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Teacher

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AGM REPORT

Classroom realities, funding, and local bargaining top federation priority list

ALISTAIR EAGLE PHOTOS

Your executive committee table officers for 1993–94 (above left to right) Ray Worley, re-elected BCTF president, Alice McQuade, newly elected first vice-president, and David Chudnovsky (with children), re-elected second vice-president. (Top) Eight of the 11-member executive. (See pages 8 and 9 for full details and more AGM stories.)

by Ray Worley

The 1993 AGM made history. Every item of business was concluded without an evening session. Why? You ask. Group think? No issues?

There were no issues like the labour affiliation, national unity, and social responsibility debates of last year's AGM. Most of the debate concentrated on details of interpretation and implementation.

Yet three significant themes did surface from the meeting: classroom realities, our relationship with government and other groups, and internal organizational matters, including the progress of local negotiations.

In the first category, delegates adopted a major campaign to improve the conditions for the integration of students with special needs.

Delegates supported the executive's recommendation for further BCTF initiatives to help make schools safe places free from violence. A lunchtime performance by drama students from Terry Fox Senior Secondary School, Coquitlam, provided students' graphic view of the problem.

This meeting was distinguished by a healthy pragmatism and a resolve to continue to work together to advance the goals of the BCTF through the '90s.

The AGM approved extensive policy statements on ESL topics—acknowledging another pressing reality for many classroom teachers.

The speech by Minister of Education Anita Hagen began a session devoted largely to topics of government policy in education. The minister's speech (see p. 9 of this issue) provoked sharp questions on the government's performance to date.

Delegates overwhelmingly passed a motion calling on the minister to speak out in support of teachers, provide direction and policy for educational change, and publically advocate for adequate funding. Another motion criticized the minister's mishandling of the school-calendar issue.

Delegates addressed the government's underfunding in a series of recommendations, including a campaign to publicize the effects on schools of the latest budget decisions.

The AGM established contingency planning for the possibility of the government's introducing provincial or tiered bargaining. The executive will be preparing an action plan to be implemented through a special RA and a membership vote in the event of proposals to change the bargaining structure. The granting of the exemption for the Salary Indemnity Plan was one positive note in the government's record in education.

As well as the relationship with government, delegates discussed and adopted executive recommendations on closer liaison with parents and the formation of coalitions

See AGM pages 8 and 9

READERS' WRITE

Open letter to the BCTF Executive

As a classroom teacher "in the trenches," daily stressed by the increasing demands made by groups of 30 individuals on the one hand, and by the demands to devise, virtually unassisted, the most substantial changes in classroom methodology in 500 years of public education on the other, I am extremely disheartened by the attitudes displayed almost daily in our major public media. Professional columnists and editors as well as members of the public, the former apparently goading the latter, seem to have concluded that bashing teachers is the best way to bring about educational change.

The public can perhaps be forgiven for not understanding either the stressful complexity of classroom interaction today or the extra time teachers must put in during lunch and before and after school, to provide individual assistance, attend meetings, "follow up," manage extra-curricular activities, and so on, with marking and preparing for the next day still left to be done at home (often at the expense of family and social relations) a quasi-schizophrenic existence in which well-deserved holidays begin with a week or two of "decompression" trance.

I, and many of my colleagues find it more difficult to forgive those who mediate, or should we say, manipulate public perception. After all, the public have their own affairs, and not all educators are, to date, equally hospitable toward the community. But the media have a responsibility to principles of thoroughness and fairness. When they, for whatever reason, are not living up to that responsibility, just what are we teachers left with by way of defence?

Such a defense is not merely important for self-justification and recharging our flagging spirits. A supportive attitude from the public is even more crucial for the children we have been charged to serve, and serve *better* with the new approaches stemming from the Sullivan Report. Without the same spirit of co-operation, positive reinforcement, etc., (you know all the words as well as I), that we have been asked to practise with children accorded to us teachers by the public, i.e., without a sense of sharing in this enterprise as mutually benefited "stakeholders" (yuk!) and participants, I submit that even the *best* results we can produce from educational change will drown in today's social maelstrom.

Why is our BCTF apparently sitting idly by while volley after volley is fired into our ranks? Does it go against our ingrained neo-Christian martyr complex to do a little publicity on our own behalf? I sure hope we've outgrown that one! A few dollars and a little effort on creating a positive image of what teachers *really* do would be well-spent. We have the means; we have the skills. With so much at stake, what are we waiting for? As our representatives, please start today.

Felix Thijssen
Coquitlam

Fernie teacher says "Thanks"

Thank you for the support that you gave to me during the lockout in SD 1 (Fernie) from December 31 to January 29. The letters of support, and the money, helped me to feel that I was not alone in my fight to maintain fair working conditions.

As McKellar and Piccott discussed in their article on management rights in the Jan./Feb. issue (page 7), we must continue to fight for the same rights (and responsibilities) of "every other unionized segment of our society."

Both school- and district-based administrators seem determined to push teachers back into the 19th century as far as working conditions go, while at the same time expecting us to teach for the 21st century.

Together, as a force of 40,000 highly educated and dedicated people, we can bring our professional working conditions into the present, in spite of the efforts of those who want to control us.

Stephen Fairbairn
Elkford

Chers collègues

Je lance un appel à tous les professeurs du Québec qui comme moi auraient été qualifiés catégorie 4 au lieu de catégorie 5 par le TQS parce que apparemment la première année de CEGEP est i'équivalent de la 12e année en C.-B. Je trouve cela très injuste; je considère la durée et la qualité de mon éducation aussi valable que celle reçue ici. Alors si tout comme moi vous avez fait *sept années au primaire, cinq années au secondaire, pour l'obtention de votre baccalauréat*, vous avez un total de 17 années de scolarité avec cinq années de scolarité après votre 12 ième année. Vous devriez donc être qualifié catégorie 5.

La seule façon d'obtenir un changement auprès du TQS est de se présenter pour une révision en tant que groupe. Je demande a tous les enseignants, quelle que soit la nature du problème qu'ils ont avec le TQS, de me téléphoner le plus tôt possible à 872-8398. Tout est possible, si on demande ensemble.

Anne Chatel
Vancouver

Colleague tribute

I learned with great sadness from the *Teacher* newsmagazine of the passing of Jim Inkster. Jim left an indelible mark on my life and on those of my sons, Jim and Harry, who were students at Carson Graham Secondary School while he was principal there.

Jim Inkster was first and foremost a teacher. He conducted his administrative duties with a teacher's mind and heart. He had ready ears to hear, a ready will to act, and ready hands to help a colleague in difficulty. Such people are hard to find.

I look back on my years working with Jim as the most pleasant and most productive of a long and varied working life.

Permit me to join with his family, friends, colleagues, and students in our deep sorrow at his passing.

