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Teacher

Exploring literacy



Fang Qing Ge and her mother, Ai Hua Fang, share a book at Queen Alexandra Elementary School, Vancouver.

by Janet Amsden

On January 27, 1999, National Family Literacy Day, four Vancouver teachers and their three parent partners shared their project, Exploring Literacy: How Teachers and Parents Can Collaborate To Support Early Literacy, with supporters and the media on location at Queen Alexandra School.

"Teaching children to read is perhaps the greatest gift we can give..."

— Kit Krieger

Observers saw parents from many cultural backgrounds enjoying books with their children for the final 20 minutes of the school's four Kindergarten classes. The books were read in many

languages, as eager children decoded words and illustrations with their parents.

The scene moved BCTF President Kit Krieger to recall his experiences as a parent and as a child.

"Recently," he said, "my 21-year-old daughter thanked me for reading to her when she was young. Then I remembered the books my parents read to me. Fortunately, it was not too late for me to thank them."

"Teaching children to read is perhaps the greatest gift we can give," he added, "one that can open their minds to the world of knowledge, the love of literature, and life-long learning."

In Exploring Literacy, teachers and parents work together to help children learn to read. The co-operative project grew out of the independent research of four teachers, Patricia Porter (Queen Alexandra), Sallie

Boschung (Sir James Douglas), Marilou Carrillo (speech and language pathologist for the Vancouver School Board), Nicole Roy (Lord Tennyson), and their collaborators,

The team explored the concept of literacy in its broadest sense and recognized that home and school literacies can differ.

parents C.C. Duncan, Deborah Fenske, and Polly Jang-Wong. The team pooled their findings, with the support of Charlie Naylor, of the BCTF's Research Department, and published a resource book that contains a wealth of ideas on how schools can work with parents of different ethnic backgrounds to help them improve their children's

literacy skills.

The team explored the concept of literacy in its broadest sense and recognized that home and school literacies can differ. The exploration resulted in practical suggestions for teaching parents to teach their children to love to read. Parent members of the team contributed to the development of tips and strategies to ensure that teachers and parents can work well together. In the spring, they will be presenting workshops in five locations throughout the province. For information about dates and locations, contact Charlie Naylor, at the BCTF.

A copy of the resource book has been sent to each local, and they are also available from the BCTF Lesson Aids Service for \$15 (LA 8096).

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



President's message



Kit Krieger

When I assumed this office of BCTF president, I vowed that I would not criticize educational partners in public. Most people see the public schools as a single enterprise. When one part of the system is found lacking, it reflects poorly on everybody who works in our schools.

It took a report by the B.C. Principals and Vice-Principals' Association (BCPVPA) attacking the provincial collective agreement to make me rescind my vow. The report, compiled after administrators were asked to identify all the troubles they could attribute to the collective agreement, pits B.C.'s school-based administrators squarely against teachers and children.

The report says AOs saw virtually no benefit from more than 1,200 new teachers the agreement provides schools over the next three years. Not one defended the value of small classes in the primary grades.

Not one AO applauded the return of a school librarian or the increase in services to ESL students and students with special needs.

The AOs did complain about having to deny students access to their neighbourhood school. They reported that some 750 students, a staggering 0.0018% of student enrolment in B.C., were turned away because of class-size limits. I have had to deny rumours that the agreement forced a pair of Siamese twins to be bused to two different schools in different districts!

B.C.'s administrators have positioned themselves on the wrong side of the fence on this issue. They spurn much-needed resources for classrooms in favour of increased managerial prerogatives, prerogatives they defend in the name of "flexibility." Teachers know all too well that flexibility is a euphemism for yet another student in an overcrowded and inclusive classroom.

In the last round of bargaining, administrators argued that schools were not short of resources for students but short only of bureaucratic latitude. In continuing that position, B.C.'s principals and vice-principals have lost an opportunity to be advocates for better schools.

Review AO estrangement

There is a situation in the profession that is troubling. It is the division of administrators and teachers into separate organizations that was foisted on us in the early '80s.

In the early years, preceding and well into this century, a hierarchy existed in our public school system. At the top was the *Department* in Victoria with its civil servants, including a cadre of inspectors. At the *District* level were the trustees and secretary-treasurers; then came the principals; and, ironically, at the bottom of the pyramid, the classroom teachers. This caste system prevailed for many years but gradually changed, probably as a result of the influence of the BCTF, improvement in teacher education, and the more liberal attitude in Canadian society.

By the '60s, radical change was manifest in all levels of education, including the universities' school staffs and the BCTF. A new catch word, *colleague*, described the relationship between administrators and teachers that resulted in an exchange of ideas expertise and respect.

In the '80s, the government of the day introduced a profound change. The administrators no longer belonged to the BCTF. They belonged to an organization of their own.

This separation has been in effect for over a decade, so it seems appropriate to assess the results and make recommendations. This could be done by an ad hoc committee representing government, administrators, teachers, and the parents' advisory council. On its findings, an appropriate response could be made, either to confirm the present arrangement or to recommend change.

Such a proposed inquiry is vital, so I suggest that a debate on the topic be held by the BCTF at its earliest convenience.

Alex Goostrey
Retired teacher, Cloverdale

Supermarket unit superb

I would like to thank the BCTF for highlighting the "Kids Shop Smart Tour" as a Top 10 BCTF lesson aid in the Nov./Dec. '98 issue. My class thoroughly enjoyed its tour through our local grocery store.

This new teaching resource is perfect for primary teachers. The program incorporates the fundamentals of nutrition education and meets the learning outcomes of the healthy living and career exploration of the personal planning curricula of the B.C. Ministry of Education.

The resource guide for teachers consists of four subsections: teacher's overview, supermarket tour preparation, the tour,

and classroom activities. The tour itself would work equally well as an introduction to or the conclusion of a fun-filled unit on nutrition. Upon completion of the tour, each student receives an activity booklet that may be completed in the classroom or at home.

Not only did my class enjoy learning about the different food groups, but my students really benefited from seeing and experiencing the many foods available in the grocery store.

The dietitians working with the school children on the "Kids Shop Smart Tour" are also finding the experience rewarding. They report very positive feedback from teachers, and they have received many letters, cards, and drawings from classes that have been on tour with them. Nonnie Polderman, RDN, says, "It is particularly rewarding to see the children learning about good nutrition and trying foods that they may not have tasted before. With the ethnic diversity in schools today, these tours provide the children with a great way to share their culture's foods in the larger context of nutrition."

To order Lesson Aid #2383 (\$3.50), send a cheque or approved purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2. GST and postage/handling are included in the price, and orders are sent by return mail.

Nona Cantwell
Richmond

The best in a small community

My wife and I have been teachers in Fort St. John since 1989. Although we have always felt that this is a supportive community, recent events have overwhelmed us with the kindness of co-workers, friends, and strangers alike.

Our four-year-old son went to the hospital on December 1 for what we were told was a routine biopsy of his colon (a day surgery that should see us home by early afternoon). When his condition worsened, he was rushed to ICU at B.C. Children's Hospital, where he stayed for three weeks.

During his stay in Vancouver, the shower of gifts and good wishes began to flood in from family, friends, and co-workers alike. Our superintendent, Wayne Cheesman, on business in Vancouver, visited us in hospital and assured us we need not worry about our classrooms back home. Margaret Little, our local president, also made a special trip to the hospital to visit. We gratefully accepted her offer to help fill out the multitude of forms and paperwork and her offer of accumulated airline points so I could return to Vancouver for the follow-up surgery (our insur-

ance covers only one parent's air fare).

We will never forget the compassion shown us by people we know and those we are connected to through teaching. The support net for teachers is wide.

The support and prayers of the entire community have continued as we make slow but steady progress working toward further surgery. Some people may think that working in a small northern community is a disadvantage. We have found the opposite to be true. The temperature outside may be -40, but the warmth of the people's hearts more than compensates.

Dave and Donna Ritchie
Fort St. John



Another antiracism activity

In response to your article "Celebrating 50 Years of Human Rights Activism" (Jan./Feb. 1999 *Teacher*), we suggest an activity not mentioned in the top 21 ideas for March 21 (or any time). Each student in our Humanities 9 class was asked to design an antiracism button as a closing activity for our antiracism and multicultural unit. Students were reminded of the importance of symbols and limited amounts of writing that make for effective slogans or posters. All the final buttons were terrific, but the class was asked to vote anonymously on a winner of the button contest. We took the winning design to an imaging lab for touch up. We then transferred the design onto buttons at the Milner Education Centre, and each student received a button to wear. Students will wear these antiracism buttons and record the reactions they encounter from fellow students and parents to these buttons. As student teachers, we are very pleased with the enthusiasm and seriousness students displayed for the project. Many members of the student body and other staff members have come to us asking for a button to wear. The design our class chose is displayed here.

Jim Michaux
Jeremy Morrow
Student teachers
Langley

Fibromyalgia—An invisible disability

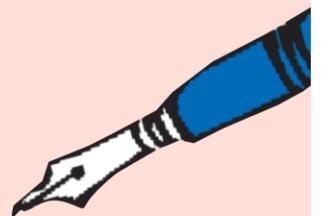
To experience fibromyalgia pain is to appreciate its existence. Those of us with any form of rheumatoid arthritis often experience the ebb and flow of fibromyalgia pain, which we agree to be more debilitating than the joint pain, bursitis, tendonitis, etc., of rheumatoid arthritis. Probably the most devastating pain is that which takes many to emergency departments, thinking they are experiencing a heart attack—pain from the shoulder blade all the way around to the sternum. Multiple deep muscle pains and tenderness everywhere are common, as are overwhelming fatigue, confusion, and memory problems.

Fibromyalgia may be a primary disease on its own or a secondary addition to such conditions as rheumatoid disease. It may be long-term—even from childhood—or a temporary condition after a vehicle accident, childbirth, etc. In any case, there are a multitude of treatments that can be very helpful or even alleviate the condition completely— aerobic type exercise within one's limits being vital. Physical and occupational therapy, overcoming sleep problems, massage therapy, extra good nutrition, family counselling, etc., can make a huge difference.

Two excellent books are *The Fibromyalgia Survivor*, by Pelligrini, and *Fibromyalgia and Myofascial Syndrome*, by Starlanyl and Copeland, New Harbinger Publishers.

The Arthritis Society and FM support groups are also good sources of information. The important thing is that the sufferer be a researcher and learn how to communicate effectively with the health providers. The knowledge of FM, the cousin to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, is always evolving. We of the teaching profession are not exempt.

Margaret Smith
Central Okanagan



Write to us

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

Articles contained herein reflect the view of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the B.C. Teachers' Federation.

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

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LOOKING BACK

70 years...

"Resolutions to the 1929 AGM:

Resolved that Gregg Shorthand be made an option for Shorthand along with Pitman. (Adopted)

Resolved, that the Teachers' Federation endorse the recommendation of the Technical High School Teachers' Section to request the Department of Education to grant a Technical High School Teachers' Certificate which shall require qualifications equivalent in status to the Academic Certificate. (Adopted)

That all reports and rating of teachers be discussed between the teacher and the inspector, supervisor, or principal for same, before the report is turned over to another authority."

(Referred to the Executive meeting for consideration and action)

— *The B.C. Teacher*, May 1929

50 years...

Coquitlam Salaries

Category	Min.	Max.	Incr.
EC	1500	2600	100
EB	1600	2700	100
EA (max)	1700	2800	100
SC	1900	3650	125
SB	2000	3750	125
SA	2100	3850	125

— *The B.C. Teacher*, May/June 1949

30 years...

School District No. 43 COQUITLAM

TEACHERS FOR SEPTEMBER 1969:

273 Positions—Kindergarten through Grade 13 representing all subject areas including administrative positions. A number of teachers with successful experience or keen interest in open areas are required.

Coquitlam Salaries
740 total FTE

Category	Min.	Max.	Incr.
3EA	5668	8388	10x272
4PC	6230	9938	12x309
5PB	6796	11359	13x351

— *The B.C. Teacher*, April 1969

10 years...

"British Columbia's teachers are 10 months into the new order created by Bills 19 and 20. Today, 75 out of 75 associations have certified and gained bargaining rights equal to those of other employees. The mechanistic bargaining regime of deadlines and binding arbitration has been abandoned. Principal teachers have become administrative officers, and collegiality among professional staff is threatened."

— *Teacher*, October 1988

BCTF Web Site— What's New

www.bctf.bc.ca

We continue to update the BCTF Web site on a daily basis. A recent addition to the site is the 1999 BCTF Education Funding Brief, Building on Success. (<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bargain/EdFunding/99brief/>)

For the second consecutive year, BCTF members who have Internet access were given the option of registering online for the 1999 Beginning Teachers' Conference. One hundred twelve people submitted their forms electronically with the BCTF, compared to 30 for the 1998 conference.

— *Diana Broome*

Learn Spanish in a language exchange

A college in Oaxaca, Mexico, is looking for exchange opportunities. Host a student from Mexico learning English for the month of April in the Lower Mainland. In return, live with a family in Oaxaca for a month and attend Spanish language classes at no cost.

For further information, contact Mario Lopez: (604) 988-1408 or lopezmario@hotmail.com

Three weeks in the Rhine region and Berlin

Immerse yourself in the ambience of Germany's past and present. See Berlin's rebirth as the country's capital. Gain new perspectives on education by taking a look at the German model. Let your taste buds tingle to the pleasures of German wine. Find out about the role of the Euro in the global economy. Enjoy the hospitality of congenial hosts. Take in picturesque castles along the Rhine, the grandeur of palaces and gardens at Sanssouci, the Brandenburg Gate that once divided Germany. All these, and more,



are yours if you join in the *German-Canadian Educators' Exchange Program* this summer, from August 7 to 27, 1999.

For more information please contact Marlene Isaac at the International Education Department, Okanagan University College, Kelowna K.L.O. campus (250) 862-5443 or misaac@okanagan.bc.ca

Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

1 Using Eric Carle's Books in the Classroom. Darlene B. Davis, 98p. ©1997. This theme unit is designed to explore the books and art work of Eric Carle. It outlines a 4-6 week study of Carle's books that relate to themes such as insects, animals, and self-esteem, and art and math lessons. Lesson plans, worksheets, pocket charts and a reader's theatre. Grades 1 and 2. LA 8090—\$8.75

2 Using Jan Brett's Books in the Classroom. Darlene B. Davis, 90p. ©1997. Theme unit designed to explore the books and art work of Jan Brett. Unit developed for Grade 2 is easily adapted to Grade 1 or 3. Presented over a 5-week period, the unit has lesson plans, seat work suggestions, creative dramatics, reader's theatre, pocket chart stories, math, cooking, art and gym activities. Grade 1-3. LA 8091—\$8.50

3 Using Leo Lionni Books in the Classroom. Darlene B. Davis, 78p. ©1997. Theme unit designed to explore the books and art work of Leo Lionni. Unit developed for Grades 1 or 2, but easily adapted to Grade 3. Presented over a 4-6 week period, the unit includes worksheets and activities including creative dramatics, poetry, math, cooking, art, gym and seat work suggestions and pocket chart stories. Grades 1-3. LA 8092—\$7

4 Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students. Nan Stein, Emily Gaberman, Lisa Sjoström, and Dominic Cappello. 68p. ©1996. This practical guide offers teacher-tested ideas on how to bullyproof the classroom. Included are 11 sequential core lessons comprised of writing activities, reading assignments, class discussions, role plays, case studies and homework assignments that engage children to think about the distinctions between teasing and bullying. LA PD160—\$23

5 Table Talk—A Learning Resource for the Study of Land and Water Allocation in British Columbia. Produced by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 850p. with a 30-min. VHS video cassette. ©1996. Comprehensive learning resource designed to teach students to use decision-making skills to solve a land-use conflict. Teachers using the complete program will first teach students about decision-making and watersheds. Students will then use this background

knowledge to participate in a simulation—students take on the roles of people who represent different sectors or interest groups (forestry, settlement, tourism and recreation, fishing, agriculture, mining and conservation). Students work together to plan the future land-use and water-use in Pangea River Valley, a hypothetical area in B.C. Throughout the simulation, students will be exposed to a large quantity of informational material that will give them the knowledge needed to participate confidently. The package also includes two short videos titled *Snapshots* and *Connections*. (BCTF LA EE219 Watershed Works, in the Intermediate Science section of the LA Catalogue, can be used in conjunction with this unit.) Table Talk is also available in French—see LA F2058 in the Immersion Française section. Grades 7, 8, 9. LA 2058—\$40

6 Poverty: A Student Learning Resource. Sandy Cameron and Patrick Clarke, 40p. ©1997. Informs students in B.C. schools on the issue of poverty. The information is intended to allow students some insights into the realities of living in poverty and to help them understand and reflect on the causes and consequences of poverty. The ultimate objective is to develop sufficient awareness of local and global poverty as a significant social issue that they will resolve to help find ways to end it. Activities include co-operative group work and individual writing. LA 2030—\$5

7 An Integrated Unit on the Aztecs and the Mayas. Carmen Kuczma and Marilu Adamson, 69p. 1995. Developed for teachers to integrate the study of the Aztecs and/or the Mayas into other curriculum areas. A variety of student activities, and ideas for developing students' critical thinking skills as well as enrichment activities are included. Teaching strategies include individual research, group work, play writing, debates and interviewing. Unit helps students be aware of the global education principles of interconnectedness, awareness of other perspectives and appreciation of other cultures. Intermediate. LA P235—\$8.25

8 The First Westcoast Nations in British Columbia. Christel Barber, 258p. ©1994. Curriculum resource guide for Grade 10 social studies includes information, discussion questions and skill development activities in 14 lessons, including: first people in

B.C., culture areas of westcoast nations; the habitat of westcoast nations; the prehistoric Victoria landscape; overview of early contact; early contact, phase one; Captain Cook in the northwest; early contact, phase two; early contact, phases three and four; effects of contact upon aboriginal peoples; the founding of Fort Victoria; colonial administration under J. Douglas; the Victoria small pox crisis of 1862; colonial administration under J. Trutch. Also included are 15 appendices and a 675-page account of potlatch perspectives. Grade 10. LA 3304—\$32

9 Physics 11. Gordon R. Gore, 352p. © Rev. 1998. The author attempts to make the material in this introductory physics book both engaging and involving. Emphasis is placed on concrete demonstrations of physics phenomena and hands-on student laboratory activities. Many well-known demonstrations of physics principles and large number of student investigations are included: challenges, exercises, examples, enrichment materials, chapter review and answers, and a practice test with answers provided called Test Yourself at the end of each chapter. Grade 11. LA4099—\$14.95

10 Charles E. Chum: Audio Cassette and Book. Produced by the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. 75p. and 60 min. audio cassette. ©1991. The original "Chucky Chum" story is contained in the curriculum package Salmonids in the Classroom. The story could be used as a model for identity stories or whole language activities and lends itself to adaptation for puppet plays. The audio version of "Chucky Chum" is divided into five episodes. There is a list of difficult vocabulary for each episode. The cassette and questions may be used with individuals (listening posts), small groups or with the entire class. Includes an audio cassette, book and teacher's guide. Primary. LA S36—\$15

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

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.

