

A.B.C. TEACHER

March-April 1981

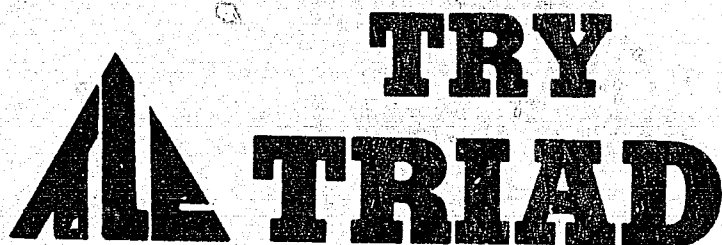
Volume 59 Number 4



PERSONAL:

We at Triad are personally involved buying new cars and trucks for the teachers of B.C. Our volume purchasing results in vast savings from dealer prices. We are too busy for what you usually encounter when you deal retail; no car-business "hype," haggling, or sales pressure. Let us get personally involved helping you get the best possible price on your purchase. Try us; you'll like us (we hope).

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advantage of capable and friendly Trust Company staff who keep you informed and your records in order.

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 **TEACHERS' TRUST COMPANY**

More than just a chequing statement . . .

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

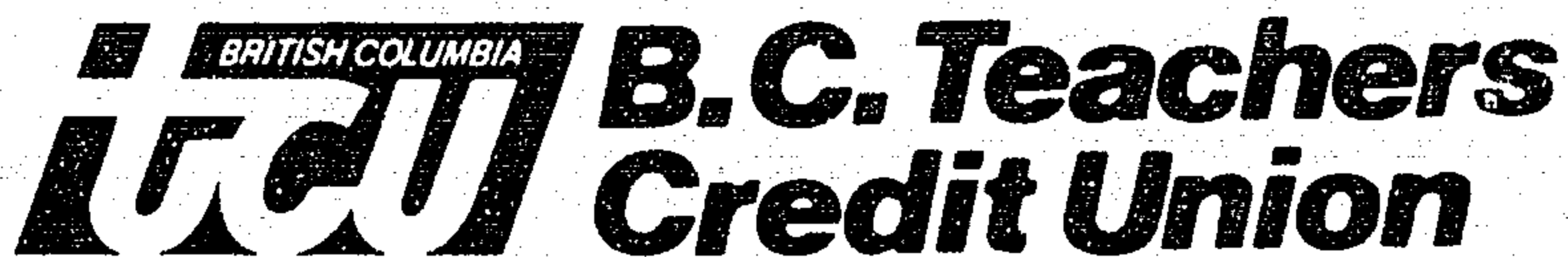
B.C. Teachers Credit Union

ACCOUNT TYPE	ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	BALANCE
CHEQUING	31MAR80 02APR80 08APR80 16APR80 24APR80 28APR80 29APR80 30APR80	3 CHEQUES	82.19 48.00 304.00 415.00 45	500.00 250.00
SHARES	31MAR80	BF		145.00
PLAN 24	31MAR80 16APR80 22APR80 29APR80	BF D W D	180.00	150.00
SPECIAL SAVINGS	31MAR80 20APR80	BF D		150.00
MORTGAGE	2 31MAR80 25APR80	BF D		415.00
LOAN	3 31MAR80 25APR80	BF D		74.94
TERM DEPOSITS	KA 2222222 31MAR80	BF		55.43 53.84
D.I.E. YEAR DEPOSIT MATURES JUNE 26, 1980				359.57
TOTAL				556.43- 474.73- 425.38- 325.99- 601.30- 106.99- 436.99- 436.57

IF INDICATES DEBIT BALANCE ON A/P
 IF INDICATES DEBIT LIMIT EXCEEDED
 IF INDICATES OVERDRAFT

our new, all-in-one statement is another good reason to use B.C. Teachers Credit Union for all your financial needs! Along with the record of your chequing activity (and cancelled cheques) you will receive the status of most accounts you have with us. There's no more fumbling with passbooks, and hoping they're up to date . . . no more guessing the balance of your mortgage and personal loan and trusting it's right. All the information you need to know is right on your statement. It makes monthly financial planning and budgeting so much easier!

To receive an all-in-one statement every month, just open a chequing account with B.C. Teachers Credit Union, along with whatever other accounts you wish to use. Not only will you find our all-in-one statement convenient, you'll find that we go all-out to give you the very best of service along with competitive rates.



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5740 Cambie Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 3Y5
Tel: 324-6655

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3023 Shakespeare Street
Victoria, B.C. V8R 4H6
Tel: 595-5151

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4162 Norland Avenue
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3S8
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Surrey, B.C. V3V 6V9
Tel: 581-9828

U.B.C. Office
2150 Western Parkway
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1V6
Tel: 224-2364

112-800-663-3345 toll-free



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Jacques Danois — p. 135; Ron Denman — pp. 125 (bottom), 142, 143; Sister Noreen MacDonald — p. 132 (bottom); Rod MacLachlan — cover, pp. 125 (middle), 130-131, 132 (top), 133, 134; Ralph Maurer — pp. 125 (top), 139, 140, 141; Salmonid Enhancement Program — p. 146; Michael Shelbourn — p. 158.

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THE B.C. TEACHER, MARCH-APRIL 1980

COVER STORY

Our cover this month focusses attention on three Third World countries and the problems they face in educating their people. Separate articles deal with The Gambia, where 40 per cent of the children attend school, Kampuchea, where none of the children under 11 can read because schools have been closed for four years, and Nicaragua, which is mounting an amazing campaign to wipe out illiteracy in a country where the illiteracy rate is 50 per cent.

Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation.

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Manuscripts (no payment) are welcomed. Topics should interest a wide range of teacher readers. Manuscripts should be up to 2500 words long, preferably typed and double spaced. Writing style should be informal. Avoid footnotes and references.

Notice of change of address stating both old and new addresses should reach the editorial office at least one month before publication.

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PROBLEMS WITH GIFTED

●In "Gifted Children: Our Wasted Resource" (Nov-Dec. 1979), Sylvia Abbott argues that talented students should be rapidly accelerated through school.

According to Ms. Abbott, talents deteriorate through boredom in the regular classroom. She cannot conceive of classes where students are challenged to work at many levels and in which they progress at their own rate.

She glosses over the troubles that would arise if talented students were put in classes with older students: they would have to study material beyond their maturity, and interact with students socially and physically more mature and with different interests. How would the bright girl of nine whose main interest is her doll house fare in a class of teenagers interested in dating? How does the gifted boy of nine who plays with his Meccano set get along with older boys whose hobby is fixing up old cars? How does the accelerated child make the high school basketball team?

If, as Ms. Abbott wants, bright children enter school early — say at age four — they could be through the primary grades by six, through intermediate at nine, through junior high at 11, and graduated ready for college at 12. This is the precise schedule according to her proposal. Such students might gain their first degree by 15, be through the most demanding of graduate schools by 19, and out practising their profession while still teenagers. Perhaps their profession would be developing deadly weapons to eliminate the teachers who had destroyed their childhood.

In proposing her hot-house acceleration program Ms. Abbott conceives of children as plants avidly soaking up knowledge. She forgets that they are human beings who need to develop physically and emotionally through sports, recreation, friendships — aspects of education that her program would destroy.

John Collins,
Maple Ridge

THANK YOU, TEACHERS

●On behalf of UNICEF, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the many principals and teachers in B.C. for their great support and efforts on our behalf during the International Year of the Child, and particularly during our Hallowe'en Campaign.

We feel it is imperative for the young people in our own industrialized nation to understand the very different conditions in which children have to live in developing countries, and particularly the present problems in South-east Asia.

The lack of adequate nutrition, inaccessibility of safe water, poor sanitation and absence of immunization against disease account for 90 per cent of all deaths in young children in the developing world. It seems to be far more a task of prevention than cure.

Obviously, the future citizens of tomorrow should be aware of these problems and we are most grateful for the assistance given to us by the teaching profession in helping us to inform them.

Barbara L. Walton
Provincial Chairperson

C. D. NELSON REMEMBERED

●It was sad to read of C. D. Nelson's passing. I always turned to his column first and reliably to good reward. He could be counted on for accurate, honest and yet, provocative reviews and advice.

I have ordered so many books and enjoyed them on the strength of his opinions — books by John Fowles, books about Jacques Barzun, etc.

His work and wit will really be missed by me! Condolences to his friends and family.

Fred Tippie,
Kamloops.

MORE ON CORRECT ENGLISH

●Let Sigurd Askevold ("We Done Good," Nov.-Dec. '79) know that the first thing teachers can do to help students use correct English is to speak correctly themselves. This is particularly important in the elementary grades, and in the high school grades it must apply to all teachers, not only to English teachers.

As a parent, I have often been tempted to correct the English used in notices sent home, or in comments made in my children's report cards or exercise books, etc., for the teachers' benefit.

As a teacher, I find the situation embarrassing. Surely competence in the use of English should be prerequisite to graduation from all teacher training programs in B.C.

Frieda Rogers,
Zeballos

WORDS?

●The Grade 5 class was a bright and eager lot, and a great joy.

When doing some "extra" reading, we came upon the word "hamlet," and suddenly I thought it might be unfamiliar to the pupils. But so many of them were eager to explain.

"A booklet is a little book; therefore a hamlet should be a little ham." Good reasoning, but not so.

"Something you wear on your head." No that's a helmet.

The third answer took the cake!

"Well, my father likes it for breakfast on Sunday morning, only he calls it a homlet."

"Out with your dictionaries," I cried, and hastened to the hall, where I was free to have a laugh all to myself.

Ruby Forteath,
Trail

Take a Close Look

Prescribed for
Reading Programs
in B.C.



Impressions 4-7

Compiled and Edited by Jack Booth

You can't really tell from a distance. One reading program looks much the same as another. A picture of the program provides a frame of reference. Knowing the titles* is something, although what's in a name after all? Being told the components† is a little more helpful. But to really find out you need a close look. So don't strain your eyes. Grab a pair of scissors, cut out the form below, fill it in and mail it today. Get a close look at **Impressions** and what a boon it can be to you and your students.

*Grade 4 Ready or Not
Grade 5 One Banana Step
Grade 6 One Potato, Two Potato
Grade 7 Inside Outside

† Anthology (poetry, prose, drama)
Skills Book (comprehension and language study)
Skillmasters (duplicating masters)
Idea Book (creative writing)
Teacher Resource Book

Yes, I want a close look at the
Impressions program.

- ☐ Please contact me personally
☐ Please send me the full-colour
Impressions brochure

Name: _____

School _____

Address: _____

mail to:
Holt, Rinehart and Winston
of Canada, Limited
2065 West 4th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C. V6L 1N3





Howard Denike

●Howard Denike, who teaches at Reynolds Jr. Secondary School in Victoria, who was named Citizen of the Year for 1979 by the Victoria Chamber of Commerce.

Howard is a music specialist. He had his own 25-member band while still a high school student in Chilliwack, and later studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

He has taught in Victoria for 30 years and has played a major role in the University of Victoria's music program. He has been a sessional lecturer at the university for 15 years. He founded UVIC's concert band, which was later incorporated into the university's wind symphony, and was its director for seven years.

Howard has played in a number of bands and with the UVIC symphony, and has conducted for the Victoria Operatic Society.

He says he will continue teaching and playing the clarinet and saxophone for as long as humanly possible because "I just enjoy it all."○

●A special issue of the international quarterly, *Visible Language*, which is devoted to handwriting.

Included in the topics covered are new handwriting styles designed to take advantage of today's all-direction pen (ballpoints and fibre-tips). Former nib pens were limited to a narrow range of movements and needed careful handling.

Copies of the special issue cost \$3.00 U.S., and are available from Visible Language, Box 1972 CMA, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.○

●Phil Thomas, art teacher at Beaconsfield Elementary School in Vancouver, who has had a book, *Songs of the Pacific Northwest*, published (See review in our New Books section).

The book is the climax of a 27-year project in which Phil researched and collected 175 folk songs of the Pacific Northwest. Forty-nine of them are included in the book.

"I've always liked folk songs," he says. "I guess it goes back to my nursery days and later to wartime singing and a stint in Northern Ireland, and to people like Pete Seeger, Burl Ives and Carl Sandburg."

The project began when Phil was teaching in Pender Harbor. As he puts it, "I began thinking it would be nice if we had some fishing and logging songs to sing, so I started looking around and collected my first songs at Pender Harbor."

The work has continued ever since, including a year of educational leave in 1973-74, which Phil took to work on the song collection.

One of the first results of his work was a series of folk song workshops he conducted around the province for several years for the former Community Programs Branch of the Department of Education.

Phil is an art enthusiast, and has become a specialist in children's art. For several years he taught Saturday morning art classes, in addition to his regular teaching duties. Not surprisingly, art contests are anathema to him.○



Phil Thomas

●A new booklet on child safety available free of charge (up to five copies) from the Council on Family Health, 633 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

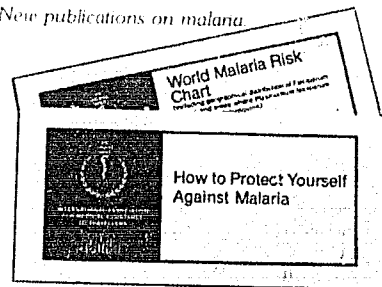
Among the subjects covered are safety and the newborn, safeguarding the home for exploring youngsters, proper use and storage of medicines and fire prevention.

The author is Dr. Jay M. Arena, former president of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Other publications available free (up to five copies) from the council are: *Women and Health*, *You and Your Health*, and *First Aid in the Home*.

Multiple copies of the four booklets are available for 10 cents each, prepaid.○

New publications on malaria



●The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers, a non-profit organization that provides information on health conditions all over the world in return for donations.

IAMAT's newest publications are *How to Protect Yourself Against Malaria*, a booklet for travellers, and a *World Malaria Risk Chart*, which pinpoints the areas where malaria is present.

Teachers travelling overseas can easily catch malaria. Last year more than five million Canadians and Americans travelled to high risk malaria countries. The result was a 60 per cent increase in reported malaria cases in Canada and a 46 per cent increase in the U.S.

Yet malaria can easily be prevented by starting on a suppressant drug before one leaves and continuing the regimen throughout a stay in a risk area.

IAMAT has several other publications of assistance to travellers. They include 24 world climate charts listing monthly temperatures, the sanitary conditions of water, milk and food, and the clothing suitable for 1440 cities around the world.

The IAMAT Directory lists centres in 450 cities in 120 countries where travellers can contact English-speaking, North American-trained physicians.

The directory and membership in IAMAT are free; the organization depends on donations. The address is: 1268 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M6E 1B9.○

Classified

ACCOMMODATION SWAP

OKANAGAN SUMMER! 5 minutes from beach, large 5 bdrm house in Westbank (Kelowna area). Exchange for similar home (suitable for family of five) in Vancouver for UBC summer school period. Kits area west preferred. For details phone 768-4891 or write RR 3, Woodell Rd., Site 22, C-2, Westbank, BC V0H 2A0.