Bruce Ewen
Saskatchewan

Alert! DND teachers

The order of the Stammtisch (TOOTS), is a non-profit organization established to provide and promote a network of educators who served with the Department of National Defence Dependants School System Overseas in Europe, between 1954 and now.

It organizes annual national reunions, maintains a central listing of members' current addresses, and publishes a newsletter four times a year.

Send a $10 cheque for annual membership: Charlotte Michaud, 66 Oval Drive, Aylmer, PQ J9H 1V5.

Corrections

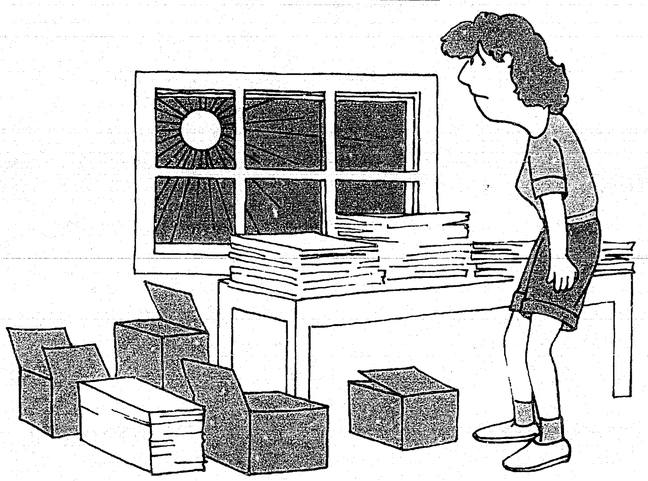
First: On page 7 of the Jan./Feb. issue of *Teacher*, is a cartoon credited to Bill Bell. Although he drew at least one cartoon per day for Fernie's *Lock-Out Ledger*, the cartoon printed was done by *Stephen Fairbairn*.

Second: Teacher-education student *Halsey-Brandt*, on the cover of the Jan./Feb. issue, attends UBC's Bear Creek Elementary Program, not SFU's, as stated.

Our apologies to both contributors.

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

Our federation, inside out



Summer semester at the BCTF

by Berniece Stuart

I've got those "double-checked vouchers, no-more-resolution-debatin', anti-climactic-election-results, post-AGM blues." Oh, yeah!

What a letdown. You spend three to four months of your life immersed in planning, preparation, trouble-shooting, wardrobe arranging, and just generally working up to the BIG EVENT, just to have it fly by in a flurried frenzy (whew!) that leaves you thinking "What, another whole year until we get to do it all again?"

Well, not exactly a whole year. We get to do something similar at the summer conference; only then, I get to do it in shorts and LA Gears.

While you are spending your summer in a concerted effort to think of anything *not* related to school, the BCTF, grievances, staff rep training, education change, or even fall 1993, we here at the BCTF, will be hard at work, planning another week in the life of a local leader.

The Summer Leadership School is an annual event held at UBC the third week in August, for local presidents, bargaining and PD chairs, and others leading your local. Those individuals are dragged away from the final days of their summer for a week packed with enough information to boggle even the most spongy mind. (I envy a person with a spongy mind—my mind has the characteristics of a brick.)

Planning for the event began in February, and by the end of June, we hope to have most of the details in place. Right now, staff are busy determining, with the input of various federation committees, what workshops will be run, what materials will be needed, who will facilitate the myriad of workshops, what political crisis will be looming and will require a local response, who should attend, *etcetera, etcetera, etcetera* (as the King of Siam put it).

Our support staff will take over the print production and logistics, with the result being a smoothly run, well-designed leadership conference. So while you're lying on the beach, blocking out those harmful UV rays, spare a fleeting thought for those of us on Burrard. I promise, I'll do the same for you from some beach in Mexico come November.

Berniece Stuart is an administrative assistant in the BCTF Organization Support Division.

Teacher

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BCTF OPPORTUNITIES

Two not to miss

Committee Vacancies

The following committees will have vacancies beginning in July. Details are on a *Committee Vacancy Poster* in your staffroom. If you are interested in applying for one or more, please mail or fax a curriculum vitae to Berniece Stuart, BCTF office.

Except where noted, the deadline for submission of a curriculum vitae is *June 4*.

- **Bargaining Advisory Committee:** East Kootenay, South Coast, Metro, Vancouver Island South, South Okanagan, Central Mainland, Vancouver Island North — *Deadline: May 21.*
- **Committee Against Racism:** 1 vacancy.
- **Committee of Ombudspersons:** North Central/Peace River/North Coast — *Deadline: May 28.*
- **Committee on the Rights of Children:** 2 vacancies.
- **Finance Committee:** 2 vacancies.
- **G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award Trustees:** 4 vacancies.
- **Judicial Council:** 7 vacancies — *Deadline: May 28.*
- **Local Presidents Advisory Committee:** 9 vacancies.
- **Policies and Procedures Committee:** 2 vacancies.
- **Professional Development Advisory Committee:** North Central, West Kootenay, North Okanagan, Metro, Peace River — *Deadline: May 21.*
- **Professional Relations Advisors Committee:** 2 vacancies.
- **Status of Women Committee:** 1 vacancy.
- **Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board:** 5 vacancies.
- **Teachers on Call Advisory Committee:** 5 vacancies plus 2 presidents.
- **W.R. Long Memorial Solidarity Fund Committee:** 1 vacancy.

Associates

The BCTF is looking for associates in the following programs:

- **Continuing Education:** conflict resolution; wellness; school-based planning.
- **Status of Women**
- **Program Against Racism**

BCTF associates facilitate program workshops throughout the province. Successful candidates must attend associate training in Vancouver August 18–20 and make a commitment to facilitate at least three workshops in 1993–94.

Send curriculum vitae to Dale Kelly, BCTF Professional Development Division, by *May 21, 1993.*

McMURPHY PHOTO

Canadian, American, and Mexican delegates at a recent conference on the effects of NAFTA on public education.

No! No! NAFTA!

A large Canadian contingent, including BCTF members and staff, delegates from CUPE, CTF, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, and other unions and organizations concerned about public education, participated with colleagues from Mexico and the United States in "The Future of Public Education in North America," a conference held recently in Olympia, Washington.

After discussing the North American Free Trade Agreement's effects on children, teachers, support staff, public education, and democracy, delegates proclaimed their belief that "... the continuation of accessible, democratic, universal, free, quality public education is endangered by the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement."

Delegates affirmed that education is a social right, and a strong public education system is vital to maintaining the cultural, social, and political heritages of our peoples. Strong public education depends on democratic, pluralistic, and participatory management at the heart of our educational institutions and on a strong social fabric.