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
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

New deputy minister addresses BCTF rep assembly

Deputy Minister of Education Charles Ungerleider addressed the BCTF Representative Assembly on January 30, 1999. His first two months in the post have been challenging and exhilarating, offering him the opportunity to learn in many new (and unexpected) ways.

Referring to the recent outcry sparked by the B.C. Fire Commissioner's ban on paper artwork in school hallways, he quipped: "I don't know how it could have happened that...in the course of more than 30 years in education, I had not learned about 'flame spread ratings.' But now I can tell the difference between asbestos (with a rating of 0) and plywood (with a rating of 100)!"

On a more serious note, Ungerleider shared some reflections on significant

changes in society and in education during his career. Now, more than ever, he said, Canadians can afford to support public education. "Put another way, we cannot afford not to support public education, given the central part it plays in ensuring the survival of society."

Thanks largely to public education, Canadian parents today are better educated than ever before, and they hold higher expectations for their children than previous generations. "Nearly 85% of today's parents say they want their children to go to university."

Students, too, are "more intellectually capable" than before. "On average, students today are one to two standard deviations brighter than their grandparents," Ungerleider said.

Both parents and students are more likely to challenge authority. "Because the educational gap between teachers and parents is smaller than at any previous time, parents are less likely to accord teachers unquestioning deference."

Because the demands upon schools today are far more extensive than at any previous time, teaching is much more difficult today. Fortunately, teachers now are better equipped.

"By any measure one chooses to use, schools are doing a better job than in previous generations," Ungerleider said. "British Columbia's teachers are among the best educated and best prepared in the world. The majority of students in British Columbia are successful by any standard."

Ungerleider affirmed that public education must serve the public interest over that of individuals. "Education's primary contribution is to the society rather than the individual... Education is not so much about me or you as it is about us," he said.

"To flourish, democratic societies must develop an educated citizenry capable of exercising the responsibilities of adult citizenship." Rather than try to prepare youngsters for a specific job, schools should ensure that students have a strong foundation in reading, writing, and mathematics, that they treat others with respect, that they can work co-operatively with others, and that they can "exercise a critical intelligence that is adaptable to circumstances unforeseen."

While British Columbia

schools "are the envy of many jurisdictions," Ungerleider noted that "we can do better for First Nations learners... and for the 20% of students who do not successfully earn graduation with their peers."

He reiterated the ministry's continued commitment to fully fund the collective agreement that will reduce class sizes at the primary level and establish minimum service levels for non-enrolling teachers.

Ungerleider also spoke of continuing to make schools safer for students, recruiting quality candidates into the profession, increasing access and quality through the appropriate use of technology, and conducting annual assessments of reading, writing, mathematics, and problem-solving at Grades 4, 7, and 10.

— Nancy Knickerbocker

Teachers' campaign wins freedom for Mexican colleagues

by Nancy Knickerbocker

After an intense month of letter-writing and lobbying by teachers in Mexico, Canada, and the United States, five Mexican teacher unionists were released from prison February 3, 1999.

The good news brought an emotional ending to a week-long visit by two members of the Mexican teachers' union who came to Vancouver at the invitation of the BCTF. Ana Maria Grajeda and Evelyn Palacios embraced one another, smiling through their tears to learn that their colleagues were free and reunited with their families.

Earlier in the week, Palacios and Grajeda spoke to delegates at the January Representative Assembly, and explained how, for Mexican teachers, this year started with a shock.

On January 1, 1999, without warning, authorities arrested five elementary school teachers—all elected leaders of Section 9, a Mexico City local of the massive National Union of Education Workers (SNTE). Those arrested included Section 9's Secretary-General Blanca Luna, Maria del Refugio Jiménez, Alonso Vargas, Elío Bejarano, and Nestor Trujano. Police hauled them off to the notorious Reclusorio del Norte, where they remained jailed along with violent offenders.

Thus began a dark chapter in the history of public education in Mexico, one that would seem a comedy of the absurd if the potential consequences were not so serious. Charged with rioting, robbery, and kidnapping, the teachers faced jail sentences of up to 50 years.

Grajeda noted that the exaggerated charges were intended to send a strong message to teachers throughout Mexico in advance of the presidential elections in 2000. As well, she said, by decapitating the Mexico City teachers' union, the government hopes to silence one of the most credible critics of President

Ernesto Zedillo's plan for drastic education cutbacks.

The charges stem from a demonstration and sit-in the teachers staged in November in the Mexican Senate. They wanted to request that senators mediate a dispute between Section 9 and the national executive of the SNTE, which has refused to recognize Blanca Luna and other duly elected leaders of the local. The SNTE has also been withholding thousands of pesos in union dues, thus depriving local leaders of all income and practically bankrupting the organization.

The demonstrating teachers occupied senators' offices for several hours, but they were unsuccessful in achieving a negotiated solution to their grievances with the SNTE. Senators later claimed to have been kidnapped and robbed. The allegedly stolen goods included a couple of ashtrays, the key to the washroom, and a photocopy of a historic document. Ironically, Palacios said, since international opposition to the arrests has heated up, these stolen items have "magically" reappeared.

As soon as they learned of the arrests, Section 9 members went into action, calling upon teachers throughout Mexico and North America to help free their colleagues. They launched an international letter-writing drive. They took out ads in major newspapers. They organized a cultural festival. They printed out leaflets and posters, including one timed to coincide with Pope John Paul's visit to Mexico. It read:

"Juan Pablo II, Welcome to Mexico, a land where they jail teachers who struggle for democracy, justice, and freedom, while rewarding those who assassinate, rob, and betray the people."

The teachers also staged two enormous protest demonstrations and a one-day work stoppage. In the most dramatic gesture of protest, four Section 9 members began a hunger strike on January 20.

As part of the Tri-National Coalition in Defense of Public

Education, the BCTF has long had close relations with Mexican teacher unionists. As recently as November 1998, a delegation of 20 Canadian teachers went to Mexico for the fourth tri-national conference, and enjoyed touring Mexico City schools with members of Section 9. (See p. 20 of the Jan./Feb. issue of *Teacher*.)

Calling for the teachers' release and for restoration of democratic union rights, coalition members immediately sent faxes to Zedillo, to the chief justice of the Mexican Supreme Court, to the Mexico City media, and, of course, to the jail.

The imprisoned teachers received letters of solidarity from Education International President Fred van Leeuwen, Canadian Labour Congress President Bob White, Canadian Teachers' Federation President Jan Eastman, BCTF President Kit Krieger, and the presidents of at least a dozen B.C. locals, as well as teacher unions in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Eastman met with the Mexican ambassador in Ottawa to plead their case, while Krieger and Suzie Mah, president of Vancouver Elementary Teachers' Association, a sister union with Section 9, met with Deputy Consul Gerardo Sanchez at the Consulate General in Vancouver.

In an effort to increase pressure on the Mexican authorities and increase awareness in Canada, the BCTF brought Grajeda and Palacios to Vancouver to address the Representative Assembly. After the speeches, delegates rose to their feet in a unanimous ovation and voted to donate \$10,000 to Section 9 for legal costs and aid to families of the jailed teachers.

As well, they wrote dozens of heartening messages of support and solidarity on postcards of Vancouver. A few examples:

To our jailed colleagues, COURAGE! We know you have been unjustly imprisoned... You are not alone...

Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of struggle...

We will do all in our power to obtain your release...

Grajeda and Palacios said they will take home not only these messages, but a new awareness of the strength of teachers' solidarity and the warmth of Canadian hospitality.

Krieger noted that, although the two most serious charges have been dropped, the teachers still face an outstanding charge of rioting. The campaign to affirm democratic union rights and have the Section 9 elections recognized will continue, he said.

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer



PETER OWENS PHOTO

83rd Annual General Meeting Agenda

Sunday, March 14

FIRST SESSION

19:00

Welcome

Preliminaries

- Adoption of chairpersons, scrutineers, tellers, Resolutions Committee
- Adoption of agenda
- Adoption of 1998 AGM Minutes

President's Report

Political Action

Recommendation 39 (p. 40)

Boards of School Trustees, School Districts

Resolution 105 (p. 11)

Annual General Meeting

Resolution 101 (p. 10)

Constitution and By-laws

Recommendation 43 (p. 14)
Resolutions 107-111 (p. 15-16)

20:30 - Timed Item

Greetings

- B.C. School Trustees Association
- B.C. Federation of Labour
- B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

Continuation of Previous Items

21:30 - Timed Item

Election Statements from

Candidates for

Table Officer Positions

22:00 Adjourn

Monday, March 15

SECOND SESSION

09:00

Executive Committee

Leadership Report

Recommendations 1-2 (p. 7-8)

Social Justice Advisory

Committee Report

Organization of the BCTF

Resolutions 138-147 (p. 34-36)

First Nations Task Force Report and Recommendations

(Supplementary Report)

Unfinished Business

12:30 Lunch

THIRD SESSION

14:00

Linda Darling-Hammond

Professor of Education

Stanford University

15:00

Report on School

Self-Evaluation Plan

15:30

Education Policy

Recommendations 10-13

(p. 17-18)

Resolutions 114-120 (p. 18-19)

Education Finance

Resolutions 112-113 (p. 16-17)

Professional Development

Resolution 150 (p. 41)

Teacher Education

Resolution 155 (p. 43)

Induction Ceremonies

Recommendations 33-34 (p. 32)

Unfinished Business

16:30

Election Statements from

Candidates for

Member-at-Large Positions

17:00 Adjourn

Tuesday, March 16

FOURTH SESSION

09:00

College of Teachers' Report

Recommendations 6-9 (p. 12-14)

10:00

Report of the Executive

Director Elsie McMurphy

Bargaining

Recommendations 3-5 (p. 10-11)

Resolutions 102-104 (p. 11)

Strikes and Job Actions

Recommendations 42 (p. 43)

Resolution 154 (p. 43)

Unemployed Teachers

Resolution 156 (p. 44)

Unfinished Business

12:30 Lunch

FIFTH SESSION

14:00

Health and Welfare

Recommendations 26-32

(p. 25-30)

Resolutions 126-133 (25-32)

Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards

Recommendations 40-41 (p. 41)

Public Affairs

Resolution 151 (p. 42)

Racism

Resolution 153 (p. 42)

Publications of the BCTF

Resolution 152 (p. 42)

Labour Affairs

Resolution 134 (p. 33)

FIFTH SESSION

Continued...

16:30 - Timed Item

Address - Jan Eastman

President - CTF

Roy C. Hill Awards

Presentation

Canadian Teachers' Federation

Resolution 106 (p.11)

Unfinished Business

17:25

Final Call for Nominations

17:30 Dinner

SIXTH SESSION

19:30

Presidential Candidates'

Debate

20:30

Unfinished Business

21:30 Adjourn

Wednesday, March 17

SEVENTH SESSION

09:00

Elections

09:30

Minister of Education

Paul Ramsey

Pensions

Tribute to John Cook,

Retiring Commissioner

of Pensions

Recommendations 35-38

(p. 37-38)

Resolutions 148-149 (p. 40)

Legal Services

Resolution 135-137 (p. 33-34)

12:15

Questions on

Committee Reports

Unfinished Business

12:30 Lunch

EIGHTH SESSION

14:00

Finance

Report of the Financial

Statements

Recommendations 14 (p. 20),

25 (p. 25), 15-24 (p. 20-23)

Resolutions 121-125 (p. 24-25)

Unfinished Business

Late Resolutions

New Resolutions

17:15

Closing courtesy motion

17:30 Adjourn

Please keep in mind that there is always a possibility that the business of the AGM will require a Wednesday evening session.

Masters programs go north

by Kathleen Cherry

They're up to their ears in books, practicums, and courses, and they're loving it. Thanks to the University of Northern British Columbia, a graduate student from Northwestern B.C. can get a master's degree without even leaving the region.

"We've been able to do all coursework and practicums in Terrace and Kitimat. From a cost point of view alone, this has been wonderful. It's a lot less disruptive of family life, and it gives people here new options for further education," explains Kitimat school counsellor and master's student Doug Thomson.

Thomson and his colleague, Stella Smith, have been part of the master of education counselling program since it started in the winter of 1995. In fact, according to UNBC professor Dr. Bryan Hartman, Thomson lobbied for the program long before it was organized.

"I felt it was very important that a master of ed was offered locally, and I was very excited when a university was created with the mandate to provide service for this area," says Thomson. From 1994 to 1996, the university offered its first master of education program in the South Central region (Quesnel/Williams Lake).

Since 1996, UNBC has offered two master of education programs, both in counselling and in curriculum and instruction, in the Northwest region (Terrace/Kitimat/Prince Rupert/Smithers). Approximately 20 students

are enrolled in each program.

"Initially, there weren't enough applicants, so it took time to get the northwest program off the ground. Sometimes it's hard to get the people before a course is actually offered. But the university doesn't want to commit until it knows that the interest is out there. Now that people have learned about this program through word of mouth, there's a lot of interest," says Smith.

Fellow counsellor Sheila Burton joined the counselling cohort in the summer of 1998. Like her colleagues, she appreciates the convenience of the UNBC program. She has some concerns, however. She recognizes the university's flexibility in accepting her late into the program, but she worries about how and when she will be able to finish. The northwestern counselling cohort will be completed soon and courses will not be offered in Terrace.

"We have no plans to start a new batch," Hartman explains. "We don't think that there would be the demand quite so soon, and the North-eastern region (Dawson Creek/Fort St. John) has priority because we've never run a program in those communities. We try to rotate the programs around the regions."

Meanwhile, Burton is studying other options. "I'd look forward to going to Prince George for the summer, but I don't know if they'll offer sufficient courses. I may finish up at one of the other universities. Right now, I'm just grabbing what I can get. But without this program, I wouldn't be doing the job I

have now. So I'm thankful," she says.

Cost and isolation have always made it difficult for northern teachers to further their education. Options were limited. Teachers could either spend their summers in masters programs or, an even more expensive route, take a leave of absence, sacrifice at least a year's salary, and attend school full time.

"I looked at the different choices available. I went to all the meetings about San Diego, but I didn't really like the program. It's also hideously expensive," Thomson comments. Attending SFU, UVic, or UBC is again costly and disruptive of family life. Moreover, only certain programs, usually in administration, are offered during the summer months.

"For me, this program seemed an excellent alternative, from a financial and personal point of view," says Smith.

And, after four years of hard work, both Smith and Thomson are satisfied with their decisions.

"I felt that the program was very thorough and that the instruction was excellent. We had a lot of contact with people in private practice rather than tenured professors. Perhaps it says something about the type of people who are willing to take on a contract to come to Terrace for a few weeks. They're very energetic and enthusiastic," says Smith.

Smith also stated that the program tried to meet needs specific to the region. For example, when offering a course in First Nations

counselling, the instructor involved elders and representatives from local bands.

"The instructor was excellent; plus I learned a lot that was very relevant to this area," Smith explains.

She identifies other "fringe" benefits of a regional program.

"We have developed a strong sense of cohort and allegiance. There are students from many different areas, like mental health and social work. So there is diversity plus a strong sense of community. You come out with excellent networks," she comments.

For Thomson, input into the program was vital. In this, he was occasionally frustrated, but he found that UNBC was willing to seek advice from school professionals about the design of the educational counselling program.

"Generally speaking, you really do have an ear. You're frustrated when occasionally you don't. But there is a model there that other universities should adapt. People who are in careers for a long time aren't idiots, and their aim is usually to make things better."

As they near the end of their degree programs, both Smith and Thomson have several recommendations. Thomson would have liked even more input, feeling that the program could be more specifically designed to meet the needs of school counsellors. He suggests that courses in career counselling, the design and evaluation of counselling programs, and student testing and assessment be compulsory parts of an education counselling program.

Burton would like the university to offer a greater

number of courses on its Prince George campus during the summers for students who are not able to take all the courses available in their local cohorts.