REASONABLY PRICED ACCOMMODATION wanted in Vancouver by professional couple, mid 30s, for July and August or will exchange 1 bedroom apartment in Portland for same. Excellent references in Van. available. Contact I. Glew, 12-3087 S.E. Ankeny St., Portland, OR 97214. Phone (503) 235-3853.

LIKE TO SWAP OUR THREE BEDROOM HOUSE for a house in Vancouver, preferably near UBC—I must go to UBC summer school. Our house overlooks the ocean and has a private sundeck, get it is only 5 mins. from boat launches and downtown Campbell River. For further information call 923-6194 or write G. Longden at 1111 Ash St., Campbell River, BC V9W 1G8.

HOUSE IN KAMLOOPS FOR RENT OR TRADE for your accommodation in Vancouver (preferably near SFU) during summer session (July 1-August 15). Phone: 374-5474 or write to: 1373 Pine Cres., Kamloops, BC V2C 2/2

ACCOMMODATION WANTED

ATTENTION VICTORIANS. Are you leaving Victoria this summer? We require accommodation in Victoria from May 1 to Aug. 31. Will house-sit or will trade our furnished two-bedroom townhouse on UBC campus. References. Write Mr. S. Pitt, 2735 Mella Road, Vancouver, BC V6T 1N3. Phone 224-0131.

WISH TO RENT FURNISHED HOME OR APT for UBC summer session by grad student, wife and 3 mos. babe. References supplied on request. Please write or phone Neil McDermid, Box 1191, Fernie, BC. Phone: 423-6785.

WANTED TO RENT JULY-AUG: accommodation for female college instructor attending UBC. Have 2 clean, well-behaved, passive dogs, and will give TLC to plants and compatible pets. E. Genser, 1776 Kenwood, Pr. George, BC V2L 1S5.

WANTED TO RENT OR TRADE: your house in Vancouver near UBC for our house in Kamloops and cabin on Shuswap Lake. Available from July 2 to August 15. Will rent your house or our house and cabin for payment, or make a straight exchange. Contact A.K. Simpson, 1376 Dominion Crescent, Kamloops, BC. Phone: 374-1666.

FAMILY OF FIVE SEEK VICTORIA HOUSE approx. July 24-Aug. 15. Responsible care; references available. J.B. Grant, Box 1464, Merritt, BC V0K 2B0. Phone 378-6509.

FOR SALE

KAWAKAWA LAKE (HOPE): attractive fully-serviced lot, \$14,500. Owner, 1289 Hachey Avenue, Maillardville, BC V3K 5P6.

WATERFRONT: GULF ISLANDS. 1.5 acres on beautiful Reid Island. Flat, treed, safe for children, lots of fresh water, part of 77 acre private parcel. J. Sellner, 4093 W. 29th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6S 1V4. Phone: 224-0402.

HOME FOR SALE. Ocean frontage plus executive 4 bedroom home. 30 minutes from Vancouver. By owner: 461-8752.

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

WAIKIKI, HAWAII. Nicely furnished one-bedroom suite for rent. Close to beach, shopping, golf. Reasonable rates. Adults only. Mrs. J.M. Burnett, 306-444 West 49th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Y 3V4. Phone: 321-0075.

KELOWNA ACCOMMODATION! Fully-furnished one bedroom apartment with swimming pool, sauna and tennis courts, available for July and first two weeks of August. Will sleep 4 adults (living room furniture folds out) or 2 adults and 3 children. Rent \$125.00 per week. Write or phone Donna Tate, 640 Seaford Rd., Kelowna, BC. Phone: (604) 765-3325 or 860-4113.

PENTICTON HOME FOR RENT: Modern, 3 bedroom air conditioned home available July and August, or September, October, November, or all five months. Reasonable rent in return for good care. Contact William Boyd, 166 Bankview Rd., Penticton, BC V2A 6S4. Phone: 493-5359.

MAUI CONDOMINIUM. July 9-22. Kihei oceanfront, 1 bedroom (unit sleeps 5), fully equipped, pool, tennis. Prince George: 964-4589.

PALMER'S CHART HOUSE: A unique guest house on Orcas Island, San Juan Islands. Year-round accommodations. Memorable meals, sailing, fishing, hiking in all-inclusive package. \$28 per person per day plus tax; minimum two, maximum four guests. By former B.C. teacher. Brochure: Mr. and Mrs. D.G. Palmer, P.O. Box 51, Deer Harbor, WA 98243, or call (206) 376-4231 weekends.

BEACHFRONT, 2 BDRM. HOUSE, Aug. 2 to Aug. 30. Non-smokers preferred. References. \$550. Victoria 658-5418.

FOR RENT: JULY 11 THROUGH AUGUST 10, 1980 How about spending the summer in Kelowna? 1100 sq. ft. house near the center of town, on a 1/2 acre lot. Close to parks, tennis courts, the Recreation Center and public transportation. I enjoy a large in-ground swimming pool while your children play on a custom designed outdoor activity center. \$800.00. Contact R. Rubadeau, 1550 Richard Place, Kelowna, BC. Phone: 763-1128 (business) 763-0513 (home).

KIHEI, MAUI. Fully equipped one bedroom condominium. See summer rates. R. Benton, 603-2180 Argyle Ave., West Vancouver, BC V7V 1A4. 926-5742 or 468-9815.

FOR RENT IN QUALICUM BEACH. Deluxe completely furnished townhouse suitable for 2 or 3 adults; near beach and golf course; July or August. References required. \$550 per month all inclusive. No. 972, Qualicum Beach, BC V0R 2T0 or phone 752-3345.

KUILIMA, ON OAHU'S NORTH SHORE. 1 bed. condo. Complete facilities: golf, tennis, pool, etc. Summer rates: \$200.00 per week or \$600.00 per mo. M. Hinton, 13520 13A Ave., Surrey, BC V4A 1C1. Phone: 536-6225.

WANTED TO RENT OR TRADE: your house in Vancouver near UBC for our house in Kamloops and cabin on Shuswap Lake. Available from July 2 to August 15. Will rent your house or our house and cabin for payment, or make a straight exchange. Contact A.K. Simpson, 1376 Dominion Cres., Kamloops, BC. Phone 374-1666.

FOR RENT DURING SUMMER SESSION. Quality 3 bedroom Kelowna home 2 blocks from the lake; non-smokers only. Please call 763-0962 for details.

SHUSWAP VACATION: neat summer cabin on treed lot on Shuswap Lake, 10 min. from Salmon Arm. All amenities. Weekly rent from May 1 to Sept. 30. Information, phone 832-569 or write to Box 1916, Salmon Arm, BC V0E 2T0.

SUNNY OKANAGAN LAKE. Three bedroom cedar A-frame, sleeps 9-12 people, completely furnished, 110 feet of ideal sandy beach, wharf, boat launch. Available August 16-29, \$200 per week. Contact Bill Woodward, 7910 Lakeview Drive, Vernon, BC V1V 1W2. Phone 545-4362.

RETIRED TEACHERS OR ? For rent—modern 2 bd. waterfront home on Shuswap. Fully equipped. May-Nov. at \$120 per week or \$400 per month. Phone 937-5490.

DELUXE TWO BEDROOM CONDO., KONA COAST, BIG ISLAND OF HAWAII. Waterfront—swimming pool, etc. Fully furnished—washer, dryer, TV. Off season summer rates. Phone Joan, 926-4566.

FOR RENT: 3 bedroom modern home, for July and August and possibly 1 year lease for Sept. '80-Sept. '81. \$350 per month. Contact: Owen Gaskell, 4676 Cook Ave., Powell River, BC V8A 3M3. Phone: 485-5494.

LAKESHORE CONDOMINIUM IN OSOYOOS. 3 br., pool, sauna, jacuzzi, beautifully furnished, sleeps 8, 2 bath., washer and dryer in unit. Near all amenities. Call 921-9229 after 6 p.m. Weekly rental.

OKANAGAN—2 b. rm. lakeshore cottage on Vaseux Lake. Available June, July at \$140/wk. with references. Write W. Sparks, 132 Mitchell Pl., Penticton, BC V2A 4E3.

HOLIDAYS/TRAVEL

TEACHER'S TOUR TO ISRAEL. 16 Day Deluxe Tour to Israel—\$1,998.00 Canadian funds. Departs from Vancouver July 13, 1980. All inclusive: airfare, 2 meals per day, 1st class hotels, sight seeing, Israel Music Festival, Cruise on the Sea of Galilee, night club evening, Kibbutz stay, all tips and much more. For information contact: Teach-A-Trip Tours Ltd., 1153 Grover Ave., Coquitlam, BC, 936-6463.

SAILOAT CHARTER: super comfortable and well equipped Grampson 30' available for charter during July and August (possibly June, also). Very attractive rates; experienced sailors only! Write P.O. Box 2524, Sidney, BC V8L 4B9.

SUMMER SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

JULY-AUGUST. Comfortable, bright one-bedroom, 10 minutes by bus to UBC. Suitable for one or two adults. \$400 per month. Can be six weeks to two months. Write 201-3680 West 7th Avenue or phone 738-7566.

CLOSE TO SFU. New Westminster family home for rent. Summer school term. No smokers or pets please. \$600. Phone: 526-2583.

AVAILABLE JULY 1-AUG 31. Small, sunny, 2 bdrm. house in James Bay. Walk to ocean, parks, tennis, town. Bike 4 miles to UVIC. \$600/season, including utilities. Ph: 386-9431. Write 141 Ladysmith St., Victoria, BC V8V 1J3.

FULLY-FURNISHED, 4 BEDROOM HOME. finished recreation room, 5 minutes' drive to University of Victoria. For July and August, \$150.00 per week or \$950.00 for whole 2 months, plus utilities. References required. Please write: Geoffrey Mills, 1530 San Juan Avenue, Victoria, BC V8N 2L5 or phone: 477-7953.

BEDROOM, SITTING-ROOM, use of kitchen, washer, and dryer for non-smoking woman summer session student. Charge for full session \$100. Write Mrs. G. McPherson, 3451 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6R 1T4.

FOR RENT. Furnished 2 bedroom home—July and August 15 mins. to UBC. 15 min. to SFU. \$350 per month—includes utilities. References. Contact: A.F. Sweet, 253-8th Ave. W., New Westminster, BC V3B 1Y1. Phone (dinner hour) 521-1762.

VICTORIA: 1 bedroom apartment, close to everything and completely furnished for someone who likes plants. Dates are flexible. \$450 for 6 weeks approx. 598-8349 or write 316 1310 Harrison Street.

SUMMER RENTAL. Large 2-bedroom furnished duplex (main floor) available July & August. View, close to UBC, beaches, bus route. All appliances. Rent \$450 per month including utilities (negotiable). Contact Dave Hamilton, 3682 West 15th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6R 2Z5. Phone 228-8069. No pets, non-smokers, please.

AVAILABLE JULY-AUGUST. Cozy home in Kerrisdale. 2 bdrms., den and spare room, 1 1/2 baths., 10 mins. to UBC, 1/2 block to bus. Adults only, non-smokers; no pets. References required. \$500 per month includes all costs and maintenance. Cat available. Contact P. Morrison, 2978 West 29th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6L 1Y4.

WEST END, 1 bdrm. apartment available all part of July, August, Young, 803-1160 Haro St., Vancouver, BC. Phone 685-8978.

VICTORIA HOUSE FOR RENT—JULY-AUGUST. Located in Oak Bay, close to parks and beaches—close to the University of Victoria and good bus line. 2 or 3 bedrooms plus pleasant garden. Write 799 Byng St., Victoria, BC V8I 5B1 or phone 595-4238.

JULY 1-AUGUST 18. 2 bedroom Vancouver home, centrally located, fully furnished, sundeck, view. Cut lawn, water houseplants, no pets. References required. \$800. Write: 503 E. 31st Ave., or phone 873-1291.

FOR RENT JUNE 30-MID-AUG. furnished 3 bedroom house near UBC. References required. \$700. Brenda DeRoos, 2633 Balaclava St., Vancouver, BC V6K 4E3.

2 or 3-BEDROOM FURNISHED HOME, in North Vancouver on large, fenced lot for July-August. \$650 for the summer. Non-smokers, please. 174 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, BC V7N 2K3. Phone: 980-3997.

FOR RENT: Two bedroom condominium for the months of July and part of August. 10 mins. to SFU—swimming pool, golf course. References please. Write to 2-7323 Montecito, Burnaby, BC V5A 1R2.

2-3 BEDROOM HOUSE AVAILABLE JUNE-SEPT. Located Fairview slopes; exceptional view, sun decks, etc.; 1 block from bus; suitable for 2 people. No children or pets. Rent negotiable. 736-3235.

MISCELLANEOUS

EXCHANGE—KELOWNA. Subject—general—should have some commerce background (typing, law, economics, marketing), though not essential. Grades 9-12. OKM Secondary is a new school close to the lake. Excellent facilities. Contact: Douglas Gillett, Okanagan Mission Secondary, 4544 Paret Road, Kelowna, BC V1Y 1T4.



NEW LESSON AIDS

LA 2045 SELECTING A CAPITAL FOR CANADA—1857, 35 p.

A simulation activity including a problem to solve, a suggested procedure and ideas for student roles. Jr. secondary. \$2.10

LA 9270 MAPS, MAPS, MAPS, MAPS—OUTLINE MAPS, 68 p.

For use in Grades 4-7. Includes outline maps for the world, the continents and numerous countries. \$2.32

LA 8519 LET'S RECYCLE, K-3, 68 p.

Includes suggestions on how to create a conservator society in the classroom. \$4.50

To order, enclose a cheque or money order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC V6J 3H9.