To protect both the public education and the social fabric in our countries, delegates supported an alternative model, which:

- Recognizes self-determination in culture, language, education, and communication.
- Is based on social participation and subject to democratic processes.
- Promotes continental development which includes a plan that eliminates the Mexican debt.
- Guarantees the fair distribution of wealth.
- Recognizes the rights of sovereign states and upholds the dignity of all people.
- Sets a code of conduct for transnational corporations that protects basic labour rights, fair wages, and human rights, and defends and protects the environment.

Delegates rejected any trade agreement that:

- Lacks a public decision-making process.
- Destroys or degrades the environment.
- Promotes unlimited indiscriminate consumption.
- Impoverishes the majority.
- Undermines food security.
- Responds only to the needs of the transnationals.

Conference participants considered the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and concluded that the agreements have already seriously affected public education on the continent and will continue to unless amended.

— Elsie McMurphy

Thierry Ponchet

Chers collègues

Je coordonne au sein du BCTF, pour les six mois à venir, le projet de communication pour les enseignants d'immersion et du Programme cadre.

L'objectif principal du projet est de préparer pour l'exécutif du BCTF un rapport, à l'intérieur du syndicat, sur les changements nécessaires, qui permettraient d'offrir des services en français.

Un comité spécial (task force) composé majoritairement d'enseignants a été constitué afin d'appuyer le travail du coordonnateur. Les membres du comité sont Wael Afifi, Guillermo Bustos, Manon Desjarlais, Paule Mondor, Anne Pidgeon, et Louise-Hélène Roy. Un questionnaire sera inclu dans le programme de la conférence de l'APPIPC, afin de solliciter le plus grand nombre de réponses possibles.

Une deuxième facette importante de mon poste consiste à soutenir le plus possible les enseignants d'immersion et de Programme cadre. Je m'occupe actuellement de plusieurs problèmes concernant les équivalences établies par le TQS, la qualité des rapports entre l'administration des écoles et le personnel enseignant et le développement professionnel de nos membres.

J'espère rencontrer personnellement un grand nombre de mes collègues avant la fin de mon mandat. Il est important que tout le monde s'implique dans ce projet pour présenter clairement la marche à suivre à l'exécutif du BCTF.

J'invite tous les enseignants en immersion et Programme cadre à communiquer avec moi pour de plus amples renseignements.

Thierry Ponchet, coordonnateur de projet pour les enseignants d'immersion et du Programme cadre.

The '93 never-ending bargaining season

Collective bargaining was on many delegates' minds at the 1993 BCTF Annual General Meeting. In previous rounds of bargaining, the vast majority of locals had concluded negotiations by the time the AGM rolled around. This year, more than half the locals in the province came to the AGM without collective agreements.

Why is this year different? According to Al Cornes, director of the BCTF's Bargaining and Member Services Division, negotiations have been affected by a number of factors. "It is tempting to blame government underfunding and the restraint mentality that pervades the province," said Cornes, "but boards were taking tough positions with their teachers long before they knew the extent of underfunding. Trustees have convinced themselves that they gave away the store in the first two rounds of bargainin[illegible]nd are determined to turn [illegible] the clock."

Cornes indicated [illegible]t class size, mainstreamin[illegible]acher transfer, and positi[illegible]d filling provisions ha[illegible]been particular focuses o[illegible] concession demands from school boards. Cornes added that despite underfunding and a pervasive restraint mentality throughout the province, locals reaching collective agreements with their boards had successfully avoided concessions.

AGM delegates united in expressing support for colleagues in Nanaimo and Powell River, where unilateral actions by school boards caused local schools to stay open during the traditional spring break. Delegates also provided moral and financial support to teachers in Vancouver Island West, in job action since February 1 and facing escalating reprisals from their school board.

Delegates from locals without collective agreements had their spirits bolstered by reports from settled locals. Settlements in locals such as Fernie and Quesnel proved that united teachers, firm in their resolve to defend against employers' concession demands could achieve fair contracts.

Despite the difficulties at bargaining tables throughout the province, delegates made numerous statements of determination to retain the present model of local bargaining. The meeting of teacher leaders from all 75 school districts invariably underscores the diversity that characterizes education in British Columbia. "It is inconceivable that a centralized bargaining regime could respond to this diversity," said BCTF President Ray Worley.

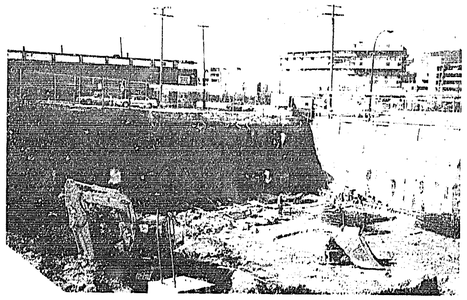
— Kit Krieger

NAFTA: Economic security or national sellout?

A copy of this topical teaching unit (developed by classroom teachers Ann Borcket and Gavin Hainsworth) has been sent to secondary social studies department heads throughout the province.

Additional individual member copies are available free of charge from the BCTF Lesson Aids Service, phone 731-8121, toll-free 1-800-663-9163, or fax 731-4891.

This three-lesson unit and resource guide may be used in any senior secondary classroom, but it is designed for use in Grade 10 and 11 social studies, Grade 11 consumer education, and Grade 12 history, law, and economics.



New federation digs under way

- Hole dug! Near 6th Avenue & Cambie Street (550 West 6th Avenue)
- Occupancy late spring, 1994
- 100% union built
- Fully accessible by people with disabilities
- Includes members' lounge
- Interior theme: Student art and BCTF history
- Project jointly developed by BCTF and MD Realty (the doctors' real estate company)
- More meeting facilities for committees, provincial specialist associations, etc.
- Operating costs considerably less than costs for roughly the same area in present building
- The BCTF property at Broadway & Fir, purchased for $56,528 in 1950, sold last year for $3,000,000. Existing property and building to be sold within the next year.

Room for more taxes on the rich and corporations

During the '80s, the rich made like bandits. Those who went to the party in the last decade should pay for the party they had.

This is not the usual pitch we hear about taxes, but it was the one made by Neil Brooks at the Investing in Public Services conference, March 6, 1993. The event was sponsored by the major public-sector unions in B.C., including the BCTF.

Brooks is not an off-the-street rabble rouser. He is a law professor, Associate Dean of the Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, and teaches tax law.

"The tax burden on average taxpayers went up in the '80s," Brooks told the conference, "while the rich and corporations got tax cuts. Corporations borrowed money in Canada, wrote it off against their taxes, then invested the money overseas, and never paid tax on their profits." The jobs the corporate tax breaks were supposed to provide never materialized in Canada.

"Taxes aren't so bad," he said. "Our taxes represent a good buy. We would have a more just society if we bought more services from government and less from the local shopping mall."

Brooks attacked the Fraser Institute's *tax freedom day* as a staged event aimed at softening up people "to believe that the public sector is just a drain, rather than that it produces freedom for people to build a better life."