"But," explains Thomson, "the university had a hard job. It's not only a beginning university trying to offer a brand new service, but it has a totally different mandate from any of the other universities. Plus it was hit with budget cuts at the same time."

Perhaps the most exciting news is that educational opportunities are expanding for teachers in northern regions. Other universities are becoming more proactive. In Kitimat, a second group of teachers is organizing a master of curriculum development through the University of British Columbia.

"We need to have 20 people, which is a pretty large percentage of our teachers," comments teacher Janise Johnson. "However, UBC would be willing to offer the core courses in Kitimat and we would have the flexibility to pick up additional credits from universities like UNBC. This openness is wonderful! It's great to know we have these opportunities, although it's still an awful lot of work!"

Thomson and Smith agree. They hope that their long years of work will be finished in 1999. Meanwhile, Burton is looking hopefully ahead to the year 2000.

Kathleen Cherry is a district counsellor in Kitimat, and a member of the Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board.

Notice of special resolutions

Notice is hereby given in respect of the following Special Resolutions that may be considered by the 1999 AGM "with or without amendments" within the scope permitted by the Society Act.

Recommendation 43

That By-law 5.4(d) (page 18) be amended by adding a new second sentence to read: "If January 31 falls on a Sunday, nominations must be received by close of business on the next business day."

Resolution 107—Burnaby Teachers' Association

That the second sentence of By-law 5.7 (page 19) be amended by adding between (to) and (the), the words "and take direction from".

By-law 5.7 would then read: The Executive Committee shall have the power to appoint, fix the remuneration of, and dismiss the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be responsible to, and take direction from, the Executive Committee. In consultation with the president, the executive director shall carry out the duties assigned to him/her; and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Executive Director shall assign the duties and direct the activities of all employees of the Federation; shall have charge of the archives of the Federation; shall designate as confidential and preserve the confidentiality of files containing information about individual members; shall cause to have prepared and preserved a record of all meetings of the Federation, the Executive Committee, and the Representative Assembly.

Resolution 108 – Burnaby Teachers' Association

That the second paragraph of By-law 6.1 (page 20) be amended by adding "The Representative Assembly may amend, alter, delete or replace existing Representative Assembly or Executive Committee policy or procedure statements." following the first sentence.

The second paragraph of By-law 6.1 would then read: The Representative Assembly may, either at its own discretion or at the request of the Executive Committee, advise the Executive Committee on any question affecting Federation policy. It may authorize or prohibit any proposal of the Executive Committee for action which is deemed to be contrary to, or beyond the scope of, Federation policy. The Representative Assembly may amend, alter, delete or replace existing Representative Assembly or Executive Committee policy or procedure statements. To these ends, the Representative Assembly will adopt procedures to enable Local Representatives to have access to documentation provided to members of the Executive Committee.

Resolution 109 – Burnaby Teachers' Association

That By-law 8.4 (page 21) be amended by adding a second sentence to read: The Annual General Meeting may amend,

alter, delete or replace existing Annual General Meeting, Representative Assembly, or Executive Committee policy or procedure statements.

By-law 8.4 would then read: The Annual General Meeting shall, in accordance with By-law 5, elect the members of the Executive Committee and shall adopt policies and prescribe procedures for the attainment of the objects of the Federation. The Annual General Meeting may amend, alter, delete or replace existing Annual General Meeting, Representative Assembly, or Executive Committee policy or procedure statements.

Resolution 110 – Burnaby Teachers' Association

That the AGM adopt a new By-law 8.8, to read:

Notwithstanding anything contained within these by-laws, the Annual General Meeting is the sovereign body of the BCTF, and policies and procedures adopted by it shall take precedence and guide the actions of both the Representative Assembly and the Executive Committee.

Resolution 111 – Kitimat District Teacher's Association

That By-law 3.4 (page 18) be deleted.

Health and Welfare of Teachers

Recommendation 26

That procedure statement 13.C.02 (3.1) (page 77) be amended by deleting "Any action against the plan with respect to any claim for benefits under the plan must be commenced not later than one year after the date on which proof of claim is received by the plan" and replacing it with

a. "Any action against the British Columbia Teachers' Federation with respect to the denial or termination of disability benefits under the plan must be commenced not later than one year after the claimant has been advised of the decision to deny or terminate benefits.

b. Any action against the British Columbia Teachers' Federation with respect to the plan, other than those actions referred to in regulation 3.1.(a), must be commenced not later than one year from the furnishing of a reasonably sufficient proof of a loss or claim under the plan."

Recommendation 27

That procedure statement 13.C.02 (24.3) (page 80) be amended by deleting "The claimant shall refer the matter to the medical review committee and shall advise the plan administrator of his/her designated physician within six months of being advised of the decision which is the subject of the dispute" and replacing it with 24.3 "Any referral of a dispute to a medical review committee must be commenced not later than one year after the claimant has been advised of the decision which is the subject of the dispute. To commence the

referral to a medical review committee, a claimant must:

a. advise the plan administrator in writing that he or she is referring the matter to a medical review committee; and

b. provide the plan administrator with a written statement signed by a physician that he or she agrees to act as the claimant's designated physician for the medical review committee.

Recommendation 28

That procedure statement 13.C.02 (3.7) (page 77) be amended by adding to the end of the statement the phrase "except where the plan administrator is aware that the disability is terminal."

Recommendation 29

That Regulation 24 be amended by adding 24.6 as follows

24.6 "The provisions of the Commercial Arbitration Act, RSBC 1996, c55, as amended from time to time, shall govern the medical review committee proceedings, and the provisions of this Article 24 shall be deemed to be a submission to arbitration within the provisions of the Commercial Arbitration Act."

Recommendation 30

That procedure statement 13.C.02 (11.2) (page 78) be amended by adding "No increase of benefits attributable to increased salary due to increased assignment shall be paid until the claimant has returned to work, exclusive of sick leave, for 20 or more consecutive working days."

Recommendation 31

That procedure statement 13.C.02 (page 81)—Subrogation Agreement be amended as follows:

1. Clause 1 be amended by deleting "all benefits paid or payable to me" and replacing it with "the gross benefits I am entitled to."

2. Clause 5 be amended by deleting "the settlement of judgment is achieved in respect of the tort-feasors' insurer" and replacing it with "I recover compensation for loss of income as a result of a settlement, judgement or award."

3. Clause 6 be amended by deleting "any settlement, or judgment" and replacing it with "my recovery as a result of a settlement, judgment or award."

4. Clause 7 be amended by adding "paragraph 5" after the word "under."

5. Clause 7 "A" be amended by deleting "or" and "in respect of loss of wages and/or loss of ability to earn income" and replacing them with "or award which may be reasonably allocated to loss of wage."

6. Clause 7 "L" be amended by adding "net" means net of taxable costs and disbursements and any other costs and disbursements recovered by me other than taxable costs and disbursements."

7. Clause 7 "B" be amended by adding "or the total amount which could reasonably be claimed for recovery of lost wages given

the evidence and circumstances at the time the settlement, judgement or award is made, whichever is less."

8. Clause 7 "C" be amended by deleting " and/or released under Paragraph 6" and replacing it with "and shall not exceed the net benefits paid to date;"

9. Clause 7 "D" be amended to read "is the gross amount payable to date without deduction for Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, Workers Compensation benefits or Employment Insurance maternity benefits."

10. Clause 8 be added as follows:

8. The portion of benefits released under paragraph 6 of this agreement is calculated according to the formula

Where:

A is the total amount of recovery from the tort-feasor pursuant to the settlement, judgement or award which may be reasonably allocated to future loss of wages and or loss of ability to earn income;

L is the net legal cost attributable to recovery of A, which is the percentage of the overall net legal cost of the action against the tort-feasor which A constitutes in relation to the total amount recovered against the tort-feasor; "net" means net of taxable costs and disbursements and any other costs and disbursements recovered by me other than taxable costs and disbursements;

B is the total claim for recovery of lost wages against the tort-feasor, or the total amount which could reasonably be claimed for recovery of lost wages given the evidence and circumstances at the time the settlement, judgement or award is made, whichever is less;

C is the amount of benefits to be released under Paragraph 1 and 6, and shall not exceed the net benefits payable; and

D is the total amount of gross benefits payable without deduction for Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, Workers Compensation benefit or Employment Insurance maternity benefits.

11. Clause 9 be added as follows:

9. All matters and differences in relation to this agreement shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator to be chosen by the parties. The award and determination of such arbitrator shall be final and binding upon the parties hereto. The provision of the Commercial Arbitration Act, RSBC 1996, c. 55, as amended from time to time, shall govern the arbitration proceedings, and the provisions of this paragraph shall be deemed to be a submission within the provisions of the Commercial Arbitration Act."

Resolution 129 – Nanaimo District Teachers' Association

That teachers on call be allowed access to the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan.

Resolution 130 – Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

That procedure 13.C.02(1.9) (page 77) be amended to read: If a repayment is owed to the plan, the plan administrator and the member shall negotiate a repayment schedule.

Resolution 131 – Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

That procedure statement 13.C.02(3.2) be amended to add at the beginning of (b) the following: "in absences greater than five days".

Resolution 132 – Kamloops Thompson Teachers' Association

That the benefits under long-term salary indemnity include full payment of medical, dental, and extended health plan premiums immediately following the period covered by collective agreements.

Resolution 133 – Kamloops Thompson Teachers' Association

That Salary Indemnity Plan—Short Term statement 11.2 (page 78), and Salary Indemnity Plan – Long Term statement 19.2 (page 79) be amended to allow for provincial salary increase adjustments to the claimant's gross annual salary without the requirement to return to work for 20 consecutive days.

Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards

Recommendation 40

That the Code of Ethics be amended by inserting in the stem the phrase "all members of the BCTF" following "general rules".

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond to address AGM

Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor of education at Stanford University, will address the BCTF annual general meeting on the topic of "Building a Professional Model of Accountability in Our Schools." Dr. Darling-Hammond is an internationally renowned expert on the issue, and her address will serve as a catalyst to inform the current debate over directions in accountability.

Dr. Darling-Hammond is co-director of the National Centre for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching and executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. She is engaged in research, teaching, and policy work on issues of school restructuring, teacher education reform, and the enhancement of educational equity. She is the author of seven books, including *The Right to Learn: A Blueprint For Schools That Work* and *Authentic Assessment in Action*.

For President



David Chudnovsky

Our BCTF has a well-earned reputation as a defender of teachers and an advocate for students and public education. But we can do better—much better. Members find the Federation increasingly distant, less and less relevant to their daily challenges.

How can we improve the situation? Solutions to teachers' problems won't come from behind closed doors, in political deals with government. Instead, all of our voices must be heard. Members need to be involved in

and control every step of the bargaining process. That means a re-emphasis on the importance of our locals. We've centralized too much power in the BCTF offices in Vancouver.

Leadership means articulating clear principles. It also means the ability to listen and to learn. So, in dealing with our own employees, we need to show more respect and understanding, and less anger and belligerence. When we ask members to chart a new course for us, as we did with last year's

Social Justice Review, we should respect their useful suggestions for compromise and renewal, rather than imposing solutions that divide rather than unite us.

Our BCTF at its best can inspire and involve every member. That's the BCTF I want to help build.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive member at large (5 yrs.); 2nd Vice-president (2); LR (2); Staff rep trainer (3); Substitute teachers' association; Committee Against Racism; Association for

community education; Adult basic education association; Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society (board of directors). *Local:* Surrey grievance officer (3); Vice-president; Secretary; Chair of anti-racism & bargaining committees; WLC committee and economic welfare committee member; chief negotiator (5); Strike co-ordinator (2). *Teaching:* Nursery school, elementary, secondary and university level in Ontario, England, and B.C. *Education:* BA (honors) York University; B.Ed. U of Toronto.



Kit Krieger

BCTF members face significant professional and organizational challenges. Professionally, we continue our struggle for adequate resources to support student success in our inclusive schools. We must challenge measures of accountability that misrepresent student achievement and limit professional autonomy. Demands on teachers in areas such as reporting and accreditation must be reduced.

The proposed review of BCTF governance and decision-making structures provides an opportunity to bring the BCTF closer to members. Our structures must be ex-

amined in light of recent changes such as provincial bargaining, amalgamation, and the trend toward centralization of power in the Ministry of Education.

We must begin now to prepare for success in the next round of provincial bargaining. Success will depend on building greater unity within our ranks and on involving the membership in shaping the bargaining priorities.

I am proud of many accomplishments of the current BCTF leadership. The last provincial agreement brought significant new resources into schools and provided jobs for TOCs. We

successfully resisted the BCPSEA's attempt to strip our contracts. We have obtained early retirement opportunities for many long-serving members. The social justice initiative is bringing the BCTF passion for justice closer to our members in their communities. Support for local leadership through initiatives such as the Federation Leadership Institutes and PD contact training has never been better. And the BCTF continues to provide a clear and reasoned voice in defense of public education. I ask for your support to build on these successes.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF President (2 yr.); Executive (5); BCTF Administrative staff (4); AGM delegate (9); Staff rep training associate; *Teacher* Newsmagazine Advisory Board; Task Force on Bargaining Structures and Related Matters; Task Force on Teaching Conditions and Professional Practice; Provincial Bargaining Team. *Local:* President (5); Executive Cttee. (6), LR (2), Executive; Staff Rep, Bargaining chair; Bargaining and other committees. *Teaching:* 24 yrs. secondary social studies and English in West Vancouver. *Education:* BA (History) and teaching training (UBC).

For First Vice-President



Bill Fite

Our Federation strength has always been the support and involvement of members. We must resist the temptation to centralize power. We must listen to rather than dictate to our members. The Federation needs renewal through strong locals, active membership, and networks providing direction to a receptive executive. The Federation's elected officers must serve, not rule.

The Federation must return to the basic bargaining principles that have been effective in the

past: inform, listen to and involve the members; insure language is clear, concise. There has never been a secret backroom deal that has benefited employees, and any offer worth considering is worth the time to reflect.

I believe that strong, effective organizations have strong member ownership. The Union must develop methods that allow the members to be heard regularly. I believe a needs survey for all members is long overdue. Members have the right; they pay

the bills.

The Federation must develop clear goals that establish ourselves as educational leaders without concern for political parties. Our members, and the public must see the BCTF as a steadfast supporter of public education.

I am committed to renewal of a Federation which listens to and recognizes the value of all members and staff. "Stronger Locals make a Stronger Federation."

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* LR (2 yrs.); AGM delegate (17); ACLP (3); Judicial cttee. (2); BCCT Advisory cttee. (3.5); BCTF delegate to Operation Solidarity, Social Studies PSA member. *Local:* President (6); Vice-president (2); LR (2); Bargaining chair (1); Bargaining team (11); ProD chair (1); Staff rep (6). East Kootenay zone president (2). *Teaching:* 28 yrs. (25 in B.C., 3 in Washington State). *Education:* BA in Education, Central Washington State, Grade work: UBC, UofW & UVic.



Barry Prong

Delegates to the 1999 AGM will use their ballots to chart a direction for the immediate future of our Federation, either to stay the current course toward increased centralization of decision-making into the hands of an Executive Committee dominated by well organized political groups, or to renew a BCTF which honours the tradition of our union by restoring strong, autonomous locals supported by a highly involved, well-informed membership.

The consequences of centralization to our union are

clear: two collective agreements covering five years which have not addressed the needs of locals, political settlements which denigrate the collective bargaining process; loss of respect from our own employee unions; alienation and isolation in the rank and file, with declining membership involvement.

The alternative is self-evident: provincial leadership promoted from our cadre of experienced local union advocates; evolving governance bodies responsible equally to locals and the central union; a Federation of locals

which bargains at the table to address both the economic decline endured by teachers and the great disparities between our existing collective agreements, by tabling "provincial standards language" while maintaining best clause provision.

As First Vice-president of your Federation, I will lend integrity to an Executive Committee committed to due process and to meaningful dialogue with locals and the membership.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* LR (5 yrs.); AGM delegate (11); Strike action co-ordinator 1991 & 1993; Staff Rep (6); Internal mediation service (2). *Local:* President (3); Executive committee (12); PD chair (4); Bargaining team (3). *Teaching:* 20 yrs. Ontario & B.C. *Education:* BA (Carleton); B.Ed. UofWestern Ontario.



Grace Wilson

Managing change is one of the most challenging aspects of leadership. It is always easier to stand on the status quo than to move forward in a progressive, imaginative way.

The situation we face in the Federation demands change; change which we have undertaken in such initiatives as the new Social Justice model, the expansion of the rehab project and the Aboriginal Education Task Force.

These initiatives are only the beginning. The changing role of

the central organization in the lives of its members calls for a careful re-examination of both the Federation's services and its governance structures. We have to ensure that we are making the best use of our resources to reflect the needs of our members and the realities of the world in which we have responsibilities far different from those which existed when many of our structures and services were designed.

Managing change successfully requires a detailed knowledge of

existing structures as well as an appreciation of emerging demands. These attributes flow only from experience. I have that experience. Equally importantly, managing change requires the courage to make and stand by difficult decisions. I have that courage. Together we can meet the needs of the BCTF membership.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Provincial: BCTF First Vice-president (2); Executive Committee (6); MCF/BCTF Liaison (2); Rehab Expansion (1); FEA and ASU negotiating team; Finance Cttee. (2); Benefits Review Cttee.; Local Presidents' Advisory Cttee.; CTF Director (3); CTF/AGM Delegate (6); Alternate LR (3); AGM Delegate (11). *Local:* President NDTA (6) Vice-president (1); Bargaining Team (8); Amalgamation Council; Treasurer (3); PD Committee (3); Mainstreaming (4). *Teaching:* 20 yrs. Primary and Intermediate; TOC (4); *Education:* B.Ed., Music Diploma (UBC).