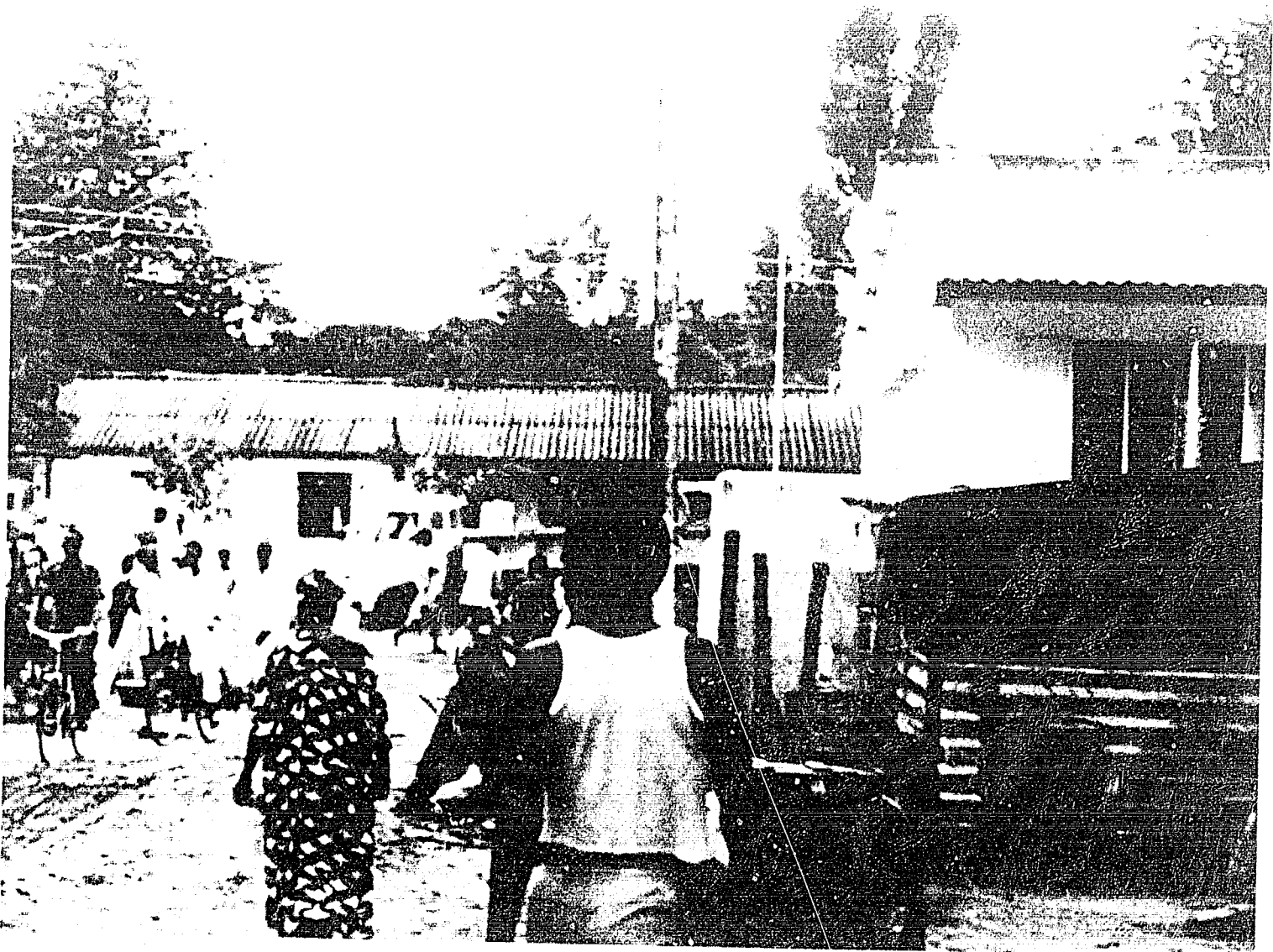


Last summer the author spent his vacation helping teachers in The Gambia, as a BCIE participant in Project Overseas. Here are his impressions of the country and its education system.

ROD MACLACHLAN

● The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane in Banjul, The Gambia, was the heat. It was a scorching 85 degrees Fahrenheit, and the humidity was oppressive. I had heard that the weather was bad, but I didn't realize how intense it would be. The air was thick and sticky, and it felt like I was being hugged by a giant, invisible hand. I was wearing a light-colored shirt and shorts, and I was sweating profusely. I had brought a hat and sunglasses, but they didn't seem to be enough. I was in for a long, hot summer.

—DUNCAN, TEACHER, KANSAS CITY, MO.



We were quickly through customs, introduced to members of the Gambia Teachers' Union, and loaded into waiting Land Rovers for the 20-mile drive to Banjul where welcome beds awaited at the Atlantic Hotel.

After a few hours of sleep, the bode seemed miraculously adjusted to the change in climate. I was relieved. Coming had been no mistake. I settled in to enjoy Project Overseas.

Project Overseas is a venture that each summer sees about 60 volunteers from across Canada sent to a dozen different

countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean to help the local teachers' associations upgrade the skills of their members. It is a joint endeavor of the provincial teachers' federations under the leadership of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

I had been assigned to the team going to the Republic of The Gambia. There were seven on the team: Sister Noreen MacDonald (team leader) from P.E.I.; Betty Bent, Margaret White, Christine Hubbard, and Dan Campbell, from Ontario; Penny Allan, from Alberta; and myself from B.C.

We were sent to Ottawa for a three-day orientation. Those three days were invaluable. Not only did we learn something about what we were getting ourselves into, but we also got to know the other members of our team as well as the teams going elsewhere. I have no idea how candidates are selected, but the system works well because the group in Ottawa was a diverse, but very capable crew.

On arrival in The Gambia, we had an orientation period where we visited schools, met officials, and learned about the country.

first hand. A four day cruise up the Gambia River completed our orientation, and we returned to Banjul to go to work.

Each of us worked with a practising Gambian teacher as a co-tutor. We offered courses in mathematics, English, science, professional studies, and agricultural science.

In any new experience, flexibility is the key. I had this fact emphasized many times during my stay, but never quite so dramatically as on my first meeting with the agricultural pre-services group. I was presenting a sample lesson on transplanting. I had done my homework. I knew the local conditions — no chemical fertilizers — no sense giving them fancy formulae concocted for each stage of growth. In place of soluble 10-52-12, I recommended a good watering with manure water. Leaving nothing to chance. I taught them how to make it using cow, sheep or chicken manure, how to store it, and how to apply it. I was very proud when a student asked about the value of donkey manure — I knew I was working at the right level. A hand shot up. "Yes?"

"Mr. Rod, here in The Gambia we have no fancy fertilizers like this manure you talk about. All we have here is animal shit."

One quickly learns. All English is not your local brand!

(Adjustment necessary.)

Once one is used to the vastly different conditions, things go fairly smoothly. It is surprising how quickly one adjusts to things at first considered impossible. Warped plywood painted black for chalk boards, chalk so soft that it disappears after only a few sentences, a bleating sheep in the doorway, the chorus of frogs in the ditch just outside the window. In Canada, sheep stay home and frogs court only at night.



This young woman is wearing a Mandingo hairstyle. Mandingo people make up about 50 per cent of the population of The Gambia.



The author is shown with three of the other members of the Project Overseas team that served in The Gambia last summer. From left to right, Margaret Whyte, Betty Bent and Christine Hubbard, from Ontario, and Rod MacLachlan, from Abbotsford.

Within days, these obstacles seemed normal and everything was placid in Roots country, parts of which have changed little since Alex Haley's ancestor, Kunta Kinte, was snatched from the banks of The Gambia.

The Republic of The Gambia is a tiny sliver of a country that juts far into Senegal. Its boundaries were originally set by the range of the guns on boats that patrolled the River Gambia. Its width varies from about 20 miles at the coast to about five miles inland. The length is about 300 miles. It is completely surrounded by French-speaking Senegal except for its Atlantic seaboard.

HOT AND HUMID

The climate is tropical, with a wet and dry season. Temperatures range up to 43° C and during the wet season, roughly July to October, the humidity is high.

The weather was good to us, however, and after the initial shock we suffered very little. The adjustment period was no doubt helped somewhat by our first week, which was spent at the Atlantic Hotel — air conditioned — which had a beautiful pool surrounded by palms, hibiscus, flamboyans, and other tropical flora. We were often grateful to return to the hotel for a dip.

The Gambia is not only one of Africa's smallest countries; it is also one of the poorest. The basic wage is two dalasi a day. This fact doesn't mean much until you relate it to the fact that a cup of coffee at the hotel is also two dalasi. Substitute teachers earn five dalasi a day. A dozen eggs (small and of poor quality) cost four dalasi.

For a population of 500,000 (half of whom are under 15) there are 20,000 jobs. The civil service accounts for 16,000 of these. The rest of the population either farms or subsists as best they can. The growing tourist trade helps some with sea-

sonal employment and craft market sales. Per capita GNP is about \$130.00 (U.S.). The only export is ground nuts (peanuts).

The country is completely lacking in mineral wealth. Even gravel for concrete must be imported. Roads are surfaced with cockle shells.

The major stress is placed on agriculture, which is a compulsory subject in all schools at every level. The government is encouraging an intermediate technology — the adoption of oxen for field work. It is an improvement on hand labor but does not burn precious oil, and the ox can be eaten at the end of its useful period.

Education in The Gambia is free, but not compulsory, at the primary level. About 40 per cent of the children attend school. The reasons for not attending are many, but the major one seems to be religious. Schools were first started by missionaries and because 90 percent of the people are Muslim, many fear that schools are agents of the Christians. All children are taught Arabic at the Koranic schools and in that sense, there are very few illiterates in the country. However, English literacy is much lower.

INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH

Students start school at eight. Many arrive speaking only their tribal language. However, English is the language of instruction. The youngsters are diligent and make good progress despite large classes (often as large as 45), very poor facilities and few supplies. For some courses, even the teacher does not have a text.

Primary education lasts for six years. At 14, in Primary VI, students write the Gambian Common Entrance Examination. This country-wide examination has papers in arithmetic, applied mathematics, English, verbal aptitude, and composition. Total

scores are ranked for each of them, and a final assignment is based on this rank.

In 1979, 6000 pupils wrote the exam. The top 500 will attend high schools, the next 1300 will be going to secondary technical schools, the remaining 4200 have come to the end of their education. The examination totals 400 marks, this year a score of 246 or above earned a high school placement, 211-245 gained a secondary technical placement. One quarter of one percent can, at age 14, determine one's future!

High school students are prepared for the General Certificate of Education. The "O" (Ordinary) level is usually taken after the fourth year while the "A" (Advanced) level is taken at the end of the sixth year. These examinations are very much akin to the British examinations of the same titles. However, the ones written in The Gambia are prepared and administered by the West African Examinations Council. These examinations are shared by all the former British colonies of West Africa: The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Liberia, although never a British possession, also shares these examinations.

Secondary technical schools have four years of education that emphasize technical and practical education. Examinations are country-wide. They are composed of questions sent into a central committee by

practising teachers. The technical schools are definitely the poor relation in the Gambian education system.

All secondary students pay fees: the high school fees are 25 dalasi per term plus 60 dalasi per year for books.

The secondary technical fees are 15 dalasi per term and 45 dalasi per year for books — a whopping sum for most in The Gambia.

There is one post-secondary school in the Gambia — The Gambia College. The college trains elementary teachers and agriculturalists. The courses offered are three years. This training is not recognized outside

Russian influence is small, but growing.

the country. It is not uncommon to meet Gambians who went three years to the college, then went to Sierra Leone for another three years to qualify for the Advanced Teachers' Certificate (for high school teaching), then left for an overseas university for four years to get a bachelor's degree — after 10 years of training!

Over two-thirds of The Gambia's teachers are unqualified. Most of the unqualified teachers have no training beyond

secondary school except for what they get on the job. A few hundred have the in-service training that is supplied by Project Overseas. Years of experience count for nothing as long as one remains unqualified. A person's climb up the ladder begins when he or she qualifies. Many teach a lifetime unqualified. Others leave the profession the minute they find a better job in the civil service, or perhaps as a waiter in one of the tourist hotels. Turnover is very high.

There is no means of becoming qualified (that is, degreed) in The Gambia. Young Gambians work every angle to get out of the country to get a degree. The government offers a few scholarships but the competition for them is overwhelming and chances are slim.

Sponsoring a Gambian student would be a worth-while project for any organization. Agricultural courses are the most needed. One of my students is now in Russia studying. It was the only placement open to him. He was eager to know if Canadian universities would give him any credit for courses done in Russia.

The Gambians are very pro-western and tend to look down on Russian-trained people. At present, there is little Russian influence, but it is growing. Russia will help to send athletes to the 1980 Olympic Games — the first Olympic competition for Gambian athletes, if their country participates.



These elementary school girls are wearing International Year of the Child uniforms. They are displaying some of the results of the tie-dyeing they have been studying in their craft class.



Part of the campus of The Gambia College, the only post-secondary school in the country. The college trains agriculturalists and elementary teachers.

Another student in the same class will represent The Gambia in at least two events. The main desire of these young Gambians seems to be doing something to advance their country.

The greatest asset the country has is its people. They are warm, friendly, and stable. Although 90 percent Muslim, there is no harshness one finds among some Muslim sects. In speaking of Muslims, it is wise to remember that Muslims are divided into as many sub-groups as Christians. As with Christians, there are vast differences from

one denomination to another.

There are several groups in The Gambia, but all are tolerant, open, and devout. In the Banjul area many are Mourides; however, they seem to see themselves as Muslim and only the highly educated are aware of sect differences. The religion is a great force for unity in a country of several tribes.

The main ethnic group in The Gambia are Mandingo. They make up about 50 percent of the population. Other groups in order of numbers are: Wolof, Fula, Jolas, Serahulis, and Akus. These groups straddle

the border with Senegal and there is much movement across the border. Many have relatives in Senegal. The only difference seems to be that Gambians consider themselves British.

A student, in speaking of his relatives in Senegal said, "But they are French and we are British!" Certainly they will never forget that the British put an end to the slave trade by building Fort James in the mouth of the river. Although fiercely proud of being an independent republic, they are proud of the Commonwealth connection.

The country is very stable. The president, Sir Dawda Jawara, has held office since 1965 when independence was granted. He is recognized as Africa's most enlightened head of state. Free elections are held to fill the 32-member house. The president moves freely about the country. There are no political prisoners. There is open criticism of the government and no one seems upset by it. There is no army. The police force numbers about 1200. Government officials are sometimes removed for corruption and stand trial like anyone else charged with a crime.

FEW WHITE RESIDENTS

There is only one European who is a permanent resident. The Gambia was too swampy, disease-ridden, and poor to attract permanent settlers. There are no white-owned plantations. The only "foreign" ownership is a few Lebanese and Syrian merchants who run stores in Banjul and Basse. There are about 400 white residents in and around Banjul. Most are there for reasons of commerce, foreign aid, education or diplomatic assignment.

The tourist trade has expanded rapidly in the last few years. More than 60,000 a year are catered to in the half dozen hotels built at various beach locations. The publication of *Roots* has brought a great deal of publicity to this little country, and more Americans are finding their way there. However, the bulk of the tourists are Swedish. They come to the cloudless skies and beautiful beaches to escape their harsh winters, just as Canadians go to Florida or Hawaii.

There is much discussion about whether tourism is or is not good for The Gambia. That argument is best left for the Gambians themselves to settle, but it is a unique place to visit. Perhaps you will be lucky enough to visit it one summer as a Project Overseas volunteer. O

Rod MacLachlan is a member of the district staff of the Abbotsford School District.

Application forms for Project Overseas are available each fall from the BCTF office. Watch the September issues of the *BCTF Newsletter* for an announcement of when the forms will be available.

1980 Project Overseas Participants

Each year the BCTF sends 15 of its members to participate in Project Overseas. At press time 14 of the 15 who will participate this summer had been selected by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Their names, their school districts, and the countries in which they will serve this summer are listed below. The asterisks denote team leaders.

Cathy Abrossimof	Richmond	Ghana
Ted Forryan	Campbell River	Jamaica
Jacquie Harris	West Vancouver	Thailand
Lynn Howland	Courtenay	Jamaica
Erica C. Krohman	Vancouver	Grenada
Henry A. Krohman	Vancouver	Belize
Henry M. Markey*	Prince George	India
Henry Meester	North Vancouver	Cameroun
Bob Moorehouse*	Vancouver Island North	Jamaica
Jake G. Penner	Prince George	British Virgin Islands
Donald Unger*	Cowichan	St. Vincent
Mary I. Varga	Vancouver	Belize
Lorne R. Williams	New Westminster	Thailand
Peggy E. Williamson	Vancouver	The Gambia



KAMPUCHEA'S CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL

Schools were closed for four years in what used to be Cambodia. Now, however, primitive schools are beginning their work, and the children are eager to learn.