"Does the public want more Nintendo games and fewer public libraries? Do they want more backyard swimming pools and fewer public pools? In fact, people say they are prepared to pay more for services they value."

What advice did Brooks have for the B.C.'s NDP government? Increase taxes to pay for services.

"The fairest way to raise revenue is through the income tax. B.C. collects about one-third of its revenue through income tax. It is assessed as a percentage of the federal government's income tax. That means," Brooks said, "that B.C. has no control over the income tax base to close loopholes. I would argue that B.C. should consider doing that because every time the federal government acts to let the rich off, it has the effect of cutting revenue for B.C."

The second source of income he identified is the sales tax. "B.C. has the next-to-lowest tax rate in Canada. If you increase the rate to 8% you would collect about $700 million; and 8% would just put B.C. in the middle of the pack in sales-tax rates."

Then there are corporate taxes. "If B.C. raised these to 17%—the average in Canada—it would pick up about $200 million more."

Brooks said, "There is lots of room for the B.C. government to collect more taxes, but the only way it could adopt a more fair system would be to let all people have a say in tax policy, not just the corporate sector. By distorting the meaning of taxation, those who control wealth and power in our society ensure that they will maintain wealth and control."

If we let the deficit drive our decisions, "we will leave a much worse legacy for our children—one based on injustice."

– Larry Kuehn

Speaking Personally

What should the public know about schools that they don't know now?

The public should know that the education sky is NOT falling. While Chicken Little kicks up dust clouds in the barnyard, many red hens apply considerable professional skills to the serious task of educating the flock.

The public should know that schools are safe places for children. The children's physical, social, intellectual, and emotional needs are being addressed in a healthy environment. Skilled adults support them at work and at play. Time is used purposefully.

The public should know that more children are learning more things, in more varied ways, and they are staying in school for more years. The dropout rate has declined steadily this century. The diversity of course offerings, and the range of pedagogy and assessment techniques are impressive. Children with special needs, previously not educated in public schools, are now welcomed. Students who previously dropped out are staying in because of alternative programs and educators' commitment to inclusion. Students who actually dropped out are returning. We're educating teen parents *and* their children.

The public should know that standards are not falling, nor have schools gone soft on evaluation. On challenge exams, the elite students perform as well as, or better than, they ever did. We don't restrict our evaluation to exams, however, nor our purpose to sorting and ordering kids for post-secondary education. What's more, students are learning key skills of self-assessment, goal setting, and performance monitoring. Incidentally, these are the same skills that management gurus like Tom Peters tell us are fundamental to an empowered, creative workforce.

The public should know that my own children are more competent, confident, independent, curious, and socially useful because of their experiences in our public schools. They should also know that I am grateful.

Elaine Decker
BCTF Communications Officer

I believe strongly in public education, but public schools are floundering. Because of a lack of direction? Definitely not! Because of too much direction. Schools are like pieces of toffee being pulled in multiple directions at the same time.

How many divergent interests must schools be expected to serve before they become dysfunctional? Certainly no more than they are attempting to serve now. When was the last time you recall something being deleted from the school curriculum? Probably never. When was the first time you recall something being added to the curriculum smorgasbord? Probably quite recently. Who will stand up and say, "Enough is enough"?

Schools will not succeed if they attempt to be all things to all people. It is time to narrow the focus of our public schools.

Mark Bigler
Nanaimo

I often wonder if the public or parents realize:

- youth today see violence as an acceptable form of behavior.
- teenagers are sexually active and urgently need accurate education about sexually transmitted diseases.
- students don't learn well because of hunger and poor nutrition.
- youth are beginning to believe that their "rights" allow them to defy authority.
- the growing lack of self-esteem among students results from the belief that put-downs and verbal abuse are acceptable forms of joking.
- parents have an equal partnership with teachers in teaching manners.
- respect for others' property, others' feelings, and others' rights is rapidly diminishing in today's youth.
- students have an equal responsibility for their education.
- parent/student rights vastly outweigh teacher rights because boards tend to support the former group.
- many teachers feel alienated because of lack of parent, board, and government support.
- the current changes in education are adding to teacher stress.
- the government seriously underfunds resources and materials for children.
- how much money goes into administration.
- only when the public and teachers support the system is there real growth and strength.

Ydella Dulcetta
Peace River South

Our public should know that another group of learners besides students is in the schools. Teachers, as well as being strong advocates for education, meet the changing needs in education by participating as learners.

In response to the Year 2000 programs, teachers all over B.C. are increasing their knowledge and skills to incorporate changes into their teaching. They attend workshops and conferences as well as continue course work at universities. Most of this is done outside of school hours and at their own expense.

The amount of time and money provided through professional development days and funds is small compared with the commitment of teachers' personal time and expense. We should have no hesitation justifying PD days to the public. One of the greatest challenges of participating in educational change is that it places teachers in the role of the learner.

Sharon Gloyn
Kamloops

The local association president's job *ain't what it used to be*

by Sandra Howes

In a previous life, I served as a non-union local president. I was president of the Mission District Teachers' Association from 1978 to 1980. We had fewer than 300 FTE teachers at that time with no release time for the president. All we could bargain were our salaries and benefits. We went through a process some of us referred to as *begging* for our working conditions. There was no such thing as class-size limits or mainstreaming language. There were no grievances because there was no grievance procedure. The School Act determined the process for discipline but it was generally applied to major issues. Minor issues may have been dealt with in a variety of ways with little or no consistency or fairness.

1978–80
Being president meant that one taught full time and as a sideline chaired general meetings and executive meetings, attended committee meetings and was the keeper of the two cardboard boxes of association files.

Being president meant that one taught full time and as a sideline chaired general meetings and executive meetings, attended committee meetings and was the keeper of the two cardboard boxes of association files. The biggest decision one faced was whether to keep the boxes in the trunk of the car, the classroom cupboard, or in the basement at home. At that time, any teacher could do the job of president, although even in those days one tended to serve in other executive committee positions before running for president if for no other reason than to learn *Roberts' Rules.*

I have served as local president of the Mission Teachers' Union for the past three years. Our teaching staff has grown to only 360 FTE but the job of president has changed beyond recognition. This is no longer a job that can be done as a sideline or without qualifications beyond those required of teachers. It is essential that the president have teaching experience, but that is only the beginning.

Teaching experience helps us at the bargaining table because we understand why we need specific types of clauses in our agreements. It helps us understand the multitude of teachers' problems we deal with daily. Teachers want to know that the person who answers their calls knows about their rights and responsibilities; offers sound advice; provides the support they require in any situation; and can direct them to the right person or agency in a matter that should not or cannot be handled locally.