For Second Vice-President



Kathryn Askew

I wish to lead a reversal of the current centralization of the BCTF. Our future strength depends on members and their local unions directing their Federation executive. As 2nd Vice-President I am committed to listening with both ears to needs expressed by local representatives, local presidents, advisory committees and networks of members.

We will have a major challenge in returning integrity to the bargaining process. Ownership must begin with the setting of

objectives and remain intact through to ratification of an agreement openly and honestly negotiated with the employer. The integrity of the process will lead to the integrity of the final agreement. As 2nd Vice-president I will not countenance backroom deals with government or any other body.

I am committed to a bottom-up Federation in place of the top-down model which has evolved in recent years. One key to this reversal is a Representative Assembly which gives priority to local association

initiatives and where Executive Committee members listen to informed debate about real concerns from teachers and union officers.

The BCTF is urgently in need of renewal of its structures and style. As 2nd Vice-President I will commit my energy to this process.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Social justice review (1 yr.); Co-chair PDAC (4); N. Island PD Zone co-ordinator

(6); PD associate in conflict resolution, school based planning, and school PD rep training; Bargaining council rep (2); AGM delegate (18); Summer conference presenter & workshop facilitator (13); CTF Roy C. Hill Award (1994). BCCT Forum on Teacher Education (8). *Local:* President (3); Vice-president (2); LR (2), Bargaining chair (3); PD chair (2); Staff rep (6); School PD rep (3); Other committees: Status of Women, Liaison, CUPE liaison, Health and safety, Contract review. *Teaching:* TOC (2), Primary (4), ESL (4), Grade 6 (9). *Education:* B.A. (UVic), Diploma in Elementary Education (UVic).



Linda Watson

The BCTF belongs to its members. That seems obvious, yet it takes constant reflection and real communication to ensure that we truly do act and speak for our colleagues as their professional voice and their union. It isn't just the activists who make up the BCTF—it's the 44,000 members. It's time to examine our structures to make needed changes, especially since provincial bargaining has had such a huge impact on the BCTF and the ability of members to feel in touch and in control.

As a Federation, we have had many successes in recent years: we preserved local contract language against determined opposition from BCPSEA, achieved non-enrolling staffing ratios province-wide, bargained for adult education teachers who were new members, negotiated for francophone members in the ADEF, and created two province-wide ERIPs.

We need to work for teachers' needs in curriculum design and delivery, support their efforts in the integration of students with

special needs, reduce the demands of accreditation, and block the expansion of PLAP standardized testing.

Also, we must enforce the new contract provision, press government to support the Teacher Professional Development Service, expand our work in social justice, and, overall, make sure we are meeting the objectives of members for their Federation.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 2nd Vice-president (2 yrs.); Executive member at large (6.5); CTF delegate

(3); LR (3); Provincial bargaining team (1); Finance committee; Capilano college labour studies program advisory committee. *Local:* President North Vancouver (3); Executive (10); Negotiating team (10); Staff rep; Other committees: working and learning conditions, mainstreaming/integration, special needs screening, contract implementation, grievance, salary appeal, educational leadership task force, science curriculum. *Teaching:* Elementary (16); Secondary LA (4). *Education:* B.Ed. Elementary (UBC).

For Member-at-Large



Rob Farquharson

I believe this year provides us with a unique opportunity. For the first time in more than a decade we are not in the middle of bargaining. We have the time to thoughtfully examine our structures and to focus our energies on the other important work of our Federation.

Provincial bargaining has greatly changed the way we must do business. If elected, I look forward to working with committees as they examine bargaining structures and

processes and re-examine the roles of our internal bodies.

We have an opportunity to continue to develop a Social Justice program that recognizes the connectedness of the different forms of oppression, that encourages and supports local initiatives and that builds on the important work done by programs such as the Status of Women and Program Against Racism.

We have the time to focus on the most important task of all—

involving members. Our members must feel that their voice is significant and powerful within our Federation, that their actions will make a difference. They must believe that things happen because of their input, not regardless of it.

I seek your support as I commit to work on these opportunities with energy, integrity, and passion.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (7 yrs.); Staff rep trainer (3); H&H Cttee. co-chair (1); Social justice cttee. (1); LR (1); Summer conference delegate (5). *Local:* President (1); 1st Vice-president (3); Bargaining cttee. (5) Bargaining chair (2); Community action chair (2); Staff rep (15). *Teaching:* 26 yrs. elementary.



Dave Harper

In this decade your union changed. An umbrella group of local associations became the provincial bargaining agent for all B.C. teachers. Governance structures remained essentially static, further centralizing provincial authority in Vancouver.

The BCTF must respond to your needs and responsibilities. A needs survey for you to fill out is long overdue. This is just one way to start to redefine the services and programs of the Federation.

My vision for the provincial

leadership has it building real unity among members for a limited set of achievable goals. You must have meaningful input into the process. Issues such as real provincial bargaining, professional development, accreditation, social justice, and BCTF governance are the keystones upon which our commitment to unity must be founded.

The BCTF Executive, through your input, needs to state educational goals clearly for all to see, irrespective of the government of

the day. These goals, once determined, are what we work towards, regardless of the political party in power.

I believe a provincial union and its entire Executive must stand on principle, not on privilege.

As Member-at-Large, I would be proud to work hard on your behalf with the BCTF Executive Committee.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (6), Advisory Council of Local Presidents (2), Bargaining

Council Rep. (1) *Local:* Campbell River DTA President (2), First-Vice President (1), Bargaining Chair (1), TOC Chair (2), TOC evaluations' joint working committee, Core PD Committee (2), District Staffing Committee (2), Staff Allocation Committee (2), DPAC Rep (3), EFAP committee (2), other committees and workgroups. *Teaching:* 5 yrs. classroom (part and full time, English and French), TOC (3 years), Assistant de langue (1 yr., France). *Education:* BA (UVic), PDP (SFU).

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Advisory council of local presidents (2 yrs.), AGM delegate (6); Summer conference (4); Job action planning cttee.; LR (alternate) (5). *Local:* President (2); Vice-president (2); Member-at-large (2); Staff rep (2); Bargaining cttee. (2); Status of Women (2). *Teaching:* Secondary (8 yrs.); Elementary (4). *Education:* B.Sc. (UBC), Teacher Training (UBC), M.Sc (SFU)



Irene Lanzinger

Teachers across British Columbia share the same concerns. They are worried about meeting the needs of their students in an inadequately funded public education system. They are worried about being asked to do more and more with less and less. They are worried about the effect of under-funding on and our ability as teachers to provide a high quality of education.

Teachers are concerned about the complexity of our current

bargaining structures. They wonder if they will have a printed Collective Agreement that they understand. They are worried that the many provisions they fought for in local bargaining will be lost in a provincial process that leaves them far removed from the bargaining table.

The list goes on and on. Teachers worry about ESL issues, racism, sexism, homophobia, new curricula, accreditation, violence, poverty, students with special needs, and parents with lawyers.

curriculum and resource concerns and parental pressures.

Teachers need to be involved in a meaningful way in their professional associations. We need to define the role of the local and its president so that all teachers have a local face to whom they can express their concerns and wishes and know that their views are being heard.

Every day we encounter new classroom situations that require remedies so that our students can rise to their potential. I believe

that a strong Social Justice Program, that can respond to these ever changing needs, will help all children.

As teacher leaders we need to listen to each other and work together towards the common good of all teachers.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Agenda Committee (3 yrs.); LR (6); AGM delegate (11); Income security cttee. (1); chair of CTF AGM Task Force, Summer Conference delegate (8); Women in negotiations delegate (1). *Local:* President—Chilliwack (2); Vice-president (4); Bargaining cttee. (8); Staff rep (4); Grievance cttee. (6); Native education advisory cttee. (2); Advocacy cttee., Wellness cttee., District TOC liaison cttee. *Teaching:* 15 yrs. Elementary; Alert Bay 4 yrs., TOC Victoria/Sooke 2 yr., Surrey 1 yr., Chilliwack 9 yrs.



Elizabeth MacKenzie

I was raised in the BCTF by an involved, dedicated teacher. My mother taught me to talk to everybody, listen to all points of view and then make my decision. I believe that I have tried to follow this philosophy in my teaching, my presidency, and in my life.

The BCTF is a leader in its work for teachers, students, and education. Many teachers still see the BCTF as a separate entity. I am concerned that teacher involvement is slipping due to increasing non-teaching workload,

For Member-at-Large



Barb Parrott

A significant challenge facing the Federation is the development of a new generation of activists committed to making positive changes in our schools. Without their active participation it will be impossible to achieve our goals.

Beginning teachers' conferences help connect the classroom with the union. Both beginning and experienced teachers overwhelmed by accreditation, assessment and reporting, and curriculum implementation don't have time or energy to volunteer for union work. Our union will only be relevant when all members are

involved in developing our objectives and action plans. We must also rebuild and strengthen our networks.

Developing structures which enable members to make decisions throughout the bargaining process is a further challenge. We cannot survive yet another backroom deal.

A third challenge is to create a working environment in the BCTF building which is cohesive and productive. We must respect the rights of our unionized employees and be the kind of employer we would want for ourselves.

As a member of the Executive Committee, I have worked to ensure that our union is driven by the needs of informed and involved members. I seek your support and continued involvement in building a democratic, inclusive, and vital union.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: BCTF Executive cttee. Member-at-large (2 yrs.); AGM delegate (21); LR (11); Bargaining cttee. & council; Staff rep trainer (4); Bargaining advisory cttee. (3); G.A. Fergusson award trustee (4); CTF AGM delegate (1); RA agenda cttee. (2); TF on membership of principals in the BCTF 85-86;

Federation appeals board (3); newsletter editorial board (2); Political action cttee. (3); *Local:* VESTA: Exec. (8); 1st vice-president, grievance cttee., editorial board, Bargaining cttee., chair bargaining & collective agreement implementation cttee., Negotiating team member, member-at-large, rep to many VSB cttees. & grievance joint cttes. Langley: '87 sign-up co-ordinator, President, Steering cttee. and Exec of Special Ed assn. of Langley; LTA negotiating team, member of all standing cttees. & many ad hoc cttees. *Teaching:* 25 yrs. classroom, teacher-librarian & LA teacher elementary. *Education:* B.Ed. (UBC)



Alice Rees

Pressures on teachers are numerous, varied, and complex. So too are the pressures on their professional organization. Two way, meaningful communication is critical to dealing with them. Teachers must feel that their voice is being heard and reflected in the priorities of the BCTF. They must feel that their concerns are being addressed.

Provincial bargaining and the increasingly centralized decision-making at the Ministry of Education has forced the BCTF to

consider new structures and new approaches in utilizing our resources. This does not and cannot mean that our strong history of democratic decision-making can be diminished. Our strength as a Federation rests upon the relationship of strong, effective locals and meaningful member involvement. The changes imposed by government have caused tension between the BCTF and this traditional relationship. This has to be addressed and alleviated.

Priorities in the coming years will reflect your demands for a safe, diverse inclusive public school system; one which reflects your vision of best practice and authentic assessment. Included also are efforts to improve pensions and the economic welfare of all teachers. I am seeking your support for the opportunity to continue to offer my experience and commitment to represent you on the executive.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: CTF delegate (2 yrs.); Finance cttee. (2);

Bargaining structures review; Staffing review/class-size cttee. (1); Provincial negotiating team (1); Interim cttee. on provincial bargaining (1); Legislative team (1); TF on roles & responsibilities (2); Teacher ed cttee. (4); appointee to BCCT external review team (1); Staff secondment (1.5); Ed policy associate (1); Project teach associate (1). *Local:* President COTA (6); COTA negotiating team (1); LR (3); Bargaining cttee. (1); 2nd vice-president (1); Staff rep (6). *Teaching:* 25 yrs. Education: B.Ed (U of Alberta), M.Ed. (Gonzaga).



Robindar (Rob) Singh Sandhu

My first major contact with a union issue was whether or not our local should negotiate a dental plan. If I had been active in professional development within the Federation during the first years of teaching I would have left it altogether due to the pettiness, personal vendettas, lack of ethical conduct and other mischievous happenings at the Federation.

The Federation is not the domain of a small group of individuals, nor is it the private domain of any one group, nor is it

a placeholder for few members who have provided service to it. A chasm has developed through a limited view that leadership means reacting to a situation rather than providing leadership. The institution rather than promoting open debate and inquiry has concocted a variety of measures to squelch differing opinions. Occasionally the bureaucracy of the institution 'massages the information' from members thereby distorting the message from the field.

During the development of the IRP's for example, the concerns and issues raised by teacher committee members were distorted thereby leaving the concerns unattended. If elected it is my desire to close the gap between the institution and its members and to ensure that decisions made are not made for political purposes but rather what is in the best interest of our membership.

EXPERIENCE: Related experiences: coached high school sports; chair of Staff Council, Sponsor of Student Council and School leaving ceremonies; President of the BCSSA; social studies co-ordinator at Ministry of Education; and K-12 Social Studies Framework Document; presently chairperson of PSAC.



Linda Shuto

As you read the candidates' statements you will see that we all strive toward the same goals. We all want a strong union that serves the needs of teachers and we all want members to be actively involved in a democratic union.

The problem is that the BCTF is not making progress toward these goals and in some cases, we are going backward.

Let's examine the reality behind the words. Provincial bargaining has not addressed our major concerns—curriculum

change, accreditation, supporting students with special needs—or our diminishing salaries. To survive as a union we must be able to bargain effectively. There must be significant changes in how we bargain so that members are in control of the process and the outcome.

Democracy and membership involvement will only flourish in an open, decentralized environment. Right now, the BCTF Executive exercises too much control over committees, PSAs,

and review panels. The BCTF RA is given too little to do and local presidents are overloaded. Social justice projects are great, but they do not give a voice to people who are marginalized in society. These voices are essential to achieve membership involvement and democracy in our union.

Major changes are necessary in all these areas for the BCTF to become a strong, democratic, and participatory union that serves the needs of all members.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: BCTF staff, S/W co-ordinator (2 yrs.); PD division (2); Bargaining division (1); AGM delegate (25); S/W task force; Commission on governance; Judicial committee; W.R. Long Committee; LR (6); PD associate; staff rep trainer; union-made workshop facilitator. *Local:* President Burnaby (2); Bargaining, Public relations/political action, Resolutions, and Pensions committees; Executive Council (13); *Teaching:* 30 yrs. Burnaby; *Education:* BGS, SFU.



Jinny Sims

Imagine...a vibrant, healthy and relevant BCTF, responsive to members' needs. We must spend time building democratic processes by providing and facilitating membership involvement. The BCTF is strong only when we have strong locals with well-trained staff reps, ProD reps, and social responsibility networks. Our strength lies in the passion of our members, passion that is engaged at the classroom, school, local, community, and global levels.

We must have a clearly

articulated position on public education and work with all political parties and community groups to ensure that our agenda is a priority.

I am committed to a Federation that models and exemplifies positive employer/employee relations. We must continue to be strong advocates for the welfare of our members and students. I am committed to free collective bargaining that occurs through democratic structures, where members are the driving force.

Our strength comes from our

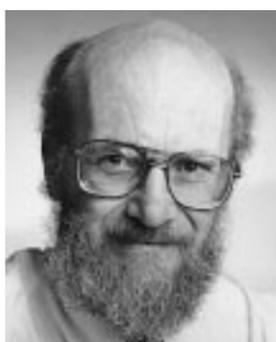
members. We need to address the needs of teachers, ensure due process and employment rights for TOCs.

The future of our Federation is at a crossroads. I am committed to working as part of a team to address the divergent need of all members.

I commit my passion, energy, and experience to building a strong and democratic Federation.

EXPERIENCE: Local president (3 yrs.); NDTA 1st Vice-president (2); LR (5); Bargaining cttee. & team (7);

Grievance cttee. (6); Status of Women member and chair (3); ProD cttee. (2); Program Against Racism (2); Staff rep (10); Staff committee chair (5); Staff committee member (15); Malaspina College partnership cttee. (1); EAP advisory board (4); District resource allocation cttee. (3); Bargaining council rep (2); BCTF AGM delegate (11); Nanaimo Labour Council (3); Co-ordinator for multicultural inner-city students (3); Steps to maturity resource teacher; ESL advisory board; facilitator for conflict resolution, etc.; Dept. head for Social Studies (3); Counsellors, Social Studies, and English PSAs. *Teaching:* since 1974.



Wayne Turner

The role of teachers is essential in directing the course of public education. We must respect the professionalism of teachers and be guided by their sense of the needs of their students and schools.

Federation leadership must respond to the needs of teachers effectively. The voices of teachers from classrooms throughout B.C., must be heard and acted upon for our union to remain a strong and a vital force for our members.

We are embarking on reviews of bargaining and Federation

structures. We must ensure that these initiatives, which have the potential of dramatically altering the BCTF, reflect the needs of our members, and involve members in a broad and bold look at the nature of our union. Difficult questions need to be asked, and our members' answers to those questions will form the basis of who we are as a union in the next decade. Such reviews can be risky business, and we need proven and responsible leadership to ensure that they are conducted in a

careful and rational manner.