JACQUES DANOIS

●The walls of the "classroom" in Svay Rieng, a small town in eastern Kampuchea, are made of corrugated iron. Around us, the children sit on the roughly-levelled ground.

It is dark and somewhat stifling, although one ray of sunshine seeps through the uneven planks that serve as a roof. It throws a streak of light on the blackboard, one of

the only pieces of school equipment that the crude classroom can boast.

"We are short of everything", says Mr. Tak Chau, the teacher accompanying us. "We open schools without benches, without paper, without enough teachers, and to top it all, without school buildings in many cases."

Tak Chau is one of the comparatively few teachers left in Kampuchea. He is now in charge of education for this province of the country, trying energetically to get the school system back on its feet after years of abandonment, with very few resources.

"Our schools were closed for four years. Not a single 10-year-old knows how to read

or write. The 14-year-olds have forgotten. The previous rulers wanted to bring up a generation of ignoramuses — easy to do, and difficult to undo." The schools not only have to provide for the hundreds of thousands of primary school children who are of age, but they have to catch up on the losses of the years when studies were banished.

"If we don't manage, we will feel the consequences in two years time, when no one will be ready for university and there will be an ignorance gap."

Throughout our travels in the Kampuchean countryside, wherever there are schools or schools-in-the-making, the picture is the same. Children learn among ruins. They are short of all essentials. Despite the difficulties, however, around 700,000 Kampuchean children are estimated to be back in "school," such is the demand for learning and education.

A few international aid donors are coming to the rescue. Exercise books have been provided by the International Red Cross, the authorities in Vietnam, and UNICEF.

"The trouble is", says Tak Chau, "that we consume paper the way we consume rice. We have some for today, but we need more tomorrow."

Blackboards and other equipment are not so perishable; these also have come from Vietnam and other sources of aid. UNICEF is aiming to provide paper, writing materials and basic equipment for 3,300 primary schools at a cost of \$4.1 million.

More critical than the shortage of school equipment is the shortage of teachers.

"Most of our previous teachers were killed or put to work in the fields. But those who are still alive have emerged voluntarily to teach our children," continues Mr. Tak Chau. "They earn very little: 13 kilos of rice a month, of which they donate one kilo to needy pupils. And they are very over-worked, teaching several classes at one time."

The teaching difficulties are only part of the story. "Our problems are more to do with health than with education," says the headmistress of the largest school in Phnom Penh. "Each day we find more than 100 sick pupils suffering from fever, enteritis or vitamin deficiency. We have an infirmary that is operating at full capacity taking care of the health of 2,000 children."

The headmistress shows me the infirmary, and I see the lines of school children queuing up for vitamins, which are being handed out by a nurse. "UNICEF and the Red Cross have brought aid here; the problem is that the numbers of children are constantly growing, so that everything is quickly used up."

Out in the countryside, most of the children seem to be in fair health. But here in Phnom Penh the school children have the tell-tale signs of rickets and anaemia, and the sound of their coughing suggests tuberculosis and asthma. All these signs of illness are compounded by undernourishment, a widespread problem in a country

whose farming has suffered years of damage from war and upheaval, and which is receiving substantial amounts of food aid as a result. Children weakened by undernutrition have poor concentration.

Some of the children at the girls' school in Phnom Penh are at a special disadvantage. "Here we take in children from the orphanage," says the headmistress. "Physically their condition is worse than those living with their parents. They get one meal a day and no other food. In a home, there is always a big sister, an uncle or a grandmother to see to the extras."

In a few schools like this one, UNICEF is now supplying rice and protein-rich food for a supplementary feeding program. Kitchen utensils, extra food supplies, and the necessary equipment were flown into Kampuchea early in January to start the program among 7,500 school children.

Despite the suffering of the recent past, and the occasional hunger pains of the none-too-perfect present, despite the lack of chairs and desks, paper and pencils, Kampuchean children still laugh and cry and play like any others. The smiles, the shouting and the joy that prevail in the courtyard during the recreation hour show that the youngest generation of Kampuchians are more interested in the present and future than in the memories of yesterday.○

Jacques Danols is senior information officer in UNICEF's Bangkok office.

WE SHALL MISS THESE TEACHERS

In Service

George Thomas Black
Frank Henry Driedger
Susan Mary Goode
Ethnea Mary Lynn
Jason Alder Scott

Retired

Dora Isobell Black
Olive E. J. Cousins
Kathleen M. Duncan
Annie Frizzell
William Gray

James E. Hill-Tout
Blondina A. Kolling
Ernest H. Lock
L. Charmaine MacDonald
Helen Morrison
Frances Padgett
Jagat Singh Parmar
Robert G. Potter
Jane Tingley
Patricia L. (Gooding) Wilks

Last Taught in

Terrace
Chilliwack
Burnaby
Victoria
Nanaimo

Last Taught in

Maple Ridge
Vancouver
Delta
Kimberley
Ministry of Education
Vancouver
Vancouver
New Westminster
Burnaby
Vancouver
Vancouver
Vancouver
North Vancouver
Summerland
Burnaby

Died

December 17, 1979
December 17, 1979
February 23, 1979
December 24, 1979
December 24, 1979

Died

November 22, 1979
January 9, 1980
December 28, 1979
December 11, 1979

January 24, 1980
December 30, 1979
December 24, 1979
February 9, 1980
November 29, 1979
June 10, 1979
December 2, 1979
March 12, 1979
December 27, 1979
December 7, 1979
March 5, 1980

Nicaragua Declares War on Illiteracy

Although 50 per cent of the people in the country are illiterate, 180,000 volunteers will attempt to eliminate illiteracy by the end of this year!

●Nicaragua, with a current illiteracy rate of 50 per cent, will be turned into one big school this year. A nation-wide literacy campaign was launched in March and it is hoped that by the end of December all Nicaraguans capable of learning to read and write will be literate.

Some 180,000 Nicaraguan literacy volunteers are being mobilized and each will teach five people to read and write. The majority are heading for the countryside because over 70 per cent of those needing literacy training live in the rural areas. The volunteers will work alongside the farmers and will hold classes after working hours. Other volunteers will work in urban slums.

Nicaragua's new Ministry of Education has named Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit priest, to head the National Literacy Commission, which will direct the crusade. The commission, representing government agencies and grassroots organizations, studied the literacy campaigns of other Third World countries and is using the

techniques of well-known educator Paulo Friere, although the program is uniquely Nicaraguan in content and implementation.

Part of Canada's involvement in the Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade will come from CUSO, the development agency best-known for its placement of more than 6,000 skilled Canadians on two-year contracts in the Third World in the past 19 years.

CUSO, which is also involved in development project support, has been funding a women's literacy program in Nicaragua for the past six months: \$10,000 has been raised to assist a women's organization set up two training centres in an urban slum in Managua. Some 120 women are receiving intensive literacy training at these centres, and they will then train other groups of 20 women, ultimately making 2,400 women literate. These women will soon become part of the national effort and act as program coordinators in some areas.

The high illiteracy rate in Nicaragua is one

of the bitterest legacies of the Somoza regime. The regime, the longest-standing personal family dictatorship in Latin America, was overthrown in July last year after a bitter battle in which Somoza planes bombed towns and cities throughout Nicaragua killing thousands. The country also was left with a huge national debt.

During Somoza's dictatorship, Canadian banking and mining interests were active in Nicaragua, but the benefits of these investments did not reach the Nicaraguan people. These people — peasants, miners, farm laborers, factory workers and housewives — are now looking to Canada and other developed nations to help them build a new society. Literacy is a crucial tool in Nicaragua's social and economic development. O

CUSO is now attempting to raise \$25,000 to buy paper, pencils, notebooks, blackboards, chalk and other supplies for the literacy campaign. The B.C. regional office of CUSO is at 2524 Cypress Street, Vancouver V6J 3N2.





24 APRIL 5 2015

1 AMERICA
POLITICAL

If we are really serious
about how children grow
and learn, we should be
looking at Maria Montessori
and her method of
education.

J. STUART GARDNER

• How do you solve a problem like Maria?

No, I don't read Maria Montessori's *The Montessori Method*, but rather Maria Montessori's name is on the lips of an entire generation of parents and teachers, more and more so, in public schools.

When I met groups of teachers in New York and Utah in the summer, I encountered a widespread respect for her. "I don't know if I should say so," I said, "but I can't think of anything good I've read of Chevreton's Montessori's birthplace." "None," they said.

I'm not surprised that few students know anything about this courageous educator, doctor, feminist, pacifist. I realize that it wasn't until long after I had completed my own teacher training that I went to the Montessori Connection, Montessori's other primary teacher, suggested we observe a Montessori school in action. We went, and sure we were surprised. Well, almost. After 15 years of teaching, I'm still concerned about binary oppositions in education. I will admit that Montessori didn't have all the answers.

Some of Montessori's own claims were not nearly as extravagant as those made by many of her followers. Indeed, she once remarked, "I did not invent a method of



As the pictures on these pages show, the Montessori schools learning. The schools attempt to provide an environment for each

education. I simply gave some little children a chance to live."

"Yes, I've heard the negative comments about the Montessori method. 'Too structured an approach ...' 'Stifles creativity ...' 'Too free an approach ...' 'Her didactic materials are too costly and limited ...' 'Under-estimates the value of play ...'

Yet I have also heard from a primary supervisor, when I first asked her if she had ever heard of Maria, "Why, sure; actually all good elementary teachers incorporate Montessori principles into their teaching whether they realize it or not."

I have also witnessed the spin-off from their Montessori pre-school training when my own two children confidently announced: "Daddy, I can do it myself." And after a field trip to a local Montessori school I have also had student teachers ask where they could get additional training in Montessori.

Basically Montessori stressed the importance of the early years, the absorbent nature of a child's mind, the need for us to allow a child to develop his or her capacities spontaneously rather than by means of adult pressure. Montessori said the child's plea is, "Help me to do it myself."

Similarly, during his wanderings around B.C. in the past eight years Dr. O. C. Christenson, counselling psychologist, University of Arizona, suggests that "teachers are often little old ladies of both sexes who talk too much." In other words, our classrooms are teacher-centred, not student-centred.

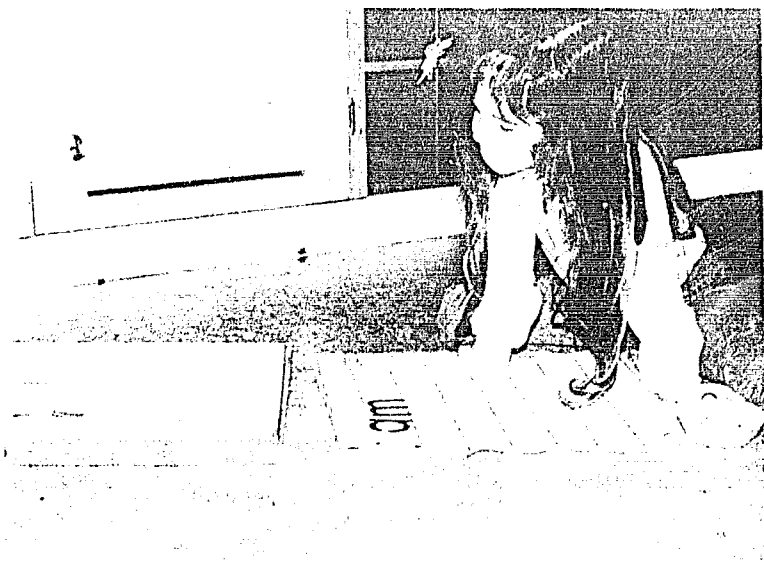
Before we immediately react to that statement, let's recognize that if we as teachers and parents had a dime for every youngster we've discouraged by taking responsibility away from him or her, we would be incredibly wealthy.

Typically in a Montessori setting you soon discover an atmosphere of serenity and

serendipity. Do we not all desire such an atmosphere in our classrooms and our homes? How often I have bitten my tongue when out of the best intentions the "teacher" in me emerges to try to do something for my children they can do it themselves or tell them something instead of doing what Maria Montessori recommended when asked to summarize her educational philosophy: "Attendere, osservando" — watch and wait. Imagine getting a salary for watching and waiting!

I don't want to enter the public versus private school debate. Much of that debate has resulted in an unnecessary polarization of parents, teachers, administrators, and trustees. I simply want to make a plea that as public school educators we find out a little more than we already know about Montessori and examine carefully the extent to which some of her principles can be integrated with our present classroom practice, both at elementary and secondary levels.





emphasize play. Play is essential, not for itself, but to increase youngster that will foster learning.

In today's schools we often see order without freedom or freedom without order. These seem to be our only alternatives. However, Maria Montessori, like Rudolf Dreikurs, whose ideas also appear to be gaining momentum in B.C., wanted to establish freedom with order in our homes and schools.

"What's it going to be then, eh?" is the first line in Anthony Burgess's futuristic novel *A Clockwork Orange*. With her emphasis on freedom with order, Montessori asks us the same question. In several American states a growing number of public school systems have answered that question by selecting Montessori as one of its options for learning. The success of the private Montessori schools has encouraged the introduction of Montessori education into public school systems. Why not here in B.C.?

The Montessori purist might argue that Montessori education should avoid con-

tamination from the public school system. Their call is for segregation, not integration. I disagree. Hear Dorothy Cohen's argument as expressed in *The Learning Child* (Vintage Books: 1972):

The nation's health depends on the vigor of its public institutions and it is especially the public schools that must be made to rise to contemporary challenges. It is that kind of reality that confronts us today, and all parents must face the task of transforming the public schools into places where all children can grow sturdily and learn well.

Surely teachers must join parents in this task of transformation. And Maria Montessori has something worth while to contribute to such an alliance of teachers and parents.

If we are really serious about how children grow and learn, we should become aware of Montessori and her method. You might decide, however, not to visit any of the Montessori training centres in Dublin, Amsterdam, London, Washington, and Bergamo. You may choose to be absent

from the excellent workshops hosted by the B.C. Montessori Society or not to visit any of the dozen Montessori schools in this province. None of Montessori's many books may capture your attention.

But when I arrive next year to discuss my children's progress, I refuse to buy you a coffee and your favorite pizza if you dare to whisper, "Maria . . . who?"

J. Stuart Gardner is an associate of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. A former Courtenay teacher, he is director of communications for the B.C. Council for the Family.

An informative film depicting the Montessori method is "Teach Me How to Do It Myself," available from Vancouver City College, Langara Campus.



So you're going to have a student teacher

An experienced teacher and teacher trainer suggests what to look for.

BERNICE McDONOUGH

●Evaluating student teachers has its hilarious as well as its serious moments, all of them revealing.