The job of president has become very demanding, and at times it can also be a lonely job. One has to be in a good-sized local before the staff numbers more than two. Often the president is alone, or, if one is lucky, there is an office manager or office support staff. At a recent presidents' seminar in discussions on the demands of the president's position came a repeated refrain regarding lack of time to do everything that requires attention. One president commented that "now there is no job description—I try to do it all for everyone."

1990–93
One president commented that "now there is no job description—I try to do it all for everyone."

The financial climate is placing more pressure on government services such as education. I can only see this making the local president's job more difficult. Stress in the workplace is becoming one of the most difficult and prominent issues to deal with. Unfortunately, even presidents can fall victim to stress.

Teachers with solid backgrounds of local executive experience, taking on the responsibilities of president, still comment that they need more grievance, bargaining, legal, and leadership training to deal with membership needs. Membership education, improving relationships between board and union, communication strategies, balancing conflicting groups within the district, dealing with sensitive personal and social issues, problems between members such as ethics, harassment, or sexual harassment, and job action are a few of the issues a local president faces. Comments such as, "I worry about giving the right advice" are ever present. "The job requires a high level of sophistication because the problems are so complex. It is hard to wear all the hats. I can't afford to make mistakes, but things happen so quickly" are commonplace in discussions with local presidents.

Presidents tend to work ridiculously long hours. There is also a personal price to be paid and the toll is not insignificant. Some of the concerns are getting out of the office at a decent time, having time for oneself, and learning to balance a personal life with the demands of the office. Family life can be stressful. A spouse and children invariably make sacrifices.

I hope this article will give teachers insight into the role their local president plays in trying to look after the best interest of teachers on an individual and collective basis. Few of us do this job for only one term. Like childbirth, if it was really terrible would we do it again?

I have found all the years I have served my colleagues to be very rewarding. That there are now more challenges does not make the job less enjoyable. My involvement at the local and provincial levels has afforded me the opportunity for friendships I would not have had otherwise.

Sandra Howes is the president of the Mission Teachers' Union.

NOEL HALL PHOTO

Sandra Howes (sitting) has seen the job of local president change dramatically in 10 years. She is pictured here with Cathy Brugge, MTU office manager.

Research

NAYLOR PHOTO

In February, teacher researchers from all over B.C. participated in a program shaped entirely by their on-going research questions.

First teacher inquiry exchange launched

Tired of conferences where teachers are passive recipients of experts' knowledge, 50 B.C. teachers shared their experiences at a conference of a different kind in February: the BCTF/SFU Teacher Inquiry Exchange.

Three informal, open sharing sessions of 75 minutes each were held. Groups were based on themes such as elementary math, secondary school change, and assessment practices. During presentations, each group offered feedback and encouragement, as well as suggested ideas for extending projects conceptually or practically. One session offered peer feedback on research problems.

Each participant also brought a poster representation of his/her research, which was displayed at the start of the one-and-a-half-day exchange. The posters, bearing photographs, sketches, collages, and written descriptions of projects, were to capture the inquiry and form a basis for reflection and communication.

This exchange was experimental, an attempt to develop a spirit of sharing in line with what teachers say is appropriate to their needs. Developing and co-funding such a pilot is part of the BCTF Research Division's approach to encouraging and supporting teacher inquiry and research.

"I loved the opportunity of hearing new ideas and being encouraged for mine. Workshops such as these serve me in that I walk away having met new people with great attitudes and opinions, and I am able to take with me the best of these," sums up one participant.

Judging by her reaction, it's the right way to go.

The exchange was planned by Sharon Jeroski (Horizon Research), Maureen Dockendorf (Burnaby teacher and SFU faculty associate), Peter Grimmet (SFU), and Charlie Naylor (BCTF Research & Technology).

Contact Charlie Naylor for more information on the exchange and its organization.

– Charlie Naylor

Intense times in education

"These are intense times in education," writes E. Anne Larson. "It is in times such as these that it is important to remember that interpersonal communication skills can go a long way in helping you deal with public controversy." She offers 10 rules, abridged here:

1. Accept diversity and dissent as facts of life.
2. Don't take criticism personally. Distinguish between yourself and your ideas.
3. Look behind criticism to discover its motivation.
4. Recognize your "flashpoint" and take a break when you reach it.
5. Listen attentively to what's being said.
6. Accentuate the positive.
7. Go for consensus and build coalitions...
8. ...but be true to your own conscience, too.
9. Keep your perspective.
10. Remember the good of students, who are the primary reason a school exists.

Source: *"PeRspectives,"* IASB Dialogue, Iowa Association of School Boards, 700 Second Ave., Ste. 100, Des Moines, IA 50309-1731, (515) 288-1991.

Ready, Set, Go!

Teachers tackle change in educational programs

SCHOOL RESPONSE

An evening of art in children's literature

by Susan Gorris

Parents streamed into the library in an early evening in late spring. Lining the corridors and the walls of the room were colorful, imaginative, and accomplished artworks by primary students of Willoughby Elementary School, in Langley. New bold and energetic compositions created after viewing paintings of Miro and Kandinsky bombarded the viewer.

Lively papier-mâché snakes bearing vivid and intricate patterns sat on table tops everywhere. Plasticine landscapes, pizzas, and other creations made by gently installing found round objects (buttons, plastic animals, etc.) into bases of clay in all colors abounded.

The atmosphere was electric as Sharon Anglin, Kelly Johnson, and Ruth Hodgins prepared to welcome the parents of their students for an evening of discovery.

Sharon Anglin introduced Art in Literature by discussing how we look at a work of art and what we may find. She explained that students are asked first to *describe* what they find: a color, an object, a line, a figure. This leads to *analysis* in finding relationships among the items listed; then an *interpretive* effort follows to find connections and links to what students feel or think about the work. A description of how we might enable students to *judge* an artwork's value completed Anglin's explanation of Feldman's Method of Art Criticism, a system of critical thinking in art that has been used throughout North America. (Laura Chapman uses this method extensively in her curricular program Discover Art, K–8).

Kelly Johnson and Ruth Hodgins walked the audience through a variety of student artworks. Most were made after viewing visual creations in different books. The students' response was discussed and many examples of outstanding illustrations were reviewed and shown. Some of the works were originally made from paper cut-outs, Plasticine, watercolor, and pen and ink.

The value of the individual expression seen in the artworks of both the professional and student artists was a focal point in each explanation. Students reacted to a technique, a system of color, the variety of textures or perhaps new and different shapes seen in books.

...classroom studies across the strands offer students an opportunity to explore the formal elements of design as well as science, cultured geography, and social and emotional situations...