It is critical that we constantly re-examine our ways of working to ensure that the needs of members are being met. It's a quest we must never forget.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: BCTF Executive member-at-large (1); Newsmagazine Advisory Board (1); AGM delegate (several yrs.); Delegation chair; LR (several); Staff rep trainer; PITA provincial

conference chair. *Local:* President Kamloops (3); Vice-president (3); 2nd Vice-president (2); Public relations chair, newsletter/journal editor, Committees: Job action (co-chair), Political action, Professional Development, Bargaining, and others. Staff rep. *Teaching:* 32 years elementary—Kamloops, Victoria (5), Port Alberni (2).



Provincial Learning Assessment Program

by Anita Chapman

A recent meeting of the Provincial Education Committee (PEC), composed of representatives of superintendents, trustees, parents, teachers, CUPE workers, and other partner groups, had a panel of experts on large-scale assessment address the question, To which educational purposes are large-scale assessments well suited? The panel consisted of David Robitaille and Mike Marshall, from UBC, and John Anderson, from UVic. The question they discussed was a timely one as the ministry's large-scale assessment program has been undergoing significant changes.

In the past, the PLAP was program evaluation. Information from periodic assessments of various subjects aided curriculum developers, provided context for teacher pre-service and in-service programs, and provided information for public and professional discussions about school programs.

Last year, the ministry moved PLAP in a new direction. In May, a reading and writing test was given to all students in Grades 4, 7, and

10. The ministry published provincial, district, and school results—and individual student results for the 18 districts that requested them. The ministry planned to continue with this trend toward school and individual student results, in effect shifting the focus of PLAP from the program evaluation to the evaluation of

The Federation is pleased that this change has been made.

schools and even individual students.

The panel discussion at the Provincial Education Committee raised serious questions about this direction in the minds of the organizational representatives who attended. After a question-and-answer period with the panel, a consensus began to emerge that the proposed new directions for PLAP would not be effective ones for education in B.C.

The ministry has listened to the concerns of trustees, parents, teachers and other

education partners and changed direction. Only provincial and district results will be reported from the PLAP test scheduled for May 1999. Individual students will not be identified and no school or individual student results produced.

The Federation is pleased that this change has been made. We were particularly concerned about the production of individual school results on a large-scale assessment.

After the expert panel presentation, BCTF representatives concluded that the PLAP tests would not provide good information on individual students to augment the information that teachers already collect in other ways.

1. Large-scale assessments administered to all students cannot be comprehensive enough to perform a diagnostic purpose. For diagnosis, we want to know about all aspects of a student's performance in writing. Large-scale assessments like PLAP tests consist of a few common tasks, that lend themselves to pencil-and-paper time-limited testing formats.

2. A large-scale assessment might tell us which students

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are not achieving within expectations, but it cannot tell us why. To find out why, we would need one-on-one diagnostic measures.

3. A large-scale assessment does not provide information on the strategies most likely to support students who are performing below expectations.

4. A large-scale assessment cannot be designed to serve all purposes. A test designed for program evaluation is not likely a valid test for identifying students who need additional support. Even standardized individual diagnostic tests that are developed for one purpose—for example, identifying students for a gifted program—cannot be used for another purpose—for example, identifying students for

Tests used to make judgments about individual students need to be more precise than tests used for program evaluation.

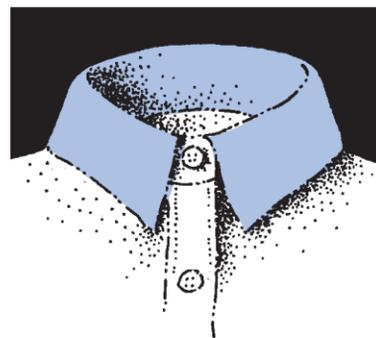
learning assistance. A standardized diagnostic test designed to identify students for additional support would have lots of very easy questions in order to spread out performance at the lower end.

5. There is too much measurement error in individual students' scores on large-scale assessments such as PLAP to use the results for diagnostic purposes. Tests used to make judgments about individual students need to be more precise than tests used for program evaluation.

6. It is unlikely that individual student scores from PLAP tests can be provided to parents with enough background information and context that parents would understand that the scores tell them little about their child's progress. If the ministry does record individual test results, the results must be released to parents under Freedom of Information legislation. Parents are likely to have a false sense of accuracy about the numbers and push for educational decisions based on them.

The BCTF will continue to work with other groups to improve PLAP. We are seeking to have PLAP administered on a sample basis rather than testing every student at three grades. We think that would allow the ministry to collect richer data for program evaluation in a more cost-effective manner.

Anita Chapman is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional Development Division.



What colour are the collars in your neighbourhood?

The Fraser Institute's ranking of schools

by Janet Amsden

Canadians are closet competitors. Although we pride ourselves on a culture of co-operation and consensus, secretly we love to compete. Adrenalin rises when the Fraser Institute ranking of B.C. high schools is published in *The Province*, and we hunt through the list to see how the local alma mater compares with other schools.

...45% of the variation between schools can be attributed to social class.

The rankings seem personal because they are personal. They are a report on our individual status in the social hierarchy. Research into factors that influence school-wide achievement tests shows that 45% of the variation between schools can be attributed to social class. The rank a school holds indicates the income and values of the neighbourhood it serves. The top schools are from high-income areas, such as West Vancouver and Vancouver's west side. Schools at the low end of the scale are from the province's lowest income areas, mainly inner-city and remote parts of the province.

To compare all schools on the basis of provincially examinable courses is a disservice because secondary courses are not valued equally. The Fraser Institute's (FI) index is influenced by participation rates. Schools that have higher participation rates in English 12 than in Communications 12 (not provincially examinable) generally show lower average exam results but a higher percentage of well-qualified graduates.

The index is also based on the premise that all students should take four provincially examinable courses in Grade 12, thus qualifying for university entrance. However, graduates can enter many other

ASSESSMENT

post-secondary programs (such as BCIT) with only two provincially examinable courses. When students choose a career path that does not include university, their school rank is lower. The FI index may be an estimate of the proportion of future white-collar to blue-collar workers that a school will produce, but it ignores the school's mandate to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes

Accreditation is a more genuine and comprehensive measure of school effectiveness...

needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic, and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

Schools reflect the communities they serve. The vast difference in communities' needs and values determines their expectations for their children's schooling. Students in the Lower Mainland may view a post-secondary degree as necessary for employment. Students in resource-centred towns may find apprenticeship programs more attractive. West Vancouver parents may view a post-secondary degree as security for their grandchildren. To rural parents, a degree can threaten estrangement from their grandchildren.

The crude averaging measure used by the Fraser Institute obscures the fact that every student in B.C. has access to the same curriculum, is taught by teachers from the

Its greatest validity is as a measure of property values in the neighbourhood.

same pool, and has the same opportunity to qualify for university entrance. Every year, schools ranked lowest by the Fraser Institute send students to Canadian universities.

Constituents who want a more valid evaluation of school effectiveness should look at the school's accreditation review. The accreditation process involves an evaluation of the school's progress toward curricular and extra-curricular goals by teachers, students, and parents. The process is scrutinized by reviewers from outside the community. Accreditation is a more genuine and comprehensive measure of school effectiveness than the Fraser Institute's report on schools.

So what does the Fraser Institute's report on schools

really measure? Is it the effectiveness of teaching and counselling in the schools? No. The index is a blunt estimate of school culture. This is not to say that teaching and counselling are not factors in school success, but unless the variable of socio-economic status is addressed in the rating process, the index is meaningless as a measure of school effectiveness. This report card for our children's schools is a rating of our own social status, a rating of our personal financial success or career prestige. Its greatest validity is as a measure of property values in the neighbourhood.

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

Staff reps look at assessment

by *Sandra Davie*

"Assessment should direct effective teaching and learning!" So said Sharon Jeroski, of Horizon Research, at Prince George's November 23, 1998, Staff Rep Training Session. My heart quickened when I heard those words; their simplicity, clarity, and practicality were just what I felt needed to be heard in our district. As I looked around at my colleagues, I thought about other staff-representing sessions and how helpful they had been. This time, the training was focussing on an issue that faces us all, an issue that has been particularly contentious in our district: assessment and evaluation.

Why was assessment and evaluation so important to staff reps? Our school board, in 1995, decided that Prince George students were not performing adequately on the government exams. A District Academic Achievement Task Force was created to recommend ways to turn the "deplorable" situation around. One of the recommendations was to form a District Academic Review Committee (DARC) to oversee the implementation of the other recommendations. Of course there was little money to help schools, but DARC created an academic template for each school to fill in so that each school could increase its marks and improve the district average. Departments were asked to set a percentage target of where they would be in three years. Schools were told to get more students writing more exams, which should look more and more like the government exams. One trustee at a school board meeting even said, "Of course, the only true measure is the government exam score."

There had also been suggestions that all schools and all grades should write the same exams so that then we could "truly compare schools."

A second motivating factor for us was the data requirement of elementary accreditation. Schools need to produce numerical scores for their children, and apparently the information that the classroom teacher can provide is not sufficient. One principal wanted his staff to administer old PLAP tests, mark them, and use the information as their "baseline data." Now, remember the original purpose of PLAP tests was to assess curriculum. Any individual data garnered from marking those tests would be meaningless.

Our executive felt we were drowning in a sea of ignorance about the nature, meaning, and purpose of assessment. And we ourselves felt ignorant about the subject. How could we then help our colleagues? We turned to our staff reps. They had to be given the information to help their colleagues with conflicting demands they were facing.

In November, Sharon Jeroski talked to staff reps (or PD reps) and to administrators about appropriate uses of assessment and evaluation, about the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada, and about the provincial standards project. She talked theory, and she provided hands-on material. Staff reps and administrators received the same simple, clear, and practical information. For me,

"The more time we spend assessing and evaluating our students, the less time we have to instruct and the less likely our students will achieve excellence."

her most profound words were, "The more time we spend assessing and evaluating our students, the less time we have to instruct and the less likely our students will achieve excellence." Such common sense!

We realize that we haven't countered all the mistaken ideas about assessment, nor have we stopped the various agendas built around the concept of "accountability," but we have taken the first step in sorting out the confusion and reminding the Prince George education community that the real purpose of assessment is to inform learning.

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

On the light side

Standardized testing vs. formative assessment

by *Garth Holmes and Lynne Rodier*

Standardized testing is once again the education wave of the future. Fear-mongers have raised questions about its validity. They moan that formative assessment is far superior. This column will test the two types of evaluation, head to head. Both assessment methods will be used to report on the progress of a team of adult bowlers. In this investigation, the greater speed and efficacy of standardized testing will be obvious.

Formative assessment

This report is to indicate the progress of the adults on the Class Acts Bowling Team. These structured comments are about their activities in the group portion of the program—the Wednesday-Night League.

This is a league in which a team average of 200 is needed if the team is to be allowed into the league next year. The current Class Acts average is 175.

Wayne is the bowler most over the 175 average, and his dedication to extra practice is noted. His ball moves so quickly that the pins are often splayed on the back wall, giving an aesthetic quality to his game. That Wayne also likes to play with Lynne demonstrates his social maturity. He is a proponent of sugar highs, handing out Twizzlers on those occasions when the team is sagging.

Lynne might sometimes do better working in another medium. Despite some progress, there are times when she would have more success writing a poem describing the pins' falling down, rather than following the more conventional process of actually throwing a ball at them. Lynne is very aware of her teammates' emotional needs, particularly during their sometimes futile attempts to improve.

Lois's attitude is good, and her form continues to improve. Her use of short, sharp, French phrases to describe her feelings about the pins is impressive, demonstrating a keen dedication to practising the language. Her knowledge of where to put the ball is more consistent than her actual placement of the ball.

Andy's social development continues apace, especially his

new-found desire to excel at social rituals. His enthusiasm might be a bit of a handicap here. Andy's peers have been known to pretend not to see him, rather than have him slap their hands enthusiastically after he has a strike.

Garth already had the pre-performance skill of flipping his fingers upward. However, this flip when releasing the ball has not yet generalized into actually putting a curve on it. Garth must be alert to the follow-through. He has been noticed several times to be actually flipping only one finger at the pins, after he has thrown the ball. Garth must work on avoiding this.

The BoC (Bowler on Call) is Maxine. Maxine follows short, active instructions better than generalized situational comments. "Remember lane etiquette." does not work as well as, "Max! Back!" for example.

In relation to the widely held performance expectations for an adult bowling team, and in light of the team's present standing (10th in a 10-team league), it must be said that the team is achieving far below average. A goal for next term would be to replace the team's current belief in "Twizzler Power" with a serious attempt to work on delivery skills.

Compare the above formative assessment with:

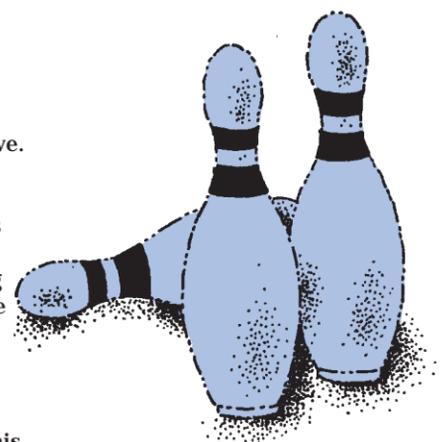
Standardized testing

Class Acts Bowling Team
The team average is 175.
They fail.

Comparison

Note the wordiness of the formative assessment and its open-endedness. Compare this with the pithy, unambiguous standardized report. A teacher using the standardized criteria could finish reports speedily. That would leave more time to work on other aspects of education, such as hot dog sales to buy computers for the school.

Garth Holmes and Lynne Rodier teach at Anne Stevenson Secondary School, Williams Lake.



Contract produces lowest student/educator ratio in six years

by Garry Litke

The first year of implementation of the new provincial agreement has produced astonishing results. Recently released Ministry of Education figures on the student/educator ratio (SER) indicate the lowest level since 1992-93. This significant improvement has occurred because the collective agreement requires boards to hire more teachers

and gives the boards the money to do it.

Of the 537 new teaching positions created by the agreement, 483 were filled by September 30, 1998. The erosion of support services to students in B.C. has been halted. Primary class sizes are being reduced.

Districts with declining enrolments had been solving their budget problems by slashing programs and support services for students.

Libraries were closed, and queues to see a counsellor or learning assistance teacher lengthened. Philosophical support for mainstreaming and integration was not matched with staffing. The influx of ESL students was inadequately dealt with.

This year, although 23 districts suffered an enrolment decline of 2% or greater, staffing levels and support for students improved. Minimum student/teacher ratios established in the collective agreement required that boards hire more teachers using special grants supplied by the Ministry of Education.

While the student population decreased by 1,500 FTE across the province, close to 500 FTE teachers were added to the system.

As a result, the SER has been reduced dramatically in many districts. Twenty-three districts had an improvement in the SER greater than 2%.

Across the province, the SER

dropped from 16.9205 in September 1997 to 16.714 in September 1998, an improvement of 1.2%. It is the lowest SER in six years.

(Source: *Ministry of Education Standard Report 2077*, September 1997 and September 1998)

(The SER is calculated by dividing full-time-equivalent student enrolment by the number of full-time-equivalent educators, which includes teachers and administrators.)

In an education-funding brief presented to the Government of British Columbia in January 1998, the BCTF pointed out the steady decline in staffing over the past nine years. If the SER of 1990-91 were still in place, there would be 1470 more educators in B.C. working with students. The BCTF recommended a return to 1990-91 staffing levels, and the first year of our new collective agreement has taken a significant step in that direction.

Since September 1998, additional hiring has taken

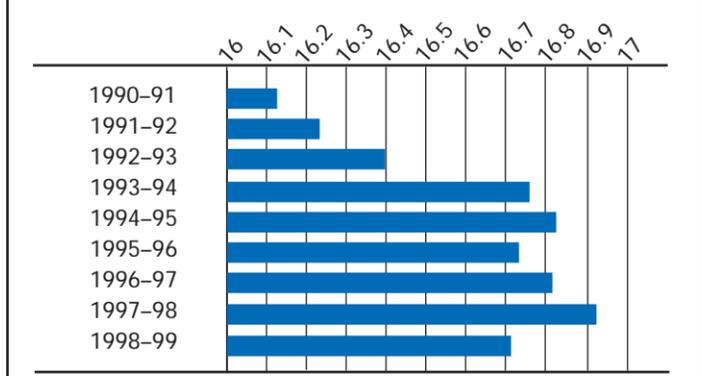
place as boards decided that compliance with the collective agreement is preferable to an arbitration. Further hiring took place as a result of mediation/arbitration hearings with Vince Ready and may continue as those proceedings conclude. All progress came as the direct result of hard work and strong advocacy by local leaders working with the BCTF.

This is only year one of a three-year agreement. We've turned the corner on the erosion of the past nine years and can now take further steps toward achieving the BCTF objective of 1990-91 staffing levels.

Further improvements are being funded for years two and three of the agreement as primary class sizes are reduced and staffing ratios for non-enrolling teachers improve.

Garry Litke is an assistant director in the BCTF's Bargaining Division.

Student/Educator Ratio 1990 to 1999



Grievetalk

The discrimination must cease

by Sharon Yandle

Arbitrator orders level playing field

If a policy is applied to one teacher exactly the way it applies to all teachers, can the individual claim to be a victim of discrimination?

In some circumstances, yes. A recent arbitration award ordered School District 61 (Victoria) to exempt a teacher from a policy "honestly made, applicable to all, and rationally connected to the performance of the job" because it discriminates against him.

The grievance arose when the employer, asserting a right to assign all teachers to teach in more than one department, assigned a teacher two blocks of social studies rather than the seven blocks of PE he had taught for over 20 years. Although widely acknowledged as an excellent PE teacher, he claimed that a life-long learning disability made teaching academic subjects difficult, if not impossible.