As I sat in the back of a Grade 1 classroom, a little one turned to me and said, "Are you Miss Joy's mother?"

"No, I'm her grandmother," I replied.

"That's nice; I wish my grandmother would come to our class sometime. We really do some neat things here."

On another occasion I was sharing a table with a Grade 7 lad at the side of the classroom while at the front the student teacher was befuddling everyone with dull, dry facts about Ancient Greece. Unasked, the lad leaned over to me and said, "I just hate Ancient Greece." Fortunately, I didn't have to write an evaluation on the student teacher — he very sensibly withdrew from the program of his own volition.

Evaluation is one of the most difficult areas that confront those of us who are responsible for dealing with students, or student teachers. But it is an integral and important part of the job, and one we cannot neglect. We know that evaluation of employees in business and industry is, in most cases, a regular and routine procedure, and that promotion and pay increases often depend on the results.

In education we have as many systems and instruments of evaluation as there are institutions for the training of teachers. These range from graded scales to evaluation booklets many pages in length. In some universities in the United States the teacher training faculty refuses to give grades of any kind — the report merely states that X has done Y number of hours of classroom teaching; other institutions use only pass-fail grades.

Practically every institution has developed its own plan, and this is commendable, for into the plan are built the perceptions and expectations of the people who are most concerned with administering it and making it work for the benefit of students, sponsors and employers.

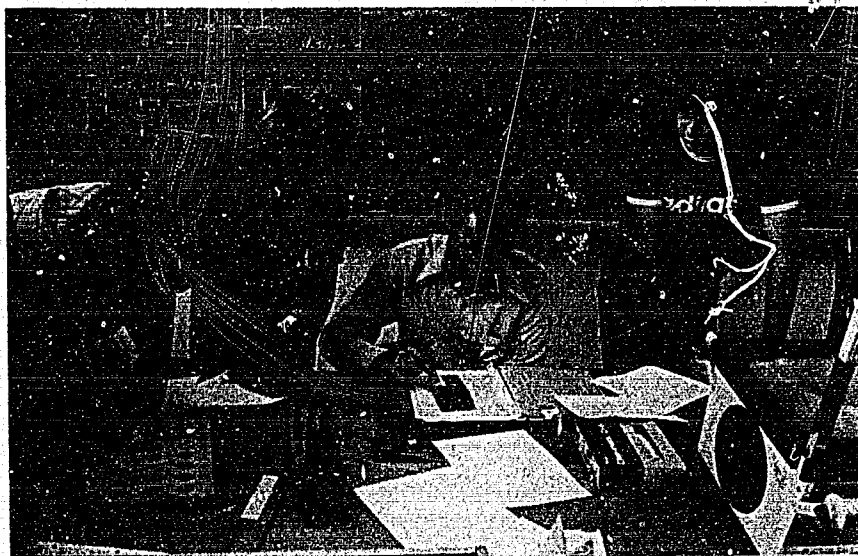
Whatever format and categories we select and build into a report form will, as all forms do, reflect the perceptions and biases of those who design it. It should also reflect the current research on evaluation, and most importantly, it should incorporate the views of co-operating teachers.

Many teachers, through UBC's ASSIST project, in which faculty from the field office held numerous meetings with teacher groups around the province, gave us valuable help and suggestions. These have now been incorporated into a Student Teaching Handbook, which has been widely distributed, and which all education students are required to purchase.

Members of UBC's Faculty of Education hold series of workshops on supervision of student teaching around the province. A pilot course in supervision was conducted in Dawson Creek. It was well received, and will, in all likelihood, become permanent and portable.

We know that the teachers who sponsor and supervise our students are dedicated and conscientious. We know that their task, because of the personal contact with the student teacher over an extended period of time, is perhaps more difficult than that of the assisting faculty supervisor. Sponsor teachers must separate their humanitarian concerns from their professional judgment — not always an easy task.

When I spend time in a classroom I often use the following list to structure my observations.



A good teacher is aware of students as individuals, and establishes a pleasant, co-operative learning climate. These characteristics are high on the list of qualities to be looked for in student teachers.

Preparation

- has materials assembled, ready, organized
- has definite, obtainable objectives planned.
- knows material to be taught
- gives evidence of background knowledge of subject

Instructional Techniques

- gives instruction clearly
- illustrates work with appropriate examples
- moves sequentially from point to point
- uses pupils' contributions in lesson
- uses variety of techniques
- uses variety of material
- uses opportunities for incidental teaching
- uses blackboard or aids effectively
- paces lesson — variety of activity
- questioning techniques are effective
- summarizes, restates, reinforces concepts
- gives suitable assignments, geared to lesson taught
- supervises student at work
- checks work thoroughly

Interaction with Students

- is aware of student as individual
- encourages active student participation
- uses suitable methods of dealing with individuals
- encourages student questions and contributions
- isolates, diagnoses student difficulties immediately
- establishes a pleasant, co-operative learning climate
- handles discipline problems effectively and promptly



In assessing teachers one must look beyond the lesson. Lessons are important, for children must learn, but equally important is the impact of a dedicated, industrious, knowledgeable and understanding professional.

The Teacher

- has pleasant, well modulated voice
- uses eye contact
- smiles, has sense of humor
- is enthusiastic and energetic
- is aware that teaching is a complex multi-faceted task
- gives learner positive feedback
- conduct is ethical
- dress and manner are professional

One important feature of teaching makes it substantially different from any other profession, a feature that has received insufficient attention. A teacher is always engaged in dealing with a group. A dentist, an accountant, a lawyer or a nurse, usually has only one person, or one problem to deal with at a time. A teacher always has a group, and therefore, however thorough the preparation, however complete the lesson, learning takes place in a group, but is an individual activity. Recreation leaders, tour guides, and coaches also deal with groups, but on a very different basis from that of the teacher. Therefore skills in group management and group dynamics are crucial to teaching success.

For this reason, and for many others, I am biased against the current emphasis on what is known as the clinical supervision of student teaching. First, the term clinical has connotations that seem inapplicable to the great enterprise of instructing, guiding, and inspiring the young. Second, it presents a very narrow and restrictive way of looking at teaching. Granted, it may suffice for a lesson or two, but in my view it allows too little room for consideration of the multi-faceted role of the teacher.

TEACHERS MUST JUDGE

Practising teachers should be aware that they do have a large measure of control over who enters the profession. They do have the right to exercise professional judgment, and should not hesitate to do so. Unfortunately, they sometimes feel that the student teacher's lack of success reflects on them, when in reality it does not. The candidate must come with certain personality traits and some specific abilities, including the ability to exercise insight into and understanding of the task of the schools, before training can proceed.

Teachers should not hesitate to identify those whose progress is minimal, whose prognosis for success is in doubt. Candidates who exhibit qualities of leadership, who have enthusiasm, dedication, knowledge of the subject matter and the pupil, and abilities to exercise self-criticism, will usually, however faltering their first steps, become successful teachers. Those who cannot unify the group, who cannot make

learning seem vital and important to their students, will not make successful teachers, however many other sterling qualities they may possess.

Looking beyond the lesson, and the many techniques and strategies the student teacher must develop, a good reporting system will incorporate many of the following features:

- It is objective and professional.
- It considers the student teacher's ability to work with groups; to unify the group, and to create a dynamic atmosphere.
- It supports generalizations with accurate observation of instances.
- It takes into account different styles of teaching.
- It identifies progress in specific areas.
- It presents areas for counselling.
- It builds a picture of personality and attitude by inference, and by concrete examples.
- It contains pertinent comments on classroom management and organization.
- It takes into consideration both the techniques and the art of teaching.
- It presents a balanced picture for a prospective employer.

In my work with student teachers and their sponsors over the last 10 years, I have visited many schools, and observed in countless classrooms. As our society has changed so have the problems of teachers, who are now dealing with a much changed student population who experience different problems from those of 20 years ago. Despite this, I am sure there is no part of the world where children are treated with more kindly concern and more personal attention than in our B.C. schools.

Our teachers do much more than teach, and that is why the character and personality of the teacher are of prime concern. For a teacher is no longer someone who merely instructs. For better or worse teachers are leaders, guides, confessors, parent surrogates, coaches, counsellors, diagnosticians, planners, evaluators and sometimes tour guides or directors of musical and dramatic productions.

This is why in assessing teachers it is necessary to look much beyond the lesson; the lessons are important, for the children must learn, but equally important is the impact of a dedicated, industrious, knowledgeable and understanding professional. ○

Bernice McDonough is a member of the UBC Faculty of Education.

This short story, based on an actual experience, identifies the nature of problems that can arise in cross-cultural exchanges, and the need to deal sensitively with those problems.

JOANNE WHITNEY

●The shivering chihuahua was lean, raw-boned, starved, eyes popping out of its head as we walked in. Little did it know it was to become the white lie, the saving grace.

Gabriella left me just inside the door and ran off to get her parents. The delay told me we hadn't arrived at a good time.

The two girls in this story had started off great. Michelle, from St. Foy, Quebec, a debutante, guarded in the classic sense — her turned-up nose, the pout, the sulky little ways she played. Gabriella, the host who billeted her — volatile, a little rough on the edges.

It was to be a student exchange between two cultures, Quebec and Canada West. Here they were both speaking French; they'd be okay for sure, we thought. We only hoped Gabriella would speak enough English to help her guest, who was anxious to learn. They'd be okay for sure!

That was the first night. The next night they had sat before me and the bilingual teacher from Quebec. The nature of the dispute — Michelle's indignation, the tears. "She invited me to a party; she told me there'd be 'pot' there if I wanted it."

Gabriella and the French teacher, how easily they slipped into French, the more comfortable language for both of them. The explosion came fast, Gabriella shouting, "I thought it my duty to warn her, that's all; it would have been worse if I had taken her there and she had found it out for herself. I didn't tell her she had to smoke it or even go. I knew she wouldn't go anyhow."

"So, if you knew she wouldn't go, why did you even suggest taking her there? Why didn't you — you're her host — take her somewhere else where you knew she would enjoy herself — something more in keeping with her style of life?"

"Her style of life, that's the problem; she doesn't like us — my home, my parents, my dad . . . my dad, yeah, he's on welfare! They're not quite your style of life, right Michelle?"

Michelle's answer was a pout and Gabriella's reaction followed fast: "Why don't you say something, you speak French!"

Then Gabriella, enraged by the silence, threw together all the blasphemous words she knew and stomped out slamming the door behind her. Miss Gagnon said, "I came prepared for difficulties that might arise between my students and yours over language, but this I wasn't prepared for — and to think, she speaks my language. Such words! Rough laborers, perhaps, but never would a woman use them. I have never heard such a thing, believe me — never, not once!"

apologetically. "Please don't tell my parents, that's all! This trip, it was my birthday present from them. I guess I won't be allowed to go to Quebec. I'd like to see my province."

Every teacher confronted with just such a situation knows that you make no promises. "Let's go home, I'll simply tell your parents we have to take Michelle out of your home, because she's allergic to the dog."

I walked the length of the hall that Gabriella had led me into and looked through the rose-tinted oval window. Gabriella and her parents were gathering up the gardening tools strewn about. She had told them something, and even from the distance I sensed the strain between them.

They were old for the parents of a teenaged daughter and looked worn out and exasperated with their daughter, the youngest of 11 children and the only one remaining at home. The little dog preceded them up the basement stairs and was shivering nervously at my feet.

"I am sorry, we have come to collect Michelle's bags . . . le petit probleme, elle est allergique au chien."

They understood, and Gabriella left and returned with the bags.

The question of whether Gabriella would be allowed to go still hung in the air. No billet to host her would present problems. The administration of the school came down hard whenever marijuana was suspected, but there was no evidence that Gabriella had smoked pot. Decisions were based on school protocol rather than extenuating circumstances arising from the incompatibility of two persons of divergent social backgrounds. A language they shared couldn't help them close this gap.

Gabriella had correctly guessed the outcome.

Joanne Whitney teaches at Douglas College, New Westminster.



Outside Gabriella had cooled down; she knew she was in even deeper trouble and returned. She spoke softly, almost

THESE TEACHERS HAVE RETIRED

Most of the teachers listed below retired last year or earlier this year. A few had left teaching before last year but were granted deferred allowances. To them all the federation extends best wishes for the future.

Marjorie Arpin, Surrey
Helen M. Arthur, Vancouver
Ernest R. Ball, Richmond
June A. Beaddie, Vancouver
James R. Bennie, Abbotsford
Nancy M. Bonter, Kamloops
Leona M. Booth, Vancouver
Helena Brackley, Vancouver
Helena Braun, Chilliwack
Elinor M. Brown, Burnaby
Thomas C. Campbell, Kamloops
Alan H. Child, Nechako
James E. Court, West Vancouver
Alice E. Covell, Delta
Fredrick B. Creer, Vancouver
Donald M. Crosby, Mission
Alice A. Cuddington, Burnaby
Edith N. Day, Kimberley
Henry Defehr, Abbotsford
Hildegard A. Deuchler, Maple Ridge
Helen E. Dohms, Prince George
Arthur H. Doree, Kamloops
Doris P. Dubetz, Stewart
Elizabeth Dugdale, North Vancouver
George W. Eacrett, Windermere
Rae F. Ellsay, Kamloops
Lillian M. Emerson, Surrey
John S. Ewen, Burnaby
Norah Farina, Central Okanagan
Stewart D. Foreman, Campbell River
Owen S. Forsyth, North Vancouver

Eric Fowweather, Delta
Renate Francis, Vernon
Norma I. Fraser, Kamloops
Jean I. Fraser, Vancouver
Helen J. Geard, North Vancouver
Marjorie Gillingham, Cowichan
Frederick E. Gower, Victoria
Alfred L. Greenwood, Victoria
Alison P. Hall, Victoria
Evelyn M. Hansen, Nanaimo
Bunite E. Henderson, North Vancouver
Hannah Hewson, Kitimat
Margaret A. Hodgson, North Vancouver
Douglas A. Holland, Central Okanagan
Raymond N. Hollins, Vancouver
David S. Holmes-Smith, South Okanagan
Jennie E. Hrushowy, Nanaimo
Hazel B. Huckvale, Cariboo-Chilcotin
Henry V. Irving, Summerland
Audrey I. Johanson, Summerland
Dorothy W. Johnston, West Vancouver
Jean E. Kerr, Victoria
Robert A. Laidlaw, North Vancouver
Jean E. Lane, Maple Ridge
Audrey G. Leacock, Victoria
Amy E. Lowen, Maple Ridge
Lila C. Macdonald, Burnaby
Marion F. Macdonald, Burnaby
Lorne A. Mann, Vancouver
Irene D. McCallum, Comox
William H. McLachlan, Vancouver