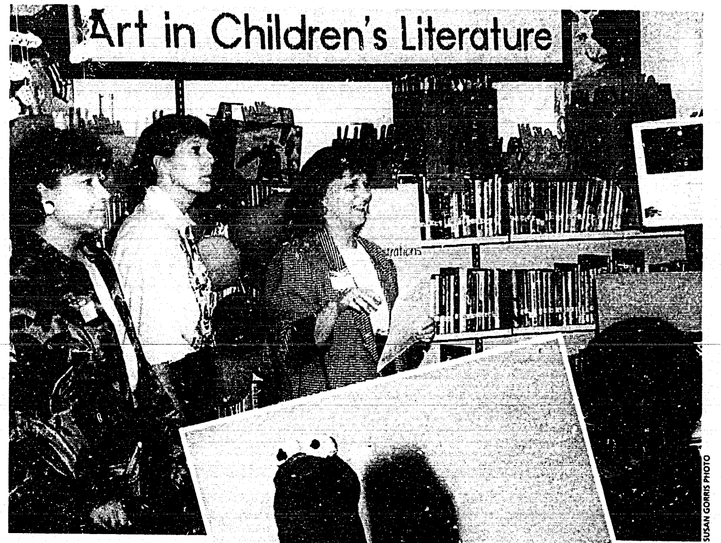
This team of teachers showed everyone that night that classroom studies across the strands offer students an opportunity to explore the formal elements of design as well as science, cultured geography, and social and emotional situations, to name a few. In creating their own interpretations of story events and visual depictions, students used additional skills of creative thinking and problem-solving.

The formal presentation concluded with a reading of one children's book and detailed descriptions of each illustration. All eyes, child and adult alike, were glued to Anglin as she told the story of *Polar Express* (Von Ellsberg) with expression and intrigue in her voice. This and many other examples of children's literature were offered to parents to mull over as they relaxed with refreshments and viewed each of the compelling displays.

These three individuals have worked together for over a year in planning a developmental curriculum that offers their students a rare opportunity. They meet regularly to discuss children's books, art lessons, techniques, and connective ideas that enable children to extend the experience of visual art in a meaningful and accessible venue. As educators we seek now to provide a balanced curriculum for each of the levels in Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation.

Seeing Hodgins, Johnson, and Anglin that evening provide a learning feast to a crowded room of committed, supportive, and curious parents was sound evidence of that and more. Their efforts offer our schools in Langley a working model of integration that is stimulating, practical *and* productive.

Susan Gorris is an art helping teacher in Langley.



SUSAN GORRIS PHOTO

Last spring, parents at Willoughby Elementary School, in Langley, were treated to an evening integrating art and literature brought to them by their own primary children and their teachers (shown here) Kelly Johnson, Ruth Hodgins and Sharon Anglin presenting to parents.

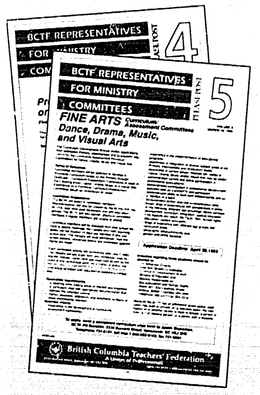
PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES

Put your professionalism to work

by Judith Blakeston

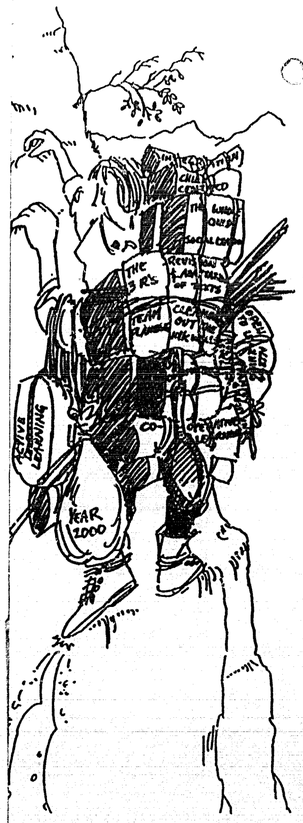
In all the talk about myths and realities of education change, nothing is more central than the issue of curriculum. We use the word to talk about subject content or, in the language of the Intermediate Program, about curriculum that is attained, intended, and experienced, or about curriculum that is integrated or negotiated.

Curriculum cannot be restricted to mean a finite body of knowledge a student must know and be examined upon. Rather curriculum consists of the objectives and oportunities for students' learning around knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to the educated citizen.



Many teachers, however, would lament along with Eliza Dolittle that a lot of this is "words, words, words." For the pragmatic, curriculum is more specific: a body of guiding principles around subject content that has authorized and prescribed texts, curriculum that is revised every decade, usually, and that is especially relevant in Grade 12 when government exams reinforce their importance. The rubber of curriculum hits the road of teacher practice when teachers see what books are in usable condition in the school bookroom.

Curriculum committees are no longer simply updating content. Instead they are developing curriculum guides/ resources/supports around the goals of the Year 2000 and the Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation programs as well as paying attention to the traditional subjects and strands.



...You gotta admire those teachers for trying...but if they don't learn to abandon some of the baggage they're just not gonna make it...
– Nolan '93

The BCTF posters sent to every staff rep in every school advertise exciting opportunities for classroom teachers, generalist as well as specialist, primary through to graduation levels of teaching, to shape curriculum as learning experiences.

The ministry is focussing on the Practical and Fine Arts strands during 1993-94. Committees have been selected for technology education, physical education, and home economics, and they will begin their work this spring. Committee positions are being advertised for music, dance, drama, and art (deadline April 30).

The committees are primarily BCTF members and are appointed by the BCTF after consultation with BCTF staff, PSA representatives, and others as appropriate. (A change in protocols earlier this year makes the BCTF entirely responsible for its own committee selections.)

Criteria for committee selection include training, experience, present teaching assignment, and gender and geographic importance. Just as important are the applicants' understandings of the goals of curriculum development meshed with the goals and principles outlined in *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning.*

The rubber of curriculum hits the road of teacher practice when teachers see what books are in usable condition in the school bookroom.

With all the demands on teachers' time and with the continuing barrage from the ill-informed as to what teachers are doing, why would teachers stick their necks out to develop curriculum at the provincial level? As a professional opportunity to bring classroom practice and knowledge into a larger arena, working on such a committee is particularly attractive. All teachers should consider responding to the ads.

In the past four years, teachers have responded to the call for representation on program steering committees because they are interested in active learning, assessment that goes beyond the traditional pencil and paper tests, research on educating the whole child, and producing citizens to answer to the demands of the 21st century.

The steering committees, unfortunately, could use only a very few representatives. Those same interests can be accommodated by, indeed are vital to, the work of the curriculum committees. The familiarity comes with the traditional subject identification of the committees, but their work has widened to far more than the scope-and-sequence format of the past.

Simply put, teachers have another opportunity to put their professionalism to work in curriculum development. Check your staffroom wall for vacancy posters.

Judith Blakeston, BCTF professional development staff officer, provides advice on curriculum.