This situation proved to be a classic example of "adverse-effect discrimination." Unlike "direct discrimination," where a rule is expressly intended to discriminate—for example, that everyone may vote except Asians—adverse-effect discrimination does not depend on intent. An apparently neutral rule applied evenly to everyone may be discriminatory if the rule affects an individual differently from everyone else.

For example, in an overcrowded school, a rule that all teachers must teach at least one block in a portable may appear to be even-handed and fair to all—the antithesis of discrimination. But if a teacher in a wheelchair has difficulty getting through the door, the rule would likely be found to discriminate against that teacher. And since discrimination by reason of

physical disability is prohibited, that application of the rule would be a violation of the Human Rights Code.

In the Victoria teacher's case, requiring nine hearing days, Arbitrator Marguerite Jackson produced a decision that she called "appropriate to the protection of the fundamental rights of the individual." She found that the employer's decision to require teachers to teach in more than one department "had a discriminatory effect (upon the teacher) because it imposes on him burdens or obligations additional to those imposed on non-disabled teachers."

Arbitrator Jackson also turned her mind to the school district's "duty to accommodate" the individual once discrimination has been established—the obligation to do whatever is possible "up to the point of undue hardship" to eliminate the discriminatory effects of its policy. In the Victoria case, she concluded that the board's offers of assistance fell short of this standard, and she ordered the board to exempt the teacher from the rule and assign him to teach only PE.

While the Jackson award dealt with a disability, most of the Supreme Court of Canada decisions on the subject have involved employees' religious beliefs. One such decision ruled that, notwithstanding universal statutory holidays, a school board must permit Jewish teachers time off to observe Yom Kippur. Another ordered the Central Okanagan School District to exempt a custodian, a Seventh Day Adventist, from the requirement that all custodial staff will rotate through Friday-evening shifts, because his religion prohibits work on that evening. Numerous arbitration awards have extended these decisions to a variety of other circumstances in which

discrimination is prohibited by law.

Two salient points emerge from these cases, both underscored in the Victoria arbitration. First, there can be no discrimination against an individual by intent or by effect. And, second, the duty to accommodate is to do what can reasonably be done to take the effect of the discrimination away. The objective is a level playing field.

Contract language prevails over any process

An interesting aspect of a recent arbitration award (see adjacent article) is the ruling that the provisions of a collective agreement are paramount, no matter who makes an employment decision.

At issue was a department's decision to change the assignment of an individual teacher. Arbitrator Marguerite Jackson found that although the decision had been made by department staff, reviewed by the school's staff committee, and upheld by the principal "because the collegial process had been followed in determining the assignment," the decision, "with respect, misses the point. Whether assignments are made collegially or by the principal himself," she said, they must be made in accordance with the collective agreement.

This award should lay to rest the notion that collective-agreement rights can be set aside if a collegial process is followed. While consultation and co-operation are always desirable, the processes must take place within the framework of the collective agreement. Decisions that contravene teachers' contractual rights will not be allowed to stand.

Sharon Yandle is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division.

EI regulations marginalize TOCs and younger teachers

A recent study released by the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC) reveals the dramatic effects of changes to Employment Insurance on Canadian workers. The report, entitled "Left Out in the Cold," shows that the percentage of unemployed workers receiving EI benefits has fallen from 74% in 1989 to only 36% in 1997.

Four separate bills over the past few years have tripled the length of qualifying time and cut the duration of the benefit period in half. The most recent legislation increased the weekly hours needed to qualify from 15 to 35.

Only 32% of unemployed women received EI benefits in 1997, compared with 70% in 1989.

Unemployed young people fare worse with only 15% qualifying for EI benefits in 1997, a drop from 55% in 1989. The total hours of work required of new entrants to the labour force has increased from 300 to 910, shutting out many unemployed youth from collecting benefits.

In B.C., the picture reflects the national trends, except for Vancouver and Victoria, where only 25% of unemployed workers are receiving EI benefits.

These changes have been especially detrimental for part-time teachers and teachers on call, most of whom are women and young people entering the teaching force.

Part-time teachers with assignments of 0.39 FTE or less, can no longer qualify for

EI benefits, because they cannot accumulate the required 700 hours. They need to work at least 77 FTE days. Under the old rules, teachers with only a 0.2 FTE assignment could qualify.

Previously, teachers on call needed only two days of employment a week for any 20 weeks to qualify. Now they need 100 days. Eligibility has been further complicated by BCPSEA and boards' refusal to recognize the provincial agreement, which gives TOCs credit for 9.1 hours per day, instead of the 7 hours per day currently being recorded.

The changes have generated about nine billion dollars a year in savings and have produced a huge surplus in the EI fund, estimated at \$17 billion. For every \$10 the Federal government collects in EI premiums, it pays out only \$6 in benefits.

The CLC is lobbying to have the EI surplus used to improve the benefits and coverage of the unemployed. Qualifying rules need to be changed, and the formula for benefits improved. The benefit period needs to be extended to provide an income while an unemployed worker searches for another job.

The Liberal federal caucus met on Wednesday, January 20, 1999, and announced that the government is reviewing the changes it has made to EI.

Now is the time to make your views known. Access the CLC Web site at www.clc-ctc.ca/eng-index.html and use the online response form to fax your MP.

—Garry Litke



Teachers on call

by David Minichiello

Teachers on call from North Vancouver and other districts were treated to a TOC Conference on the weekend of January 8-9, 1999, in North Vancouver. The first, we hope annual, conference sponsored jointly by the North Vancouver Teacher's Association and the BCTF, was well attended, by 70 first-year and veteran TOCs from North Vancouver, Vancouver, Surrey, New Westminster, Coquitlam, and Burnaby. The conference comprised an evening at the NVTa office for introductions, a panel presentation, and a social, followed by a full day at the Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre for workshops, lunch, and more workshops.

The workshops offered valuable learning opportunities for the new and the seasoned TOC. Classroom Management and Discipline was the most popular. Also popular was Polishing Your Résumé and Interview Skills. Other workshops included Communication: Building Rapport with Students and Staff and Curriculum Directions in North Vancouver that involved reading, math, and science for primary and intermediate levels, and Departments and Courses, Assessment and Reporting, and Reading Across the Secondary Curriculum for the secondary level.

As a first-year TOC, I found the workshops to be very practical. The week following the conference, I tried out some of the tips I learned during the Classroom Management workshop and was pleased with the success I had. It was comforting to know that I had a few more skills upon which to draw. I look forward to using the tips I learned from the other workshops when the time comes. Other TOCs in attendance also voiced their satisfaction that such a conference was held and proved to be beneficial for them.

Many thanks must be extended to the NVTa Executive and office staff, along with the BCTF, for organizing the conference. Special thanks go to the 12 teachers who gave part of their weekend to lead the curriculum workshops. Everyone's involvement made the TOC conference a success and a very welcome and worthwhile event for the TOCs in attendance. The effort by the NVTa and BCTF was a welcome message to TOCs and teachers of the support available to their members.

David Minichiello is a teacher on call, North Vancouver.

Smoking salmon for social justice

by Pat Clarke

What does building a salmon smoking house have to do with social justice? Quite a lot. Small-scale community development projects are often the key to building equitable and sustainable communities, a primary objective of social-justice movements. The salmon-smoking project, in Nanaimo, has involved teachers and students in a dynamic effort to revive an old tradition and build a practical and sustainable food production activity.

In the fall, teachers and students at John Barsby

Secondary School in Nanaimo were confronted with a local controversy when a large

For a number of reasons, salmon smoking had not been done in recent years. A smokehouse would serve as a first stage in the creation of a local First Nations-operated food-preparation industry. The teachers at John Barsby went to their local association, the NDTA, with their project idea, and the local submitted it to the Federation for a social-justice grant.

Students would help construct the smokehouse; they would work with artists and

several other elements of social justice.

One of the most significant of these is the matter of sustainability. The smokehouse is a small example of how we can link what is, in one respect, a race-relations activity, with an initiative that will, in the longer term, make a community more economically and socially viable. By making better use of the resource and honouring other elements of

Secondary School in Nanaimo were confronted with a local controversy when a large

The smokehouse is a small example of how we can link what is, in one respect, a race-relations activity, with an initiative that will, in the longer term, make a community more economically and socially viable.

number of discarded and rotting salmon were found after a First Nations food fishery. Students in the school's First Nation's education program were personally affected by the controversy, and they, along with teachers in the program, resolved to do something to address the problem. Working with leaders of the Snuyemx First Nation, they developed a plan to revive the old custom of smoking salmon that was not going to be eaten immediately.

elders during preparation for building and during actual construction. They would be learning skills related not only to construction but also to salmon-smoking and related traditions.

So how is this social justice? The teachers involved realized that the First Nations students at the school were vulnerable to stereotyping and discrimination as a result of the local controversy over the food fishery. The smoke-house project, at a very basic level, was directed at improving relations between local First Nations and the larger community. Much of the Federation's past antiracism work concentrated on the critical matter of race relations. The smokehouse project, however, is an example of how a community-development-oriented activity can work on

the community, such as the value of custom and tradition, the smokehouse project can become part of a larger effort to obtain economic and social equity for a group that has long experienced the effects of discrimination and marginalization. The people involved, in particular the students, are actually building opportunity for themselves and others. The development of a locally based and sustainable economic activity is a critical part of cultivating a community where people have reason to stay and work and participate in building a viable future. Such a place is one where discrimination, inequity, and poverty are much less likely to gain a foothold.

The smokehouse project at John Barsby Secondary School in Nanaimo, is one of several social justice projects the Federation is now supporting through its social justice grant program. We have received a

The Federation's social justice program depends on teachers working together on social issues, school by school and local by local, to build communities where equity, sustainability, and opportunity ensure a promising future for the children we are teaching.

number of other equally ambitious and encouraging projects. The Gulf Islands local has submitted a proposal for a grant to support a school and community based anti-violence project focussing on girls and young women. The Nicola Valley local is developing a drop-in centre for local youth at risk, helping to develop programs for single mothers, antipoverty initiatives, and violence prevention.

Each locally developed project idea is an example of how teachers, working through their local association, can develop their interests in social issues such as racial discrimination, sexism, violence or homophobia into meaningful, community based social justice projects.

If the projects described here sound interesting and have you thinking about how you could get involved, find out who your local's social justice representatives are, or talk to your local president. The Federation's social justice program depends on teachers working together on social issues, school by school and local by local, to build communities where equity, sustainability, and opportunity ensure a promising future for the children we are teaching.

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



Kamloops Thompson teachers on disability form support group

by Alice Charbonneau and Shirley Clayton

A support group for teachers on disability has been formed within the Kamloops Thompson local. The group was initiated by two teachers on disability who had major concerns regarding their inclusion in their union.

One significant result of disability is isolation. The new group, Kamloops Thompson Teachers on Disability, wants to provide interconnectedness during chronic disability by having a support organization where persons can seek assistance from other members and meet informally. The group wants to change the focus to the *possible* while chronically disabled.

Chronic disability brings with it considerable stress and many necessary losses. No teacher believes that this will happen. Teachers who were once very active face the loss of a career that provided intense fulfillment, accompanied by the disorientation

due to illness and financial instability. Grieving the loss of a career, steady income, and dreams and making changes in personal, social, and professional relationships is a difficult process for many people. There are many steps in the journey to acceptance of changed circumstances. Usually there is no ready network of support available, and teachers flounder trying to cope with a serious illness and completing the myriad forms that require clarity at a time when just keeping the focus on daily activities is a challenge.

The loss of self-esteem is significant. Once very involved in their profession, many teachers find that the bottom has dropped out of their lives. What can replace their career? This is a difficult question for most. While the body can no longer perform the functions for operating a classroom, the mind still constantly pokes into the places where there was intense activity with students and interaction with other professionals.

In addition to providing support for one another, members of the group have indicated interest in changes in the public education system and innovations in their area of expertise. The local association executive is very supportive of the group, and the president will give a talk concerning changes and trends in teaching in the last five years and make available the professional resources of the KTTA Teacher Centre.

A basic aim of Teachers on Disability is to build an advocacy group pertaining to their own unique problems. One chief concern is the cost of medical coverage when benefits are only slightly better than half an average salary. Quite a few teachers have no spousal plan to cover them. The Kamloops Thompson group feels that the salary-indemnity program should cover the costs of medical, dental, and extended-health premiums beyond the period covered by collective agreements.

At recent general meetings in the local, the KT Teachers on Disability received unanimous support for their BCTF AGM resolutions regarding medical benefit premium coverage and pegging SIP benefits to teacher salary increases.

The Kamloops Thompson Teachers on Disability are looking for the support of all their colleagues on this monetary issue. At a recent meeting, one after another mentioned that they never thought this would happen to them. Gratitude for the present SIP was expressed, but clearly a more comprehensive program regarding medical benefits and increases in SIP benefits tied to teacher salary increases would be in the interest of the security of all members.

Anyone with comments or concerns can contact the Kamloops Teachers on Disability through the KTTA Office at (250) 554-1223 or e-mail to bwturner@direct.ca

Nanaimo District Status of Women

by Jan Thorsen

For the past three years, the Nanaimo Status of Women Committee has sponsored an essay/poster contest for all students in our district to honour women who have made an impact on students' lives, either historically or personally.

This highly successful event coincides with International Women's Day, on March 8. We have been impressed with the quality of submissions and the strong emotional response from the students.

This year, thanks to the support and encouragement from other S/W committees, we will be hosting our first ever Grade 7/8 girls' conference. We hope to make this conference an annual event along with our poster/essay contest.

Our committee has been, and continues to be, a strong, dedicated sub-committee of the Nanaimo District Teachers' Association. We believe that the social-justice issues that our committee addresses are as important today as they were at the inception of the BCTF Status of Women Program, more than 25 years ago. We also believe that the network of S/W committees throughout the province needs to remain a strong, autonomous voice for gender equity. We need the continued support of the BCTF.

The Nanaimo District Teachers' Status of Women Committee has also created a generic calendar highlighting dates important to women. If you would like a laminated 11x17 colour calendar, please send \$5 to NDTA S/W Committee, 3137 C-Barons Road, Nanaimo, BC V9T 5W5.

Jan Thorsen is the co-chair of the NDTA S/W Committee.

Truth is stranger than fiction

Last issue, we brought you Garth Holmes's satirical look at the future of corporate sponsorship in schools. Reporting from SD #52 (Carbonated Beverages), he offered a humorous preview of a world in which all schools would have only two departments: supply and demand. No sooner had that issue rolled off the presses, than we learned that truth really is stranger than fiction. What follows is an actual letter, dated September 23, 1998, from John Bushey, executive director of "school leadership" in School District 11, Colorado Springs, Colorado. In September 1997, the district signed an \$8 million exclusive vending contract with Coca-Cola.

Dear Principal:

Here we are in year two of the great Coke contract. I hope your first weeks were successful and that pretty much everything is in place (except staffing, technology, planning time, and telephones).

First, the good news: This year's instalment from Coke is "in the house," and checks will be cut for you to pick up in my office this week. Your share will be the same as last year. Elementary school \$3,000; Middle School \$15,000; High School \$25,000.

Now the not-so-good news: we must sell 70,000 cases of product (including juices, sodas, waters, etc.) at least once during the first three years of the contract. If we reach this goal, your school allotments will be guaranteed for the next seven years.

The math on how to achieve this is really quite simple. Last year we had 32,439 students, 3,000 employees, and 176 days in the school year. If 35,439 staff and students buy one Coke product every other day for a school year, we will

double the required quota.

Here is how we can do it:

1. Allow students to purchase and consume vended products throughout the day. If sodas are not allowed in classes, consider allowing juices, teas, and waters.
2. Locate machines where they are accessible to the students all day. Research shows that vender purchases are closely linked to availability. Location, location, location is the key. You may have as many machines as you can handle. Pueblo Central High tripled its volume of sales by placing vending machines on

all three levels of the school. The Coke people surveyed the middle and high schools this summer and have suggestions on where to place additional machines.

3. A list of Coke products is enclosed to allow you to select from the entire menu of beverages. Let me know which products you want, and we will get them in. Please let me know if you need electrical outlets.

4. A calendar of promotional events is enclosed to help you advertise Coke products.

I know this is "just one more

thing from downtown," but the long-term benefits are worth it. Thanks for all your help.

John Bushey
The Coke Dude

Source: Harper's magazine, February 1999.

Youth news network (YNN)

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) first opposed the introduction of the Youth News Network (YNN) in Canadian schools as far back as 1992. When the CTF Board of Directors became concerned about the resurgence of YNN in early 1996, it reaffirmed its opposition, saying the YNN interferes with the professional autonomy of teachers to manage their classrooms and opens the door to selling portions of the school timetable for commercial purposes.

YNN provides equipment in exchange for agreements to telecast programs with commercial content teachers and students are required to view during classroom hours.

YNN has launched a national campaign to gain access to 2,300 Canadian secondary schools. It is sending information packages, including a video brochure to schools. It is hoping to sign up more schools by September 1999.

CTF encourages you to protest, as strongly as you can, any attempt by YNN to get its foot in the school door.

We also ask that you keep CTF informed about any YNN activity that you hear about so that we can track trends and take appropriate action at the national level in support of your provincial/territorial action.

- David Eaton
CTF Secretary General



International Women's Day MARCH 8, 1999



A teacher's perspective on the Surrey book ban

Bouquet, Asha's Mum, One Dad Two Dads, Brown Bad Blue Dad were banned. Not many employees have the temerity to sue their employers.