Joan M. McLagan, Vancouver
Margaret McLeod, North Vancouver
Helen L. McMichael, Victoria
Kathleen L. Meredith, Gulf Island
Richard H. Monk, Uvic
Henry C. Mottishaw, Nanaimo
Mary F. Nystrom, Vancouver
Eva J. Ollis, Sooke
Jacqueline A. Osborne, Burnaby
Noel R. Parker, North Vancouver
Robert E. Pooley, North Vancouver
Winston Potter, Central Okanagan
Robert J. Robinson, North Vancouver
Marcelle I. Rumpf, Kitimat
Dorothy E. Russell, Cowichan
Robert W. Spence, Vancouver
John F. Stirr, Keremeos
Olive F. Swann, Vancouver
John G. Tarangle, Abbotsford
Irene V. Taylor, Richmond
Agnes Theodor, Abbotsford
Victor F. Thiessen, Langley
Isabel Trozzo, Nelson
Charles Unsworth, Vancouver
Benjamin H. Waldron, Central Okanagan
Dexter N. Wallbank, Alberni
John B. Watkin, Alberni
Hazel F. Way, North Thompson
Frances L. Widdifield, Victoria
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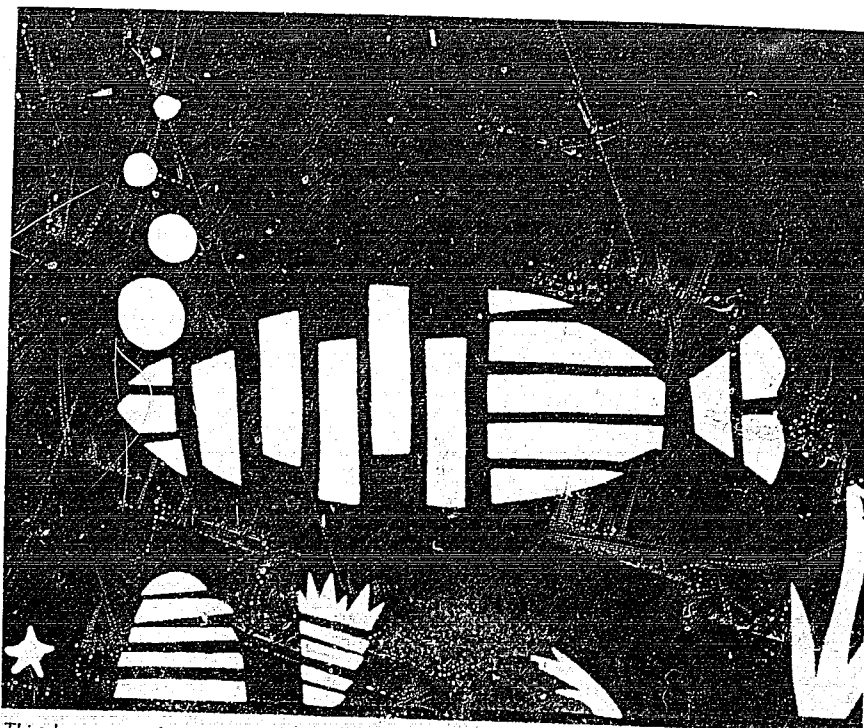
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*This elementary school student's design illustrates the multi-disciplinary approach taken in the package, **Salmonids in the Classroom**. In addition to ideas for art classes, the package contains quizzes, vocabulary sheets, photo copy masters and a host of other materials for teachers.*

In the Classroom

A field-tested program and accompanying materials for teaching about fish, particularly salmon and trout, are available from the BCTF Lesson Aids Service.

HEATHER PERSONS

● "I wish to complain about your junk in the oceans and streams. I was coming back to spawn but I couldn't because of your junk."

So wrote a Port Hardy Grade 5 student who obviously identified with the hazards encountered by the salmon and trout. His complaint was duly noted in the Sunday Salmonid Sun, a school newspaper put out after his class had studied these anadromous fish.

The class was part of a pilot group exposed to "Salmonids in the Classroom," a supplementary course created under the auspices of the Salmonid Enhancement Program (SEP) for use in B.C. schools.

"The kids really turned on to the resource," says Port Hardy teacher Larry Burroughs, one of five teachers who field tested the package in the Port Hardy School District over a six-month period. "We adopted a stream beside the school. We did a stream study looking at it from the point of view of the salmon." They also produced the school newspaper quoted above and made a field trip to the Keogh River where SEP is involved in stream improvement.

The Port Hardy youngsters were not alone in their enthusiasm. In all four areas where the educators' package was field-tested (Kamloops, Richmond, Sechelt and Port Hardy), students displayed an interest that extended well beyond the classroom. Kamloops students organized a fair and are planning an incubation box. Richmond secondary students made a presentation at a public hearing on salmonids.

"Salmonids in the Classroom" is the result of two years of curriculum writing and testing, a demanding process that called for input from a number of teachers and co-operation between three government agencies: Fisheries and Oceans and British Columbia's Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Education.

Representatives of these government departments and a dozen teachers formed a critics council. This body met four times providing advice and direction while curriculum writers progressed through four drafts, and 45 teachers in the four districts tested the document.

The package has received the endorsement of the B.C. Ministry of Education for use in the school system as supplementary material.

"Salmonids in the Classroom" is a multi-disciplinary package providing material for use in science, social studies, political science, geography, reading and art courses.

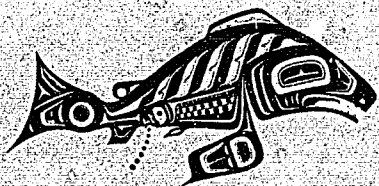
"In the field test I was able to teach the package about 20 per cent of the time without feeling that I'd deprived my class of any of the basic material they needed," notes Burroughs.

The package can be used as a complete curriculum or any one unit can be taught independently. There are two versions of the package, one aimed at grades 4 to 6 in the elementary schools and a junior secondary edition for grades 7 to 11.

Information on the life cycle of the salmonids, their habitat, the fishing industry, the native food fishery, the aquatic food chain and the migration patterns of the fish is provided. Issues such as resource management are also described. The needs of various resource users are examined — logging, fishing, mining and agriculture all employ and affect the waterways of this province.

The package contains everything the teacher will need. Reference materials, activity sheets, lesson plans, quizzes, overhead transparencies and photocopy masters are included. ○

Heather Persons is the information officer for the Salmonid Enhancement Program.



We Treat TALL STUDENTS Abominably

A plea for more compassionate treatment of tall people in schools.

SOENID ANDREWS

● As a teacher of many healthy, energetic, but frustrated tall senior secondary students, and being tall myself, I call for more compassionate treatment of tall people in our school system.

Many students in secondary schools are over six feet tall, yet are given desks suitable for those much shorter.

As teachers constantly striving to be sensitive to our students' needs, we must learn to observe the body language of our students and must never overlook even the subtlest indications of discomfort or assume that this discomfort is purely physical and temporary; for, in fact, this process of "pretzelizing" our tall students can cause severe and irreparable emotional damage.

Tall students are forced into a "fail set" from the moment they begin each class period, attempting to accordion-pleat their legs. After this ritual of failure is completed, they usually attempt one of two positions. In a move of silent desperation they slide their legs under the seat ahead, quietly praying that the person in front will not stand up quickly and break their ankles.

The problem with this position lies in the necessity of sitting on the edge of the seat to establish the correct leg angle; the position of the head, in this case, is back, with the eyes most comfortably focused on a favorite ceiling tile. This position is not only uncomfortable, but also dangerous, because the students must grip the edge of their desks to keep balanced.

Now, in this position what must these students never do? Right! Raise their hands. In other words, these students can never safely volunteer to answer or ask a question in class. If they raise their hands their torsos immediately assume the slide position, and like seals meeting the water they slip right under the desk in front and for a moment seem to disappear. The teacher knows they are in the room only if he or she happens to glance at the floor and sees feet sticking out from under the front desk in the row. When this occurs, the students are often accused of practising for the Gong Show in class time and are given extra homework.

The only alternative to sticking the feet straight out is to sit back and tuck the feet under the desk seat. This position forces the head and shoulders forward into the "gosh, darn I'm tired" position in which only the double-jointed student can manage to write. The advantage is, I suppose, that the teacher cannot easily snoop into the work the students are doing in class.

The disadvantage is that the psychologically-oriented teacher may interpret this posture as a regression into the foetal position, and may jump to the conclusion that the students do not like the course, in which case they automatically fail.

The traumatic effect of tiny desks is not always appreciated even by the most sensitive teachers. There is always the harried teacher who wheels around from writing on the blackboard because of some noise in the class, reacts to her first impression, and says, "Tom, sit down!" The embarrassment is, of course, that Tom is already sitting down. If Tom forgets himself and raises his hand to protest — swish — he disappears.

Many tall people react to this psychological strain by muttering or speaking softly when asked a question in class. This problem is firmly entrenched by the teacher's inevitable request, "Speak UP, please."

In short, tall people are emotionally repressed and isolated by the physical situation in which they find themselves. At a time when streaming is considered a retrogressive step in education, I find it deplorable that tall students are segregated into the psychological backwaters of quiet suffering, and are forced to concentrate not on the core curriculum, but on how to get comfortable. ○

Soenid Andrews teaches at Centennial Secondary School in Coquitlam.



Educational Memorabilia Wanted

If you have educational items from bygone days and would be willing to donate them to the B.C. Teachers' Federation's archives, they would be appreciated. It is hoped that at some point in the future they could be put on display. We are looking for old photographs (identified), minute books, slates, schools bells, ink wells, etc. Things used in the past might be deemed useless by some and be collecting dust and be eventually thrown out. Please consider donating them to the BCTF. Kindly direct any donations or inquiries to: Donna Tromp at the B.C. Teachers' Federation, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9.

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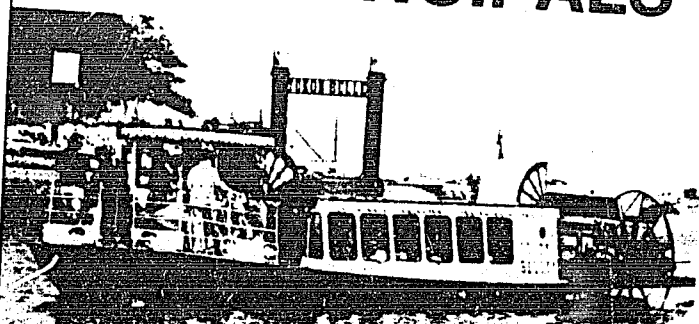
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THE B.C. TEACHER, MARCH-APRIL 1980

A Matter of Opinion

CAMERON'S LAW

IAN CAMERON

●I read Bernice McDonough's piece (Nov.-Dec.) on the way to become dean of a faculty of education with some interest — not interest in the revelations contained in the article, but interest in the fact that she bothered to write it and the *B.C. Teacher* bothered to print it.

After all, observers of society have been commenting on identical phenomena for centuries.

Cato the Elder gave some fine speeches on the topic to the senate. His complaint lay with promotion procedures of the Roman army.

Perhaps the First Lord, in Gilbert and Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore", put it best in his advice to future admirals when he said:

"Stick close to your desk
and never go to sea,
And you may all be rulers
of the Queen's navy."

Having dismissed the article as trivial, however, I was bothered by two questions: why does it happen and what can we do about it? After some cogitation, I arrived at an answer that I herewith set forth as Cameron's Law: TO BECOME AN ADMINISTRATOR IN A HIGHLY SPECIALIZED INDUSTRY, ONE MUST IGNORE THE JOB FOR WHICH ONE WAS HIRED.

Furthermore, there is an additional formulation that is called (what else?) Cameron's Corollary: THE MORE SPECIALIZED THE INDUSTRY, THE LOWER THE QUALITY OF ADMINISTRATION IS LIKELY TO BE.

The rationale behind Cameron's Law is as follows: in an industry employing simple technology (technology in the sense of how the work gets done), such as making hamburgers or paper, the people at the top can hire people who are trained as administrators and teach them all they need to know about hamburgers or paper in a short time. As a result, managers are likely to be good at their jobs.

In a more specialized industry, such as education or nuclear fission, however, it takes so long to learn the technology that it is impractical to hire trained administrators and teach them the skills of teaching or atom splitting. Since people who hire administrators are usually teachers or atom-splitters themselves, they are reluctant to

place persons without relevant expertise in charge of people who have the expertise. As a result, administrators in these industries come from within the industry.

And how do they get picked? By showing competence at administrative duties, such as chairing committees, organizing, and doing paperwork (and knowing people's names and making people feel at ease). So, if you want to become a principal or head of a nuclear power plant, the last thing you want to do is spend your time teaching or chasing atoms! As Cameron's Law says, you have to ignore the job for which you were hired and concentrate on the committee work and politics.

Given that insight, the corollary becomes obvious. It takes five years to become a teacher. Some people will undertake further training and receive a master's or doctorate in educational administration, so there will be some trained administrators in the system. Now look at the university. It takes seven or eight years to become a member of faculty, so there will be fewer people willing to spend additional time receiving training in administration. Hence, the more specialized the industry, the poorer the quality of administrators is likely to be.

The one industry that has licked this pattern is medicine. It is obvious that no doctor is going to give up nine years of training in medicine to run a hospital, so hospital administrators are not doctors — they are trained administrators, who know (usually) very little about medicine. (In fact, a friend of mine who runs a large California hospital claims that the less one knows about medicine the better a hospital administrator one will be, because one is less likely to argue with the staff, who know more about their jobs than any administrator can.)

Could we do likewise in education? I'm not sure, at the public school level. The big difference between doctors and teachers is that doctors' clients choose their doctors, and are more or less competent to judge the quality of treatment received. (In theory, anyway. How many patients did your doctor bury last year? That's what I thought.)

Teachers' clients don't choose their teachers, and probably aren't competent to judge the quality of treatment received. As a

result, school administrators have to supervise teachers to ensure standards are maintained, and to do so they should know something about teaching, although perhaps not as much as we think they should at present.

Faculties of education, on the other hand, don't have that problem. Education students should know when they have an incompetent lecturer, so there should be no need for the dean to inspect lecturers. As a result, should the dean have to know anything about teaching teachers? Probably not.

In fact, if we set up a different system in public schools (collegial evaluation, perhaps), school principals wouldn't have to be teachers either. The benefit of this suggestion is not so much that the quality of administration would improve — although it might — but that teachers and education professors could forget the political games and get on with the job for which they were hired, secure in the knowledge that the games won't help anyway.

That would probably do more to help raise the quality of instruction than all the SCOT and SCET in the world.○

Ian Cameron is completing his doctorate in educational administration at UBC. He is on leave from the Saanich School District.

¹Note that Cameron's Law is to some extent the converse of the Peter Principle, which states that people are promoted because they are outstanding at their present tasks, and continue to be promoted until they reach their level of incompetence.