For further information, ask your staff rep or your PSA contact for the poster information or phone Judith Blakeston at 1-800-663-9163 or 731-8121.

DISTRICT RESPONSE

Nelson cultivates expertise in own backyard

by Frank Burden

Nelson has a good idea for steering educational change in the district. Teachers, administrators, district staff, and trustees have joined forces to facilitate quality on-site in-service education to support program implementation.

The principle is not new. *Teachers helping teachers* has long been the watchword of in-service education and professional development programs. Nelson has taken it a step further and established a resource team of local experts, which has a mandate to provide educational-change in-service education at the school level.

The team is an outgrowth of the former Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation committees. As the Primary Program worked its way through the system, members saw the need for collaboration with their colleagues in the Intermediate and Graduation Programs. As the team's role developed, the need for client contact became evident; parents were added and the call is out for two student volunteers to serve on the team in an advisory capacity.

The committee is now the first-call in-service source for program implementation. A two-day workshop for trainee facilitators was held in late January. Twenty-four participants, including teachers, administrators, district staff, a trustee, and two parents, gathered for the session led by BCTF staffer Dale Kelly and PD associate Lorna Maximick. The workshop led participants through the skills of planning and presenting workshops to teachers and other partners and provided participants with insights into the characteristics of good in-service.

For some, it was a great opportunity to try latent skills they suspected were there. For others, it was a serious risk-taking exercise. Whatever the case, the professionalism of all present encouraged, supported, and, at times, challenged participants to find their limits.

Trafalgar Elementary-Junior Secondary School teachers Ann Naymie and Paul Luck had an interesting story to share. A follow-up visit to their school after the workshop found them team-teaching a combined English and Social Studies 8 class. The timetable provided the room and the side-by-side classes and the prep time to do this.

As Luck led the class in a discussion of the ballad, Naymie prompted a few groups as she toured the room and, with no perceptible break in the action, she was in the lead. Ballads and troubadors, original and contemporary, were read, sung and discussed. While all this was happening, Lina Myles, the learning assistance teacher, supported a group in another part of the room.

Seeing this took me back to one of the workshop mini-sessions in which a group, including the Trafalgar team, led their colleagues through a practical lesson in integration of curriculum. From idea through planning, presentation, and debriefing, the participants reinforced the fact that the level of expertise in our district is equal to none.

"It's amazing how resourceful teachers really are," one participant was overheard saying during the preparation of the mini-session.

Using local resource people to provide in-service education in the new programs makes educational and economical sense.

In recognition of the local expertise, Sandi Prentice, the NDTA professional-development chairperson, promotes and updates a registry of local educators who have something to share. The registry is widely circulated within the district.

The district-resource-team model formally recognizes resident expertise and provides a sound training in presenting workshops. "The multiplier effect of this project can be astonishing," says Jean Cusworth, director of instruction (curriculum). The next step is to put team members into the field and to rotate team members.

Frank Burden is teacher-librarian at L.V. Rogers Secondary School, Nelson, and a member of the district resource team.

FRANK BURDEN PHOTO

A Nelson district resource team of teachers, administrators, district staff, parents, and trustees provide in-service to support school implementation. (Above) Trustee Carol Mann and teachers Anne McDonnell and Melissa Nesbitt look on as teacher Ann Naymie collates group responses at a training session on workshop facilitation.

AGM 1993 AGM 1993 AGM 1993

Delegates applaud calls for resources and recognition

This year's AGM swung between the high-pitched notes of pain and passion, and the low deliberative hum of getting on with operating the BCTF. It was a meeting of dynamic contrasts; it delivered a clear message.

Both Minister of Education Anita Hagen delivering all-too-familiar NDP-government answers to exhausted teachers, and Allan Bacon, CTF president, outlining the challenges of teaching today's kids in our complex society brought delegates to their feet. Hagen appeared deaf to the reality of delivering services to kids in our schools in such an underfunded system, while Bacon claimed we teachers *must* respond to social concerns, like violence, poverty, and perception of declining standards, for the issues are inseparable from the children we teach. Teacher-delegates who meet the social changes and realities of restraint each day in their classrooms felt let down by the minister and appreciated by their Canadian president

Calls for recognition of the important work by teachers and public schools resonated throughout the debate during the three days. The call was there when Barbara Priess, Vancouver Island West Teachers' Association past-president, pleaded that the delegates not forget the teachers in her remote, dispersed district as they stand on picket lines in the midst of the West Coast Forest in groups of four or fewer.Their cause is every teacher's cause.

BCTF President Ray Worley, in his opening remarks to the AGM, called for recognition through the financing of education. "Mr. Harcourt, you can't have a first-rate system on second-rate funding. Trying to do more with less will simply result in doing less for more. The real deficit is a child's needs that aren't met, not the bottom line on government graphs," said Worley, and applause rose from the audience.

The call was answered as creative and dedicated teachers Morven Morrison and Allen York (Victoria) and Tim Varro (Burnaby) received their CTF Hilroy awards for curriculum leadership, the first two for fostering a climate of wellness in their school and the latter for a project on *The Canadianization of Robert Burnaby.* It echoed again as Jacqui Birchall (Surrey) was recognized by the Canadian International Development Agency for her twinning project that will link B.C. students with those in schools in Malawi, as one bridge to global understanding.

Delegates' responses may have been conditioned by recent media attacks on public education and teachers or by colleague talk in staffrooms. Whatever its source, the mood was clear. The time is now for strong government advocacy for education and its current changes, and for voices of support to debunk the myth that our schools are failing, misguided, or anything but first-rate.

The one warning surfacing from this annual general meeting is this: While turning down the tap on funding and strangling fiscal resources, the government is endangering a more fundamental human resource. Teachers' energy, dedication, and spirit for the job is not bottomless. After years of struggle and criticism, career teachers are flagging, looking for relief and appreciation. The signs are there in calls for pension change and claims on the Salary Indemnity Fund.

Total preoccupation with funding has created a deficit of a more human kind in our profession. Education is in danger of losing an even greater resource: the professional esprit de corps that makes teachers excel and students want to learn. Recognition must accompany resources if our schools are to continue to excel.

Pauline Galinski, veteran teacher and federation activist, received an Honorary Life membership in the BCTF this year. Her career spanned 43 years of membership and pursuits too numerous to list. In her own words, "The BCTF has been my hobby for all these years," and fully dedicated she has been. Our goal must be more careers like Pauline Galinski's. Why not target the preservation of a committed and dedicated teaching force as another goal for the Year 2000? "We deserve to hear we are important. We must be supportive to each other," says Bacon.

This, above all was the message of the '93 AGM. Teaching is a valuable public good, an important public service, and to do the job vested in them, teachers require the resource investment, both moral and financial, that enables the work to be done. It is time to refocus, to move forward with pride as we pursue the support for the kids we serve.