Chamberlain had the good fortune of winning in court, but his victory was *pyrrhic*, in reference to an ancient king who exclaimed after battle, "One more such victory and we are lost." He and other teachers in Surrey remain afraid to use any storybook portraying same-sex parents. An Orwellian chill has set in, and we feel its coldness.

Censorship may be thought of as the suppression of books or films; yet its ultimate form, as George Bernard Shaw has said, is assassination. Roman Emperor Nero burned the books he did not like; Caligula went further and burned the authors. Nobody was burned in Surrey—only the proposal to mirror different parenting forms.

One of my students last year was being raised by two men. Of my 22 students in Grades 4 and 5 this year, 13 do not live with their birth father. To assert that normal parenthood comes from the natural mother and father in the same home is to avoid looking reality in the face.

Our courts have established that we should serve "the best interests of the child." But when the literature approved by schools does not reflect a range of lifestyles and parenting models, certain children may be cast in shame.

My wife and I, parents of three children (ages 6, 8, and 11), make decisions on the suitability of certain books and television shows. For example, we do not allow our children to read the popular *Goosebumps* series, judging the books frightful. We also prohibit the children from watching the television shows *The Simpsons* and *Southpark*, which create appeal through vulgarity and disrespect for adults.

The determination of what is appropriate for our children, or school children generally, is influenced by parental values. More deeply, it is enmeshed in the historical structures and power relations of our society; for example, that of heterosexual dominance. The exclusion of books with same-sex parents from the Surrey School District-approved body of literature demonstrates this dynamic.

The root sense of education (from the Latin *educare* and *educere*) is mental growth and leading out toward broader thought. In other words,

education is not on indoctrination at all. As Northrop Frye has said, "One has to avoid any suggestion of leading the student toward or away from any position of what is called belief. The academic aim is to see what the subject means, not to accept or reject it."

James Chamberlain's intent was never to teach Kindergarten children about choices in sexuality. It was to show them that non-traditional families are part of the world around them and that being different is okay—though he himself has not been made to feel that way.

Jim McMurtry teaches at Sunnyside Elementary School, Surrey.

Public services in B.C. and Alberta: The cost of cutbacks

Since 1994, all provinces have had to contend with massive cutbacks in transfer payments from the federal government for health, education, and welfare. Most provinces have reacted by making cuts in all three programs. A new Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) study comparing B.C. and Alberta finds that B.C., alone among the provinces, has chosen not to cut funding for health and education. B.C. has, however, made cuts to other programs, including social services. Alberta, which introduced dramatic spending cuts before the federal Liberals announced their plans to reduce transfer payments, continued to cut deeply into health, social services, education, and other areas until only last year—even while posting record budgetary surpluses.

Among the CCPA study's findings:

- Welfare in both B.C. and Alberta provides a level of income well below Statistics Canada's low-income cutoff, although the poverty gap in Alberta is greater.
- B.C. has seen a steady increase in health-care spending, and currently ranks first among the provinces with respect to public-health-care spending per capita. Alberta, in contrast, now ranks last among the provinces in per capita public-health expenditures.
- B.C. now spends \$1,100 more per pupil on primary and secondary education than Alberta.
- Alberta has more pupils per teacher than B.C. in the K-12 system. Moreover, while the ratio is worsening in Alberta, the ratio has improved in B.C.
- In 1996-97, B.C. spent \$373 per capita per year on post-secondary education, compared to \$315 in Alberta and \$328 in Canada as a whole.
- In 1997-98, average university tuition in B.C. was \$2,308 per year. In Alberta, tuition fees have been rising dramatically (by 8% last year alone), and averaged \$3,102 per year in 1997-98. Average tuition at B.C.'s colleges and institutes has been frozen at \$1,390. In contrast, 1997-98 tuition at Alberta's colleges and institutes averaged \$1,675, and has been rising at almost all colleges and institutes by between \$200 and \$300 a year.
- In B.C., gambling revenues per capita and as a share of total revenues have been flat. In contrast, per capita gambling revenues in Alberta have increased dramatically since 1991. Albertans now send approximately \$150 more per capita to government coffers by way of lotteries and gambling than do British Columbians.

continued on page 17

by Jim McMurtry

As good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, God's Image; but hee who destroyes a good Book, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye...

— John Milton, *Areopagitica*

James Chamberlain surprised me and other teachers in the Surrey School District last spring when he became party to a class-action suit against the district after storybooks with same-sex parents (*Belinda's*

It's time to demand a tax deduction

by Bonnie Sutherland

We teachers are generous, so generous that we have been subsidizing education across Canada for generations. Teachers have quietly purchased materials for their classroom from paper to supplementary texts, to graphing calculators, to enhance the learning process. Teachers now find that they must purchase computers for use at home to meet their districts' requirements in areas such as reporting; furthermore, they must constantly upgrade as new applications become the standard. Having a computer and its peripherals at home for school-related work is no longer an option. Such outlays without tax breaks, are unfair to teachers. This issue cuts across disciplines and grades. It is time that taxation reflected this new reality. For

years, the Canadian Teachers' Federation has been pursuing issues such as these through meetings with Revenue Canada, Department of Finance officials, and CTF federal budget proposals. However, the CTF has neither the staff nor the budget of Ottawa's more powerful lobby groups. We need clout if we are going to initiate change. John Staples, the CTF director of economic services, recently summed up the situation:

"It would appear as though it will take an incredible amount of political pressure to get this, or any other government to agree to changes in taxation laws that favour teachers specifically. Even if there were completely justifiable arguments for the changes, they would have to be of an extremely compelling nature to cause Revenue Canada to agree to adjustments only for teachers. However, the federal govern-

ment is now in the process of developing an approach to "Targeted tax relief" which they will introduce in stages over the next few years. It is therefore an opportune time to attempt to influence the thinking of the decision makers to as great a degree as possible." (September '98)

...full tax deduction for all computer hardware and software purchased for education purposes.

So, now is the time to take action—action that should be proactive on a grand scale to get the government's attention. We do not have a dozen expensive lawyers lobbying for us. We do have the numbers and an excellent cause that unites us across the country: full tax deduction for all computer hardware and software

purchased for education purposes. Notice I said a "tax deduction" not a tax credit! (Yes, all school-related purchases should be deductible, but this is the place to start.) That is why an orchestrated Canada-wide letter-writing campaign held over a one-week period and aimed at MPs, MLAs, and the Honourable Paul Martin makes sense. Any MP or MLA receiving so many letters, even form letters with a space for personal comments, is going to sit up and take notice. As for Paul Martin, how could he ignore so many letters? Would he even be able to find his desk? The government pays the postage, so our costs would be minimal. The effect would be highly public, and the result positive for all teachers. This is a window of opportunity. Let's open it wide!

Bonnie Sutherland teaches at Seaquam Secondary School, Delta.



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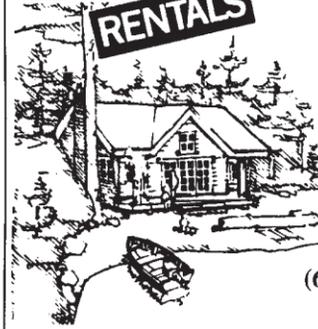
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continued from page 15

What many people save in taxes in Alberta, they lose in reduced services and new out-of-pocket expenses.

Ultimately, you get what you pay for. Alberta is under-investing in health, education, social services, and other public programs—all because of an economic strategy to maintain low taxes for the wealthy and corporations.

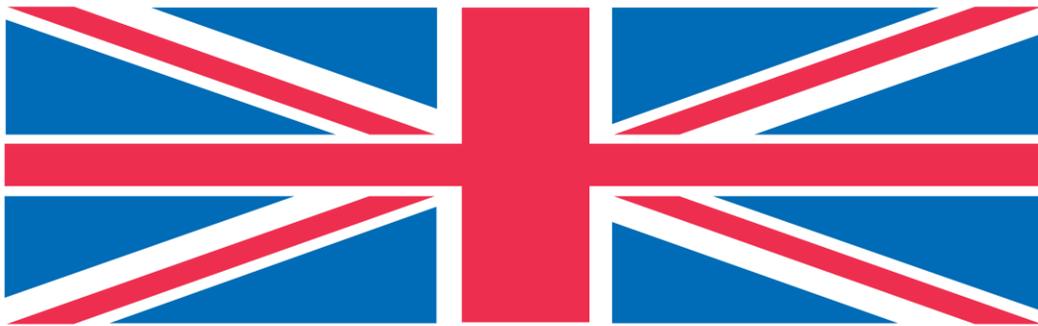
As the table shows, average people may pay less tax in Alberta, but this “advantage” is often more than offset by reduced services and new private expenses.

To obtain a copy of *A Tale of Two Provinces*, contact Shannon Daub at the CCPA-BC office: 815-207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1H7, (604) 801-5121, F: (604) 801-5122, www.policyalternatives.ca, ccpabc@intouch.bc.ca

Summary of cost and service comparisons for a two-income family of four with an average family income of \$55,000

	Alberta	B.C.	Alberta Advantage
Total direct provincial and federal taxes, 1998	\$13,331	\$14,067	\$ 736
Public health care expenditures per capita, 1997 (estimate)	1,587	1,954	-367
Private health care expenditures per capita, 1997 (estimate)	729	685	-44
Public education spending per pupil (K-12), 1997-98 (estimate)	6,235	7,361	-1,126
Public post-secondary spending per capita, 1996-97	315	373	-58
Average university tuition, undergraduate arts & science program (1997-98)	3,102	2,308	-794
Average college tuition, academic program, 1997-98	1,675	1,390	-285
Government revenues from lotteries and gambling per capita, 1996-97	219	68	-151

B.C.'s water for sale?



by Murray Dobbin

Shouldn't people have a right through their governments to implement water-protection measures and ban bulk water exports? Specifically, shouldn't B.C. residents have a right to determine what effects bulk water exports would have on the environment and our economy before we let this resource be shipped out of the province?

According to a California company, Sun Belt Inc., the answer is “No, not unless you're willing to pay hundreds of millions of dollars to us for the privilege.” And given the antidemocratic rules Canada has agreed to under the North American Free Trade Agreement and is pursuing in various other international agreements like the MAI, they may be right.

Sun Belt, which was not even issued a licence, is seeking to get up to \$300 million Canadian through NAFTA for lost business opportunities

In December 1998, Sun Belt Water Inc., of Santa Barbara, gave notice that it intended to submit a claim under Chapter Eleven—the investment chapter—of NAFTA. The chapter allows corporations to bypass our court system and directly sue governments for measures that reduce their

profits. The chapter is used as a model for the MAI. Sun Belt is demanding that Canada pay between \$105 and \$219 million (in U.S. dollars) to compensate for the effrontery demonstrated by B.C. legislators in introducing water-protection measures.

Under the Social Credit government in the '80s, B.C. promoted commercial exports of what was viewed as “surplus” water. By 1990, six licences for bulk water exports had been issued, one of which was granted to the B.C. company, Snowcap Water Ltd. A flood of applications followed. Extensive public opposition to the planned exports, on conservation grounds, led to the government's declaring a moratorium on exports. A drought in California in the late '80s raised the prospect of huge quantities of water being exported, regardless of B.C. needs or environmental impacts. The B.C. Water Protection Act, under which B.C. banned bulk water exports, was subsequently passed by the NDP government.

In 1996, the B.C. government settled with Snowcap for the money it had spent creating an infrastructure to export water. Snowcap received \$335,000. In contrast, Sun Belt, which was not even issued a licence, is seeking to get up to \$300 million Canadian through NAFTA for lost business opportunities. Its claim is based on the provisions in NAFTA that governments have to treat foreign companies as they do domestic

ones and on the provision that foreign companies are guaranteed a minimum standard of treatment. The size of its claim is based largely on the future profits it would have made by selling B.C. water in California, not on the actual expenses it incurred before B.C.'s policy changed.

“The B.C. government acted to protect a natural resource, but under NAFTA they have to pay for that privilege.”

The concerns raised by critics about the investment chapter of NAFTA and the similar provisions in the MAI seem to be confirmed by the Sun Belt case. A government, persuaded to change existing policies through the democratic actions of citizens, finds itself being asked to pay enormous sums by investors who claim losses of potential profits. Council of Canadians Chairperson Maude Barlow commented, in a December 8, 1998, news release, “The B.C. government acted to protect a natural resource, but under NAFTA they have to pay for that privilege.”

What's at Risk

If you want to get some profoundly frightening insights into the designs U.S. corporations have on B.C.'s water, just read Sun Belt's NAFTA submission. To justify their claim that they lost out on

huge profits, Sun Belt stated: “There are 33 million people in California. It is the fastest growing state in the United States and it is expected to double in population within 25 years. Two thirds of those people live and will live in an area that is a desert where the ground water is depleting and the new water resources cannot be found.” They go on to say that they had identified several markets in Asia, but these “could not be developed due to a lack of an adequate source of fresh water.”

Richard Bocking, author of *Canada's Water—For Sale?*, gave an eloquent plea in favour of water protection at the initial round of B.C.'s Legislative Hearings into the MAI in October. He categorically rejected the concept that “surplus” water is available: “There is a lot of water in British Columbia, but there's a lot of land, too, and it has been shaped and given life by the water that flows from the mountains to the sea. Not a drop of that water is unused or surplus; it all has a role to play in supporting this land of beauty and rich productivity. The entire landscape and the life it supports, as well as the resources basic to the B.C. economy, depend upon the normal flow of our streams, including floods and low flows. There is no such thing as surplus water.”

There is no such thing as surplus water.

Bocking also challenged the notion that California “needs” B.C. water. He pointed out that Californians are the largest consumers of water in the world, mostly for low-value subsidized agriculture carried out by large multinational corporations. (Richard Bocking's full presentation is on the B.C. MAI hearings site.)

Participate in the next phase of the MAI hearings

The whole issue of water protection and what governments can and cannot do under NAFTA and MAI will be a hot topic at the public phase

Californians are the largest consumers of water in the world, mostly for low-value subsidized agriculture carried out by large multinational corporations.

of B.C.'s hearings into the MAI. The Sun Belt case, emerging after the first round of hearings on the MAI was over, has made challenges to these rules all the more urgent. While MAI negotiations at the OECD are over, they are likely to be taken up at the World Trade Organization. When *Teacher* lands in your mailbox, you may still have a chance to make a submission or at least attend a hearing.

Hearing dates and locations:

March 2—Courtenay and Nanaimo
March 3—Victoria
March 4—Surrey
March 9—Kamloops
March 10—Kelowna
March 11—Vancouver (UBC)

Contact the Clerk of Committees toll free at 1-877-428-8337 to get more information on the hearing in your area. The Council of Canadians office—604-688-8846—has information on how to make a submission and on how MAI rules will affect public services like education.

Murray Dobbin is a social activist, journalist, and author.

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WHITE ROCK Ocean Rose Bed & Breakfast. 2 min. walk to beach & promenade. Spacious suite, private entrance, K-bed, TV/VCR, private bath, phone, fridge, private garden. Short walk to shops and restaurants. Full breakfast with ocean view. N/S (604) 531-8398, F: (604) 531-5664, email davidj_webb@bc.sympatico.ca

RENTAL/EXCHANGE

STICKS N' STONES, GALIANO. Quiet location, modern, self-contained cabin, all amenities, wood stove, water/beach access. Weekend/ week or monthly rates. Ralph/Rocky (250) 539-3443 collect or via compulink44

MARCH BREAK IN VANCOUVER. Cosy west end sublet. \$250. (604) 688-9266.

VANCOUVER. 1bd. deluxe condo, Robson St. (nr. Blue Horizon Hotel) Daily & weekly rates. (604) 608-4268 or (250) 561-0162.

VANCOUVER. 3 bd. house, large yard, porch, bicycles, toys (possibly in Aug. for up to 4 wks.) Ideal for family. Close to bus stop, downtown. etc. \$475/week. Alain (604) 876-5199.

WHISTLER NORDIC ESTATES. Fully equipped townhouse, max. 6 persons, min. 5 days. (604) 985-7669.

VICTORIA. 2 bd. house close UVic/Camosun. July & Aug. \$850/ mo. N/S. N/P. (250) 385-1238.

VANCOUVER. Commercial Dr. area. Jewel of a character home, fully furn. 3 bd., renovated kitchen etc. Lovely garden and play area in backyard. Avail. for rent \$1400/mo. from July 1 to Dec. 1 approx. N/P, N/S. Ref. req. Call Michelle (604) 254-0911 or Tony_mcw@istar.ca

CRANBROOK. fully furn. exec. home, grand piano, 4 bd., 3.5 bath, living rm., family rm., patio, on quiet scenic 17th fairway of Cranbrook Golf Course. July 1 to Aug. 31/99 \$1500/mo. (250) 426-6120.

SOUTH OAK BAY, VICTORIA. Fully furn., cozy 2/3 bd. home with very private garden, hot tub. July 15/99 thro July 2000. \$1700/mo. (250) 387-9472.

BIRCH BAY. 35' Villa Royal trailer. Edgewater Park. Located on beachfront road, clean. Lots of safe, open grassy area for children. Sleeps 6. (604) 522-7710.

SOUTH SURREY. Large family home available, reasonable rent near beaches. Summer months. Call for details. (604) 535-3447.