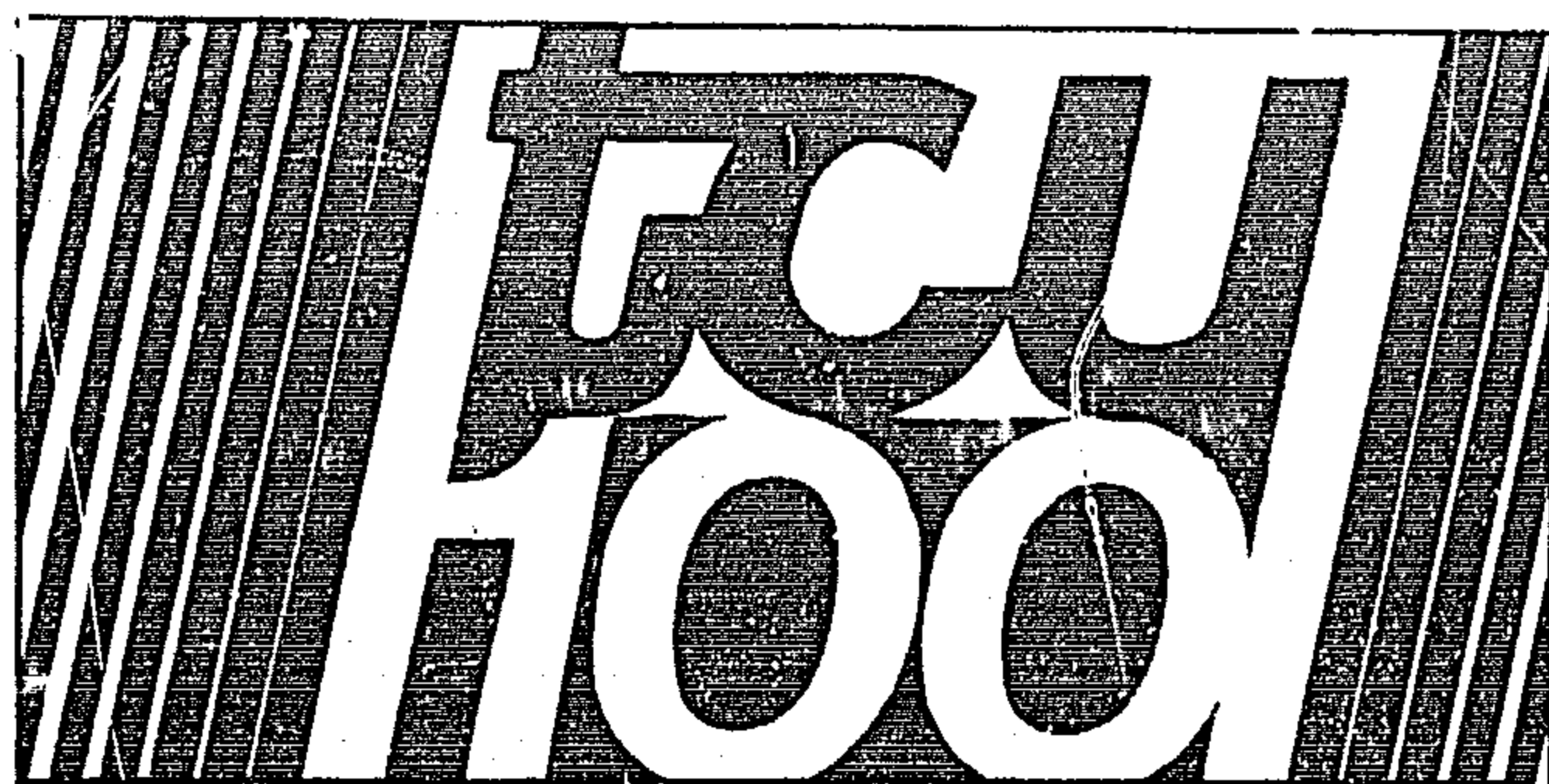
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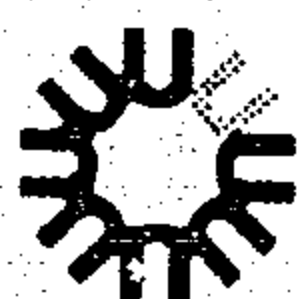
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Classroom Tips from Project TEACH

USE HUMOR IN NO-WIN SITUATIONS

DAN DeGIROLAMO

● Few of us would suggest that the classroom teacher should aspire to the role of stand-up comic, but humor is a classroom management option frequently overlooked.

Most of us enjoy laughter without ever stopping to wonder why. An examination of many popular jokes would reveal some rather serious anxieties. Sex, death, old age, poverty, homosexuality, racism, taxes, big government, teachers and assorted phobias are among the anxiety-ridden topics that cause us to laugh. For it is through laughter that we are able to reduce tension and anxiety.

Daily, teachers are faced with a series of behavior problems of varying magnitude. Some can be resolved easily; others, not at all. Too frequently teachers are drawn into "no-win" confrontations with students and emerge with their credibility greatly eroded.

A female teacher of a class of junior secondary boys entered her classroom one morning near the beginning of the school year to find on the front board in very large letters her last name preceded by a rather offensive four-letter word.

Consider her options, with each member of the class poised on the edge of his seat waiting expectantly for screams, tears, anger, or some other predictable behavior.

Imagine the reaction of her students when she faced them squarely, hands on hip and asked "Which of you has delusions

of grandeur?" The class broke into gales of laughter for a few moments whereupon she erased the phrase from the board and went on to introduce the lesson.

Through the use of humor she had avoided precipitating a confrontation she could not win. Furthermore, her sense of humor had enhanced her stature in the eyes of the class.

While this example may be an extreme one, consider how you might use humor to deal with some of the following:

● A student persistently tapping a pen or pencil on the desk.

● A crying youngster who has fallen and sustained a minor scrape.

● One student looking onto another's test paper.

● Two boys preparing to square off with fists.

● A student throwing a lunchbag in the direction of the wastebasket.

● A student who has spilled a container of paint on the floor.

● A student who verbally insults you in front of the class.

Although not all of us have a good sense of humor, we can train ourselves to see the light side of situations and to look for incongruities in word or action that can be used to produce humor and to relieve tension. As well, we can concentrate on non-verbal signals. A laugh, a smile, or just a twinkle in the eyes is often enough to serve

the purpose. We must remember that a sense of humor is simply the ability to look at the light side of things. It is an attitude, rather than joke-making, and it improves with practice.

We should realize that, as with all management techniques, humor has its element of risk. Laughing at something that is very serious to a student, getting students "up" who have difficulty coming "down" and intimidating sarcasm or ridicule must be avoided.

Furthermore, the appreciation of the joke, and the subsequent release of tension, depends on how each person identifies with the situation. If there is little identification, one is not amused. Or, if the identification is extremely strong and anxiety-ridden, there will be little amusement and perhaps an increase in anxiety.

If humor is well-intentioned, body language, tonality and other non-verbal clues must be consistent with good intentions. There must always be congruency between what we say and how we say it. Indeed, "how we say" is often more important than "what we say".

Not all breaches of behavior can be laughed away, but the next time you find yourself in a "no-win" situation, consider humor as one of your options. O

Dan DeGirolamo is a Project TEACH associate, and teaches at Coldstream Elementary School in Vernon.



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New Books...

GRACE E. FUNK



Opinions expressed in these reviews are those of the reviewers, and not necessarily those of the B.C. Teachers' Federation, the editor or the new books editor. Reviews are edited for clarity and length.

● Suddenly, I find myself your book review editor. As a new editor, may I restate the book reviewing policy of *The B.C. Teacher*, as I interpret it.

Established in 1974, the policy is to bring before B.C. teachers books that may be useful to them to improve the art and practice of teaching. I hope to handle books related to the education profession, materials on teaching methods that inform and motivate good teaching, books on the related disciplines of child study, or social psychology.

In addition, as teachers we should be actively involved with the issues that affect our country, our lives and our students' lives. As far as possible, I shall seek a Canadian emphasis, but certainly be on the lookout for items of professional interest from elsewhere. There are no hard and fast lines. In a province with a brisk publishing industry, items of local and historical interest clamor for attention.

The BCTF office receives many texts and student workbooks intended for classroom use. These I plan to list in "Books received" so that interested teachers may inquire about them (Remember, if you are willing to write a review, the book is then yours to keep.)

I shall endeavor to maintain a consistent form of bibliographic description, varied a bit for sets or series. Publishers' addresses will be included if they are not found in *Books in Print*, *British Books in Print*, *Canadian Publishers' Directory* or *Books from British Columbia*. I invite comments on the form as it appears in this issue. Should it include CIP? Of course I also invite comments on the reviews themselves.

Plans and promises — but to make them work, you, the readers need to become you, the reviewers. The purpose of a book review is to tell the reader whether or not to seek out/buy/read the book. So a review should be the "news" of the book, the who, what, where, when and why. Reviews need not be long, nor need they be approving.

Just as you turn to tell a friend about a new book you have enjoyed, take a little time to share with your colleagues the

books they might enjoy. Reviewer's guidelines are available. New and interesting books will be yours to keep. Please volunteer your interests and preferences to Mrs. Grace E. Funk, Book Review Editor, B.C. Teacher, 2206-45th Avenue, Vernon, B.C. V1T 3M8.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Steltzer, Ulli. *Coast of many faces* by Ulli Steltzer and Catherine Kerr. Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1979. 212 pp. hard, \$29.95. O-88894-232-X

Ulli Steltzer is an internationally recognized photographer, able to discern among a people the forces that shape their way of life. We are fortunate that she has chosen to live in British Columbia, and use her perceptive lens to let us see ourselves more clearly.

In 1976, she and Catherine Kerr completed *Indian artists at work* (Douglas and McIntyre, 1976). Since then they have spent two years travelling to eight of the more inaccessible areas of the B.C. coast, and recording the faces, the circumstances and the work of the people.

Steltzer's photography is like looking out a window; you can hear the waves lapping and the seabirds crying. The end papers of the book are a forest layered with light, like an Emily Carr painting. The reproduction in black and white (instead of the overpowering color of *Beautiful British Columbia*) gives a curiously muted, work-day effect. This, you feel, is truly the rainy outer coast.

Life on the B.C. coast concerns fish, logs, mines, boats, tides, and radio. Steltzer has a photographer's eye for patterns as well as people: a spider's web of booming logs, the silent appeal of frozen salmon, the eerie prehistoric skulls made by frozen halibut, the devastation of clear-cut logging on a steep slope. The pictures are not "pretty," but they are technically superb, arresting and intimate. They are arranged in a sensitive mix of portraits, people, places and patterns, to create the spirit of each separate community.

Catherine Kerr recorded people's accounts of their lives, their histories and their hopes, and edited them skillfully, to let them speak clearly for themselves. The brief texts are tantalizing bits of stories, too-short glimpses into many people's lives. (The story of many parts of the west coast has yet to be written; there is surely matter here for a writer.)

That's all there is, just the photographs and the taped statements and two small maps for the benefit of those not acquainted with the place names of the Nass River, the upper mainland

coast, outer Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes. Taken together, pictures and text make a very definite statement. No commentary is needed; the effects of destructive logging, of destructive fishing, of heavy-handed federal regulations are all too evident.

But the book is the stuff of human resilience, of human endurance, of human dignity. The last group of pictures was taken at the pole-raising ceremony at Old Masset, November 1978. The book closes with a carver's words: "God's gift of trees... a gift that brings with it responsibility for the life of the forest. If we reject this responsibility we deprive our children of their heritage and celebration."

—Grace E. Funk

Ashworth, Mary. *The forces which shaped them: a history of the education of minority group children in British Columbia*. Vancouver, New Star Books, 1979. 238 pp. cloth, \$14.95. O-919888-92-5; paper, \$6.50 O-919888-91-7.

● In the preface to her book Mary Ashworth conveys the hope that by understanding the past we can do better for the children of the present and the future. It would be difficult not to agree with her, because the past she describes for minority-group children in B.C. has indeed been grim. At times it has been horrendous.

Ashworth documents the racial and cultural discrimination faced by Chinese, Japanese, Native Indians, Doukhobors and East Indian children in B.C. during the past century. What emerges is a clear picture of the history of racism in the B.C. school system. School trustees, Ministry of Education officials and teachers all have contributed to this racism in the world beyond classroom walls.

The book is well-researched examination of the policies, attitudes and actions that have interfered with the education of minority group children in B.C. In the early 1900s, for instance, Chinese students in Victoria were placed in separate classrooms because, as the trustees argued, "their presence would retard the progress of white pupils."

In Vancouver in 1938, Alderman Halford Wilson argued vehemently against the presence of 27 Japanese students who were enrolled in three Vancouver schools in one of the best residential districts: Kerrisdale Elementary, Point Grey Junior Secondary and Magee. Wilson maintained that since the revenue from Oriental parents was low, their children were a tax drain on the entire white population. "Japanese students enjoy the best educational facilities of the

city at the expense of the white population," he said in his brief on school taxes.

However, it is Native Indian children more than any other group who have suffered most in the B.C. school system. Denied recognition of their language and culture, native children have barely managed to salvage an identity from the insensitive school environment.

Insensitivity has also characterized the treatment of East Indian children in B.C. Unfounded stereotypes about their living habits and their manner of dress have often made them the brunt of intense hostility over the years. But for the first turbaned teenager in John Oliver High School his experience was "one of warmth and enjoyment," except for the shocking impudence of those who asked whether he was a boy or a girl.

Although the racist tendencies of the school system dominate the book, some attention is given to those forces that have been combatting racism in B.C. As a result, the book is not entirely depressing. Minority groups themselves have fought back. They have been helped by some enlightened teachers and school trustees. More recently, the Ministry of Education and the universities have shown some slight recognition of the problem.

But racism is far from eradicated. What might help matters is a knowledge of how it gained a foothold in B.C. Ashworth's book advances our understanding significantly.

—Wes Knapp

Thomas, Philip J., *Songs of the Pacific Northwest: Folk, Topical and Historical*, Saanichton, Hancock House Publishers, 1979, 177 pp.

This volume consists of 49 "folk songs" set primarily in the area now known as British Columbia. Some of these "folk songs" — that is, both traditional folk songs and ballads, and also more contemporary songs in which the composer's primary message is social — were presented to the compiler/author in printed form. The others were collected orally from singers in many parts of the province.

The organization will enhance the volume's utility. Songs are divided into two main historical periods — pre-Confederation and post-Confederation to the 1960s. Within the latter category, sub-headings for subdivisions include Pioneering, Sod-Busting and Settling In, Transportation by Land and Water, Logging and Sawmilling, Coast and Interior, Mining, Prospecting, Coal and Hard Rock Mines, and Men, Fishing for Salmon and Halibut, and finally, Ranching — Dairying and Cattle.

A succinct foreword, comprehensive explanatory notes to accompany each of the 49 songs, notes on sources, a detailed bibliography, an index of titles and first lines, and a general index will not only help the user, but also testify to the compiler's diligence, time-consuming care and energy in preparing the work. Several photographs add a visually appealing dimension.

It will meet many needs in schools in B.C., as well as in other parts of both anglophone and francophone Canada. Its use in music classes is obvious. It provides a new social resource to social studies and history classrooms. It provides teachers of both English and social studies/history with testimony that already in B.C. there is a

rich and cultural heritage of folk songs in the English language. Teachers who are looking for new means of enriching their own classrooms will welcome this volume.

Finally, this reviewer urges the compiler/author, a respected B.C. teacher of many years, to have the songs recorded on audio tapes or discs to accompany the book. Then its use in Canadian classrooms would undoubtedly be greatly increased.

