jobs...*

Secondary schools (Grades 6-9) offer a baffling selection of courses to their 12- to 15-year-old students. Some classes are offered only once a week, many at different levels, requiring teachers to prepare for 15 to 20 different subjects a week, but with no prep time.

Mexican students attend classes in shifts, either in the morning or the afternoon. The same teachers instruct both groups for a basic salary of about \$330 U.S. per month. This low figure represents a 70% loss of purchasing power

since 1980, as wage increases have fallen far behind the deflating peso and increased cost of living. One recent poll found that 53% of teachers held two teaching jobs, a phenomenon called "doble chama."

Doble chama means "teachers have to work from seven in the morning to seven at night in order to survive," said high-school teacher Bertha Gabriela Solano Joarca. Her school, Enrique Herrera Moreno, a former military school, nunnery, and veterinarian college, also runs two shifts. "This impedes them in professional development and planning and upgrading their lessons, and so the quality of instruction suffers."

Given that since 1970, more than 150 teachers have "disappeared," most of whom were active in some way with the democratic movement, teachers were remarkably willing to speak to us about their classes and working conditions.

The stakes are also high for the students. They take obligatory exit exams that determine their future as technical or Educacion Media Superior (college bound). In a country where the minimum wage is \$3 a day, 250,000 students were forced to pay \$13 each to write this test, which would assign them to whichever secondary school came up. Only the large and numerous military schools will take anyone.

When this nation-wide testing was adopted in 1996, 40,000 people marched on the presidential palace and occupied the Mexican Stock market.

High-school attendance is mandatory, but an estimated 50% of primary admissions don't make it through to high-school graduation.

We asked students in a Grade 9 math class at Enrique Herrera Moreno if they worked at a job outside of school. "I must rush from school each day to work in factory with my father, making ball bearings," said student Dante De Oca Flores Alberto. "I get an A, but I wish I had more time for my homework, but I am tired." Every student in the class had a job and a similar story.

"Parents have to work so hard that kids leave school for the street," said counsellor Teresa de Jesus Bustos Farias. "And since children attend school only half the day, our children have been learning from the streets—they bring the lessons of the street into the school."

I remembered the eyes of the girl at the truck stop. I felt a chill as I wondered if I was seeing the past or the future for Mexico or for us all. In Spanish, "to wait" and "to hope" are the same.

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



*Students at Raphael Angel de la Pena Elementary School and Enrique Herrera Moreno Secondary School, Mexico City.*

## Teachers demand release of jailed colleagues

On January 1, 1999, Mexican authorities arrested five teachers, all elected leaders of the Mexico City elementary teachers' local. They are: Secretary-General Blanca Luna Becerril, Alonzo Raul Vargas, Nestor Manuel

Trujano, Elio Bejarano, and Maria del Refugio Jimenez. At press time, the five remain in prison without bail. They face charges of rioting, kidnapping and robbery, with possible sentences of up to 50 years! The BCTF, member locals,

and other teacher unions across Canada have sent faxes to Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo calling for their release and restoration of democratic union rights.

—Nancy Knickerbocker