FOR SALE

MANUAL FOR PARAGRAPH & ESSAY writing. Designed for teachers/parents of weaker or remedial students. To order send \$10.75 plus \$1.45 postage to Avstan Publications, 8850c Young Rd., Chilliwack, BC V2P 4P5. Phone/Fax: (604) 792-0839. Looking for an enchanting **RETIREMENT ENVIRONMENT!** Does low crime, low taxes, and low prices appeal to you? Then discover Gabriola Island. Close to major center, mild temperatures, easy access! Visit my website: www.realestate-gabriola.com or call for free catalogue and brochure. spring@island.net, 1-800-205-8080 (J. Springfield. Gabriola Village Realty).

VICE PRINCIPALS EXAM companion 2.0 offers full features for your Exam Time Table Scheduling for just \$289. Please send for brochure to Doncaster Office Services, 214 Willowridge Court, Oakville, ON L6L 5J2, (905) 842-9616, F:(905) 849-0604, doncaster@compuserve.com

DISCOVERY TOYS. Giant sale. Personal orders welcome. Book preview boxes available, reading fundraiser program. For catalogue call (604) 463-9295, toyseducate@ivillage.com

FREE SAMPLE! New science and technology teaching resources for Grades 1, 2 and 3. Affordable, reproducible, hands-on experiments, take-home pages, assessments. Call toll free 1-888-839-2153. Professor Beaker's Learning Labs.

MISCELLANEOUS

ENRICH YOUR INUIT UNIT! Experienced teacher presents dynamic 2 hr. classroom presentation: slides, music, stories, games. Hands on! Authentic Inuit tools, clothing, toys. Serving Okanagan and Kootenays. \$199 includes supplies and teacher's kit. Classroom Expeditions (250) 352-3598.

TRAVEL-TEACH ENGLISH. 5 day/40 hr. March 10-14, 1999, TESOL teacher cert. Course (or corresp.) 1,000s of jobs avail! Free info pack, 1-888-270-2941.

PENSION ADVICE and counselling (personal and confidential)? Small group pension and retirement workshops? Call Ken Smith at (604) 435-5907, F: (604) 435-5917, kjsmith@istar.ca

CAPITOL HILL ELEMENTARY School (N.Burnaby) invites you to the 75th anniversary, Friday, May 28, 1999. RSVP (604) 299-6440.

CANADIAN COWBOY. Learn history, enjoy entertainment, get motivated. Canadian Cowboy performer "Sky Floyd Drew." Teachers/principals/communicators/educators. Like some help? Singer, songwriter, storyteller, a world record holder in "trick and fancy roping." Dry and dumb humour. Call Sky (250) 836-5327 F: (250) 837-5220.

TEACHER EXCHANGE, Australia. PE, Math & science at Telopea Park School, a bilingual school in Canberra. Wayne McAuliffe, 4 Pankhurst Cres., Gilmore, ACT 2905, Canberra, Australia, email: michelle.mcauliffe@anu.edu.au

ESCAPE INTO THE WOODS! Science World invites elementary teachers to join us for five activity-packed days at summer science camp. Pick up fun classroom ideas, meet colleagues from across Canada. Travel subsidy available. Aug. 16-20 or 23-27. (604) 443-7440 or seix@scienceworld.bc.ca

AUSTRALIA EXCHANGE. Primary school teacher interested in exchange with a K-6 teacher in 2000. Clean, sunny Canberra (National capital), close to Sydney, south coast and ski fields. Prefer Vancouver area. Email: corey.bacon@affa.gov.au or locally (604) 421-6058.

INTERNET RESEARCH Frustrated with the internet? No time to "surf"? You produce the topic and we'll provide internet sites appropriate for you to use in the classroom. Contact "InQuest Information Services" Brenda Diffley (604) 685-0577, bdiffley@axion.net or Mary Briggs (604) 526-8163, mbriggs@istar.ca

FEUERSTEIN'S INSTRUMENTAL Enrichment Level 1. This workshop is being presented by the Variety Learning Centre, March 15-19, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: Hastings Education Centre, 1909 E Hastings St., Vancouver. Trainer: Patrick Maxcy. Cost: \$340/person, incl. FIE Level 1 manuals. Participants will receive certification in Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment Level 1. To register call (604) 255-6596.

REGISTERED EDUCATIONAL SAVINGS PLAN Federal government grant \$16,200 max., 100% guaranteed investment. Tax sheltered, highest interest earnings, RRSP rollover, free information, Chuck Lipp, Fax (604) 327-1413.

BURNABY CENTRAL '67 REUNION All students and teachers are invited May 8, 1999, Westminster Club, 7 p.m., \$50/person. Contact Randy Bednas (604) 291-6297.

25-YEAR REUNION for those in the UBC 3rd-year transfer group (1972-1974), graduation June 1974. If you remember Ron Hlady, Greg Caulfield, Don Ballantine and others, you're "one of us"! Let's celebrate this July 3 & 4, 1999 in Ladner, BC Phone/fax George Rust (604) 940-9694 for details.

PD CALENDAR

PD CALENDAR

Any additions or changes? Write, fax (604) 871-2291, or e-mail dstagg@bctf.bc.ca adhering to our format.

MARCH

11-12 Vancouver. 24th Annual Special Ed. Assn. Crosscurrents Conference. Sessions for regular and special ed. teachers. Contact Pearl Wong, 5860 184 St., Surrey, BC V3S 4N4, (604) 888-5827, F: (604) 576-1561, pearlw@uniserve.com, www.bctf.bc.ca/psas/SEA

25-26 Duncan. Van. Is. Regional Workshop, Orchestrating Student Academic Success: Adapting/Modifying Curriculum; Practical Behaviour Plans, by Dawn Reithaug. Contact Candace Spillsbury/Wendy Erickson, (250) 748-3138, F: (250) 748-5163.

27 Burnaby. Saturday Science: Learning To Love Science, 09:00-12:00, SFU. \$25. Expectations for elementary science, technology, and math can be met using simple activities. Contact Let's Talk Science, c/o SFU, (604) 268-6583, gmg@sfu.ca, www.letstalkscience.uwo.ca/

APRIL

8-10 Vancouver. 3-day intensive Leaders Training Program certifies registrants to facilitate Developing Capable People to parents, educators, and support staff. \$495 + GST includes \$250 worth of training materials. Contact Developing Capable People (Canada), 1-800-327-1090, F: (250) 545-1270.

9 Kelowna. Learning Assistance Teachers' Assn. Spring 1999 Conference, An In-Depth Look at Reading: Teaching Phonological Awareness and Educational Implications of Dual-Coding, with Dr. Steve Truch, Okanagan Grand Hotel and Conference Centre. Contact Lynda Mawer, F: (250) 558-1065, lmawer@sd22.bc.ca

9-10 Richmond. Catalyst 99, Bringing Science to Your Classroom, Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre. Contact David Barnum, c/o West Sechelt Elementary, PO Box 220, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0, F: (604) 885-6468, dbarnum@sd46.bc.ca, www.bctf.bc.ca/BCScTA

11-13 Victoria. Focus 99, Believe in the Healing: Two Cultures Working Together To Empower Our Children and Youth and To Rebuild Our Communities and Schools, Victoria Conference Centre. \$295 + GST (\$40 off until Nov. 30). Contact Barbara Smith & Associates Ltd, 300-3060 Cedar Hill Rd, Victoria, BC V8T 3J6, (250) 598-1039, F: (604) 598-2358, Barbara.Smith@bc.sympatico.ca

15-16 Vancouver. Business Education Assn. Spring 1999 Conference celebrating "40 Years of Business Education." Coast Plaza Suite Hotel, Vancouver. Contact Garth Errico, Burnaby Central Secondary, (604) 664-8542, F: (604) 664-8314.

17 Burnaby. Saturday Science: Good Vibrations, 09:00-12:00, SFU. \$25. Noise and young children go hand in hand, so let's harness their energy and use it scientifically to discover the power of sound vibrations. Contact Let's Talk Science, c/o SFU, (604) 268-6583 or gmg@sfu.ca, www.letstalkscience.uwo.ca/

22-24 Victoria. 3-day intensive Leaders Training Program. See April 8-10 info. for registration and course description.

22-24 Courtenay. Connections 99, 4th Annual Middle Schools Conference, sponsored by MYABC and SD71, Courtenay Junior Secondary. \$190 before March 1; \$225 after. Contact Tom Demeo, (250) 334-2428, tdemeo@sd71.bc.ca

22-24 Coquitlam. Spirit of Secondary, Models of Teaching for the Subject Specialist, From Theory to Practice, sponsored by the Coquitlam Teachers' Assn. and SD 43; Contact Chris King, 2322 St. Johns St., Port Moody, BC V3H 2A9, (604) 936-9971, F: (604) 936-7515, cel: (604) 312-9975.

MAY

8 Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices, an annual conference for critical reflection on the what, how, and why of teaching, UBC. Contact OCPE, 2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, V6T 1Z4, F: (604) 822-2013, or Gaalen Erickson (604) 822-2733, gaalen.erickson@ubc.ca

8 Terrace. Spring meeting of the B.C. Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers. Northwest Community College. A full day of demonstrations, teaching ideas, discussions and presentations to which all teachers of physics and physical science are invited. Contact Don Mathewson, (604) 668-6500, (604) 668-6509, dmathewson@richmond.sd38.bc.ca

8 Surrey. Surrey Teachers' Assn. Convention '99, five strands in four sites: rapprochement/conflict resolution, global education, teaching to diversity, wellness at work, and fine arts. Out-of-district teachers may attend by pre-registration only: \$50. Contact Lynda Toews c/o STA, 201-9030 King George Hwy., Surrey, BC V7V 7Y3; 1-800-967-5353; F: (1-800-255-5176, lmtoews@home.com

8 Burnaby. Saturday Science: Mind Over Matter, 09:00-12:00, SFU. \$25. Explore matter and materials to facilitate a better understanding of the three states of matter with students while introducing innovative rules for classification. Contact Let's Talk Science, c/o SFU, (604) 268-6583 or gmg@sfu.ca, www.letstalkscience.uwo.ca/

18-19 North Vancouver. Fast Forward Educational Media Showcase, for media users who wish to preview video, CD-ROMs, and multimedia before purchasing. Programs from kindergarten to university level. \$85 before March 25, 1999; \$105 thereafter. Contact Susan Weber (604) 323-5533, uweber@langara.bc.ca, www.langara.bc.ca/ffwd

22 Burnaby. Saturday Science: Batteries Not Included, 09:00-12:00, SFU. \$25. Energy is essential for all life, but it is one of the most difficult concepts to understand and teach. Workshop introduces hands-on activities that involve energy transfer and tasks requiring the application of knowledge. Contact Let's Talk Science, c/o SFU, (604) 268-6583 or gmg@sfu.ca, www.letstalkscience.uwo.ca/

JUNE

3-5 Kelowna. 3-day intensive Leaders Training Program. See April 8-10 info. for registration and course description.

12 Burnaby. Saturday Science: Science, So What? 09:00-12:00, SFU. \$25. This workshop illustrates the importance of basic research by exploring the link between research and the products we use in everyday life. The unit is cross-curricular and multidisciplinary, and it can extend over a few periods or an entire school term. Contact Let's Talk Science, c/o SFU, (604) 268-6583 or gmg@sfu.ca, www.letstalkscience.uwo.ca/

24-27 Victoria. WHA 99, Eighth Annual World History Association International Conference, Colonialism: Its Impact and Legacies, University of Victoria. Contact Ralph Crozier, History Dept, UVic, Box 3030 Stn CSC, Victoria, BC V8W 3N6, WHA99@uvcs.uvic.ca, <http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/conference/wha99>

24-30 Victoria. World History Assn. institute for secondary teachers offered as a credit course, ED-E 480 Special Topics in Education: Learning from World History (1.5 units), UVic plus three days follow-up in your district. \$226.50 plus \$125 for resources and WHA conference sessions. Instructors are Peter Seixas, Jim Ross, Maureen Ross. Contact Lona McRae, (250) 721-6192, F: (250) 721-6603, lmrae@ubcs.uvic.ca, www.uvcs.uvic.ca/csie

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

October PD Day
1999-2000 October 22

TRIP OF A LIFETIME

At times we had tears in our eyes as the children greeted us in speech, poem, or song.

Refreshments were always forthcoming, and hospitality was always warm.

by Jacqui Birchall

Is Cuba the hellhole of U.S. propaganda or is it Fidel's Shangri-La? The truth is somewhere in between. During the Christmas break, 12 B.C. teachers travelled to Cuba to meet with their Cuban counterparts and to visit schools and teacher-union offices. We talked with students from Grade 1 to university; we conversed with teachers, university professors, and union leaders. Some of us were lucky enough to visit Cuban homes; a few of us were lucky enough to see Fidel.

A Cuban teacher, Lucy del



JACQUI BIRCHALL PHOTOS

CUBA

Alba Perez Bardaji, travelled with us and arranged our schedule in Cuba. We asked many questions. Answers to our questions were less than frank; yet we learned and saw a lot. We saw no homeless people on the streets of Cuban towns and cities. We learned that everyone is entitled to the same food rations, education, and medical care, that housing is affordable (30% of a person's wage), and that wages are terrible. Teachers earn about \$25 U.S. Per month, and doctors and professors, about \$30 to \$40 U.S. per month. Dollar stores sell consumer goods, but only Cubans who work in the tourist sector have access to dollars through tourist tips. The desire for tourist dollars causes young women to become prostitutes for the foreign tourists. The government is trying to stop



the prostitution, but the battle is futile in a country where dollars mean access to items we in this country take for granted.

Julia was another guide who accompanied us. At 70 years of age, with an undying belief

in the revolution, Julia was wonderful company. In impeccable English, she explained all we saw, and she defended her country against any questions we put to her. In Holguin, she sternly lectured teen-age boys who asked us for money, pointing out all that



the education system had to offer them.

Havana is like Miss Havesham. With elderly beauty in decay, much of Havana is falling down. Piles of bricks and plaster lie in front of once beautiful buildings. Cubans have the knowledge but not the materials to repair their beautiful capital, Julia told me. Windows are still crisscrossed with protective tape used against Hurricane Mitch. Only Old Havana retains its original grandeur, rebuilt by a project that teaches restoration techniques to recent high-school graduates. Old Havana is magical and music-filled at night.

Holguin is small, attractive, and clean. It boasts a boarding school for high-school students. Those students also learn to work in the fields and to grow much of the food for the school. We were entertained at the teachers' union party house. They served us rum and lunch and danced with us. The trip taught us much about generosity. To be fed in a country where food is not plentiful was heartwarming.

From Holguin, we drove for four hours through beautiful farmland filled with banana and sugar plantations. Small campesino houses sat in tidy farmyards, television aerials rising from their thatched roofs. A poor public transit system forces people to hitchhike all over Cuba. At main departure points between Holguin and Santiago de Cuba, people gather, and under the guidance of *los hombres amarillos* (men in yellow uniforms), they are divided into groups depending on their destinations. The waits are long and the rides are free—



generally in the backs of crowded, open, government-owned cargo trucks.

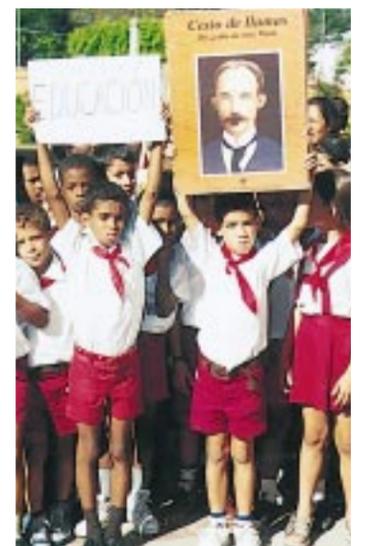
Santiago de Cuba is sand-coloured and beautiful. The centre of the Afro-Cuban music scene, it is also where Fidel fought to victory on January 1, 1959. We met school children parading to celebrate that historical event.



Carrying banners celebrating education, the rebuilding of Cuba, and the great heroes José Martí and Ché Guevara, the children sang for us and recited poetry with a passion rarely witnessed in Canada. Several of us were determined to see Fidel speak on New Year's Day. Alas, one needed an invitation. We had none. The BBC camera crew suggested we get press accreditation. After \$60 U.S. and four hours of waiting for bomb-sniffing dogs to clear everyone's gear, two of us, duly accredited, were shuffled onto a bus and deposited in the town square with paparazzi from around the world. It had the atmosphere of a rock concert. Giant screens were set up on either side of the city hall, from whose centre balcony Fidel would speak. Three minutes before Fidel was due to speak, the crowd broke into "Guantanamera." Fidel stepped out, and the Cubans sang their national anthem, and then the screens were filled with footage of the revolution 40 years before. An adoring crowd kept cheering until he raised his hands and finally asked for silence. He

spoke for only an hour-and-a-half. (A Cuban friend confided that Fidel probably realized that with so much international press present, a long speech was inappropriate.) He ended with *Socialismo o Muerte! Patria o Muerte! Venceremos!* (Socialism or death! Fatherland or death! We shall overcome!) The crowd went wild, and he stood for some time.

We agreed that the trip was a voyage of discovery for us. We agreed that we wanted to return. We agreed that the U.S. rhetoric does not do justice to a proud and wonderful people who are struggling to maintain a dignity and identity that is separate from Miami. At times, we had tears in our eyes as the children greeted us in speech, poem, or song. Refreshments were always forthcoming, and hospitality was always warm.



More trips are planned to encourage tourism and friendship between Cuban and Canadian teachers. Come. It could be the trip of your lifetime.

Jacqui Birchall teaches at Frank Hurt Secondary School, Surrey, and is a member of the Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board.