— John S. Church

A NOTE ABOUT BOOK PRICES

● Prices quoted in these reviews are publishers' list prices, and are subject to varying discounts: 5 to 15 per cent on textbooks and 25 to 35 per cent on trade books. Library editions and pre-bound books do not have discounts. Where price is not mentioned, this fact is noted in the review.

Prices listed by American publishers are American list prices. Prices asked by Canadian agents are likely to be considerably higher, with or without a discount.

A Canadian agent does not necessarily carry all the lines of the American publisher; he or she represents. Be prepared for a few disappointments.

Teachers buying books for their personal use should try to secure at least a 10 per cent discount from book stores, or ask for the regular educational discount when ordering directly from the publisher or his or her Canadian agent. Be sure to establish that you are a teacher when you send in your order. Where possible, use school stationery. ○

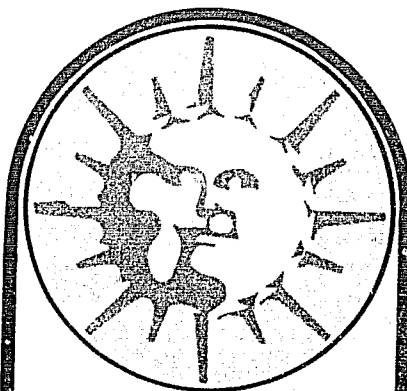
BOOKS RECEIVED

Of the many books received, it will be possible to review a few in depth, in each issue. A wide variety of other titles, with a single descriptive phrase, are listed below. Would you like to see one of these titles reviewed? Better, still, would you like to review one of these titles? Write to me.

Allison, Sam. *French power: the francization of Canada*. Richmond Hill, Ont. B.M.G. Publishing, 1978. 112 pp. paper, \$3.50. 0-920254-05-5. B.M.G. Publishing Ltd., 60 A. Industrial Road, Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 2Y1. Exposes a deliberate "colonization" by the Quebec government of areas that were never French.

Appel, Robert. *The used car believer's book: a complete guide for the subsequent owner*. Toronto, Dorset, 1979. 214 pp. paper, \$7.95. 0-88893-014-3. Buying, selling, and maintaining. In considerable technical detail.

Ashwell, Reg. *Coast Salish: their art, culture and legends*. Saanichton, Hancock House, 1978. 88



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Blomqvist, Ake. *The health care business: international evidence on private versus public health care systems*. Vancouver, The Fraser Institute, 1979. 185 pp. paper, \$5.95. 0-88975-026-2. The Fraser Institute, 626 Bute St. Vancouver, B.C. V6E 3M1. Do doctors need higher fees? — the economics of staying alive and dying.

Boswell, William. *Crossroad I Teacher's resource guide* by William Boswell, Betty Lamont and John Martyn, Toronto, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979. 82 pp. paper, \$1.25. 0-442-19715-7. Suggestions for using Crossroads I, plus background notes and teaching suggestions for each selection.

Boswell, William. *Crossroads II* by William Boswell, Betty Lamont and John Martyn. Toronto, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979. 175 pp. paper, \$4.95. 0-442-29772-6. High School literature text of Canadian stories and poems.

Bradley, Jan L. *Twentieth Century Canadian Composers. Vol. 1*. Agincourt, G.L.C., 1977. 222 pp. hard, \$10.00. 0-88874-052-2. 10 composers, 34 compositions analysed.

Broten, Delores. *The Canadian Reader II: High School Canadian Literature Students*. Peterborough, Canlit, 1978. 37 pp. typescript, \$5.00. 0-920566-02-2. Canlit, P.O. Box 1551, Peterborough, Ont. Spot survey of students' leisure reading patterns, and reactions to Canadian literature courses.

Brown, Brian A. *The Canadian challenge*. Saanichton, Hancock House, 1978. 102 pp. paper, \$2.50. 0-88839-023-8. 100. 2-minute radio editorials on Canada's future.

Cameron, Silver Donald. *The education of Everett Richardson: the Nova Scotia Fishermen's Strike 1970-71*. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1977. 239 pp. paper, \$4.95. 0-7710-1845-2. Detailed history of the strike that introduced fishermen's unions in Nova Scotia.

The Canadians
Careless, J. M. S. George Brown. ISBN 0-88902-667-X.
Redekop, Magdalene. *Ernest Thompson Seton*. ISBN 0-88902-661-0.
Hacker, Carlotta E. *Cora Hind*. ISBN 0-88902-666-1.
Saunders, Robert R. B. Bennett. ISBN 0-88902-653-X.
Neering, Rosemary. *Louis Riel*. ISBN 0-88902-214-3, 1977.
Don Mills, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1979. 64 pp. paper, \$2.45. (The Canadians) Brief biographies of prominent Canadians.

Coggins, Gordon. *A guide to writing essays and research papers*. Scarborough, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1977. 94 pp. paper, \$3.95. 0-442-29862-5. Straightforward, practical advice to high school and college students, including some grammar.

Covell, Harold. *I can spell* by Harold Covell, Denis Rogers, Kenneth Slade. Toronto, Heath, 1977-8. 6 student's texts, paper, \$2.95; 5 workbooks, paper, \$1.50; 3 teacher's resource books, paper, \$3.95. Individualized Canadian basal spelling program Grades 2-7, emphasis on visual memory.

Deiseach, Donal. *Family life education in Canadian schools*. Toronto, Canadian Education Association, 1977. 40 pp. paper, \$2.00. Canadian Education Association, 252 Bloor St. West, Suite S850, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1V5. Results of a survey conducted in 1976.

Desbarats, Peter. *René: a Canadian in search of a country*. Toronto, Seal, 1977. 297 pp. paper, \$1.95. 0-7704-1526-1. Story of René Levesque, revised and updated.

Flanagan, Frank J. *Focus on Science: Exploring the physical world*. Toronto, Heath, 1979. 329 pp. hard, \$9.50. 0-669-00842-7. Experiment-based Canadian science program for Grades 7 and 8. Teacher's edition, also *Focus on science: exploring the natural world*, and teacher's edition, now available.

Gagliardi, R. *The mathematics of the energy crisis*. Westmont, N.J. Intergalactic, 1978. 71 pp. paper, n.p. Solutions booklet. Intergalactic Publishing Co., 221 Haddon Avenue, Westmont, N.J., U.S.A. 08108. Senior high school mathematical problems related to energy sources and consumption.

George, Marian. *Why?* New York, Carlton Press, 1979. 64 pp. hard, \$4.95. 0-8062-0927-0. Homely philosophy on strikes, health, education and the story of Jonah.

Hassam, Abdul S. *The learning process: how to pass examinations*. Hicksville, N.Y. Exposition Press, 1978. 80 pp. hard, \$5.50. 0-682-49117-9. Exposition Press, 900 S. Oyster Bay Road, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801. A philosophical approach, with references to "the Higher Spirit" plus a little psychology.

Joyeux lecteurs and other readers. Montreal, Les Editions Projets, 1978-80. 18 readers, paper, \$1.75 to \$4.00. For Francophone and French immersion students ages 5 to 9.

Kaiper, Dan. *Tlingit: their art, culture and legends* by Dan and Nan Kaiper. Saanichton, Hancock House, 1978. 95 pp. paper, \$4.00. 0-88839-010-6. Well illustrated account of Tlingit life, including several legends.

Kenney, Morgan. *Histoires de nos jours*. Toronto, Heath, 1979. 64 pp. paper, \$4.17. 0-669-00833-8. (Passeport au plaisir series book 6) Student exercise book and teacher's guide. French reader intended for French immersion or Francophones.

Mitchell, Charles. *Hawaii for you and the family* by Charles Mitchell and Colleen Shifflette. Saanichton, Hancock House, 1979. 26 pp. paper, \$6.95. 0-88839-032-7. Guidebook for travelling to Hawaii with children.

Montgomery, R. A. *Space and beyond*. New York, Bantam, 1980. 118 pp. paper, \$1.25. 0-553-12817-5. (Choose your own adventure 4.) At each turn of the story, the 8-12 year old reader selects one of two choices, and turns to the appropriate page to continue the science fiction story he or she has selected.

North South encounter: the Third World and Canadian performance. Ottawa, North-South Institute, 1977. 200 pp. paper, \$3.95. 0-920494-01-3. (Canada North South 1977-1978.) North-South Institute, 185 Rideau, Ot-

tawa, Ont. K1N 5X8. "Audit" of Canadian performance in trade and aid to developing countries. Volume 1 of a series of 4.

Page, James E. *A Canadian context for Science Education*. Ottawa, Science Council of Canada, 1979. 52 pp. typescript. free. Publications Office, Science Council of Canada, 100 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa, Ont. K1P 5M1. A discussion paper leading to a serious study of science education in Canada by the Science Council of Canada Working Group on Science Education.

Paterson, T. W. *Encyclopedia of ghost towns and mining camps of British Columbia. Volume 1*. Langley, B.C. Stagecoach Publishing, 1979. 165 pp. paper, \$8.95. 0-88983-025-8. Brief histories, and some photographs, of 48 places. Volume II now available also.

Peat, David. *The nuclear book*. Ottawa, Deneau and Greenberg, 1979. 138 pp. paper, \$7.95. 0-88879-017-1. What happened at Harrisburg, the history and dangers of nuclear reactors.

Peters, John F. *Divorce*. Toronto, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, 1979. 47 pp. paper, 0-7713-0077-8. (Social problems in Canada series No. 8.) Brief investigation of demographic, psychological and legal aspects of divorce in Canada.

Prout, Peter F. *Community Schools in Canada*. Toronto, Canadian Education Association, 1977. 36 pp. paper, \$2.00. Canadian Education Association, 252 Bloor Street, West, Suite S850, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1V5. Findings of research on the subject of community schools.

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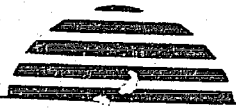
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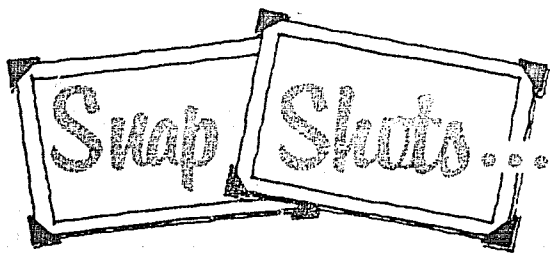
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GEOFF HARGREAVES



THE GAME'S THE THING

● "What's the capital of Saudi Arabia?" asked the vice-principal.

"Riyadh, isn't it?" I said.

"What's keratin?" he went on.

"Some kind of horny substance, by the sound of it."

"What brand of milk products do you use?"

"Dairyland, mostly," I said.

"Congratulations!" grinned the vice-principal. "I'm putting you in charge of this year's *Reach for the Top* team."

The cumbersome machine we inherited from past years, with its buzzers and bells, its lights and tangle of wires, was so temperamental that by the time we'd figured out its moods, we'd covered a fair proportion of the brush-up on basic science.

We then pressed on, without a backward glance, through ministers federal and provincial, composers classical and pop, the spelling of uncommon three-syllable words, the program's favorite painters, Rembrandt, Degas, and always Gauguin ("Gauguin à gogo," quipped one of our team), and the wisecracks of Oscar Wilde; in short, every field of knowledge in which a high-school graduate, in this era of the global village and the collapsing dollar, needs to be proficient.

Then came the big day. Over a meal provided by our sponsors, featuring their milk in our glasses, their cream in our coffee, and their ice cream in our dishes, we met our opponents and their coaches. One of the coaches evidently took the upcoming struggle with greater earnestness than I did. Throughout the meal he continuously dilled his students, firing questions across the table from the first sip of milk to the last swallow of ice cream.

About his neck he was wearing a snappy tie decorated with a scene from the Bayeux tapestry. Not out of any desire to sabotage his coaching, but simply to escape "shop" for a second, I congratulated him on his taste in neckwear.

He gave me a sharp, mechanical nod, then barked at his students. "Who ordered

the construction of the Bayeux tapestry? Come on! Bishop Odo. 1092. Not fast enough!"

I raised my eyes in despair to the ceiling. "Did you notice a washroom on your way in?" I asked.

"Is that for 10 points or five?" he rapped back. I fled.

The students took off for makeup and came back underneath pancakes.

After tuition from the floor manager, the audience applauded as the team took their seats on stage. Terry Garner ran through the routine. He asked for the school reports. Now, as it happens, the year had been an uncommonly slow one for the school. However, in a burst of school spirit that overrode a pedantic concern with facts, our spokesperson generously attributed three consecutive tournament wins to our modest basketball team, recommended the community to look out for a breathtakingly sophisticated performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest* from our small, newly instituted drama class, and dispatched our stay-at-home school band on a tour of Oregon.

I groaned in disbelief.

"Be grateful for small mercies," consoled a colleague. "I heard the team wondering if the school band couldn't fit in a tour of Nepalese monasteries."

The game proper began. By the time the final bell had ceased its jangle and I at last dared to open my eyes, we had won.

No, we hadn't. There had been a miscalculation in the scores. Both teams were dead level.

The cameras came to life again. Terry Garner licked his lips and posed the tie-breaking question. "What animal is associated with a mock court?"

In the millionth of a second the other team had buzzed. "A turtle," one of them said. Wrong!

"A kangaroo!" said our side. Right! We had won! We really had!

My colleague glanced down at the wet wood of the chair arm I had just withdrawn my hand from. "You know," he said reflectively,

"this wood is supposed to be kiln-dried. But you've managed to squeeze sap out of yours."

Two of the boys had gone home with their parents. My colleague and I were driving the other two home. We debated whether we should treat them to some celebratory fare. A drink? Well, they were under age. Okay, over to Denny's for something non-alcoholic.

As we settled into the predictable seats (What would you get if you put orange vinyl seats end to end from Hawaii to St. John's? Another chain of Denny's!), the waitress came over. Her manner was distinctly off-hand. No doubt, it was the end of a long day for her.

The boys wanted to know how much we were prepared to spend on them. My colleague smiled indulgently and named a generous figure. The lip of the waitress curled. I suppose it did mean more work for her. After the boys had consumed vast quantities of pie, sundaes, and coffee, the waitress brought the bill. She slapped it down on the table with an overtly aggressive disgust.

"It's getting late," said my colleague, rising. "I've got some essays to mark before school starts tomorrow."

"Yes, okay," said one of the boys. He rubbed his cheek. "I'll sure be glad to get this makeup off my face," he added.

I winced with sudden awareness.

To see ourselves as others see us! The waitress was glaring at me as if I were a shameless pederast corrupting painted boys with sundaes. With bowed shoulders, I slunk out, offering no explanation.

How did we do in the end? We got to the zone finals. There we lost the battle of the brains, but the genial demeanor of our kids in victory and defeat won most of the available hearts.

With one exception, of course. But then we don't often eat at Denny's anyway.

Geoff Hargreaves teaches at Cowichan Senior Secondary School in Duncan.

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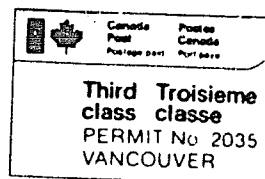


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