Both Hagen and Bacon struck a chord with this year's delegates...answers must come in the form of support closest to the classroom, where policy and resources transform into learning and teaching.

– *Nancy Hinds*

(Clockwise from top) Allan Bacon (CTF president); Anita Hagen (Minister of Education); Gregory fitzGeorge-Watts (Richmond); AGM delegates discussing motion; Mike Zlotnik, Ken Smith, Mike Lombardi (BCTF staff in St. Patrick's Day regalia); Pauline Galinski (Honorary Life Member); Terry Fox Secondary School students in teen violence production; and Doug Steinson (Honorary Life Member).

KILBRIDE AND EAGLE PHOTOS

Minister Hagen fields questions on government's education record

Suppose you have the opportunity to ask any question of the minister of education. What would you ask?

Six teachers had such an opportunity following Anita Hagen's address to the 1993 AGM. The questions revealed a deep frustration over underfunding, threats to the autonomy of local school boards, and lack of ministry leadership. Most of the teachers prefaced their questions with assertions that Hagen's remarks to the meeting revealed a lack of understanding of the realities teachers and students face in thousands of classrooms around the province.

Richard Hoover, a secondary math teacher from Burnaby, charged the NDP government with reneging on its promise to address chronic underfunding of B.C. schools. Hoover called underfunding "the most vital issue that faces each of us in our classrooms every day." Citing the financial mess inherited by her government, Ms. Hagen claimed that education, with health care, continues to be "our highest priority." Thousands of teachers, facing increasing class sizes, inadequate support for new programs, and pressures from mainstreaming students with special needs, were unimpressed with the minister's claims.

Mission teacher Bob Minty warned that rhetoric without action would ensure that the NDP is a one-term government. He called for a redirection of scarce resources from costly administration to classrooms.

BCTF Executive Committee member and Surrey teacher David Chudnovsky asked Hagen to reaffirm an NDP campaign promise that local bargaining would be preserved. While recognizing the "passionate views" that teachers hold on local autonomy, Hagen refused to commit her government to maintaining long-established bargaining structures.

North Vancouver's Ron Pound pleaded for the minister to be a more ardent defender of public education in the face of persistent attacks in the mass media. "I haven't heard you speaking for teachers and supporting us and saying we have a fine teaching force," said Pound. "What stops you from coming forth and saying those kinds of things?" he asked. Hagen expressed regret that Pound hadn't heard her voice and claimed that her support for teachers has been consistent. Hagen expressed dismay at the negative emphasis in media coverage of education and claimed that ministry efforts to highlight the good work of teachers were beginning to redress the imbalance.

> *"I haven't heard you speaking for teachers and supporting us and saying we have a fine teaching force," said Pound. "What stops you from coming forth and saying those kinds of things?"*
>
> *– Ron Pound, North Vancouver to the Minister of Education*

Mike Hayes, of Saanich, identified himself as a teacher, parent, and life-time member of the NDP. He criticized the government for passing up two opportunities to restore taxation authority to local school boards. Hayes expressed outrage that he payed only $172 last year in school taxes on his Victoria house, adding that if he were a senior citizen, he would have paid no school taxes. Alleging that the NDP had made "eunuchs of local school boards," Hayes called for the return of taxation powers to trustees. Hagen responded that taxation policy falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance and assured delegates that policy is under "active consideration" by her government.

> *Alleging that the NDP had made "eunuchs of local school boards," Hayes called for the return of taxation powers to trustees.*
>
> *– Mike Hayes, Gulf Islands to the Minister of Education*

Dozens of teachers were lined up at microphones ready with their questions when the minister fielded her last question. Hagen left to applause that was clearly appreciation for her willingness to enter the lion's den and not in response to her government's education record.

— *Kit Krieger*

AGM, by Worley from page 1

with other unions and community groups to promote public education and support for all public services.

Finally, delegates conducted the essential organizational business of the federation. Delegates elected the Executive Committee for 1993–94, approved status quo fees for the operating fund and the Salary Indemnity Plan, awarded Honorary Life memberships to Pauline Galinski and Doug Steinson, a G.A. Fergusson Award to Eleanor Phillips, and accepted recommendations for professional-development-representative training, increased support for small locals, and 0.2 release time for executive members.

Delegates heard from Quesnel, Fernie, and other locals about their struggles to achieve collective agreements.

For me this meeting was distinguished by a healthy pragmatism and a resolve to continue to work together to advance the goals of the BCTF through the '90s and beyond. The absence of *dramatics* indicated, not boredom, but rather a broad consensus on the critical issues and a united determination to address them.

Ray Worley is president of the BCTF.

Your 1993–94 Executive Committee

Ray Worley, President — *Alice McQuade, 1st Vice-president* — *David Chudnovsky, 2nd Vice-president* — *Susan Crowley* — *Peter McCue* — *Cathy McGregor* — *Grace Wilson* — *Members-at-Large Elected* — *Jan Eastman* — *Maureen McPherson* — *Tom Westwater* — *Carrol Whitwell* — *Members-at-Large Continuing*

REFLECTIONS BY TEACHERS ON CALL

Getting clear again

by Ginny Jaques

I am at Keith Lynn Alternate Secondary School, on a two-day assignment, replacing Marian, the cooking teacher. I am standing at the sink washing dishes left over from the last cooking class (if you can call it that).

I'm not washing the ----ing skillet. I did the ----ing dishes last time. It's Joe's ----ing turn.

I am looking out the window above the sink, enjoying the feel of the warm water on my hands. No, I am looking at the window. I can hardly see out. The window is grimy, graffitied on the outside with three colors of paint. The colors overlap, creating a senseless, violent, orange, white, and blue design. I wonder if the paint is water soluble. I doubt it.

Tomorrow I have a spare and no homeroom. I think I'll bring some turpentine and a paint scraper.

The window is louvered. Long, horizontal slats of glass, one above the other, in an aluminum frame that can be opened like a Venetian blind. I tug at the panes. They are defiant, resisting arrest. They squeal, grime against glass against metal.

I hate this place. These people are nothing but a bunch of retards.

Finally they're all out. A blast of cold air rushes in from the outside. But between us is a sink full of warm, soapy water. Not hot, just warm, so the glass won't crack from the sudden change in temperature.

Turn that walkman down, Tony. You'll hurt your ears.

The paint is not water soluble. I apply the turpentine, thoroughly, mercilessly, and let it soak in, do its work.

No, Jen. The zero stays. It's too bad, but you know the rules.

The orange spots come off easily. This is fun, rewarding, even. The white paint is tougher. I use the scraper, working slowly, with determination. I am going to be more stubborn than this paint. The blue is even worse. Impossible, it seems. It occurs to me this might not be a cost-effective way to deal with the problem. Maybe we should just throw these panes away and replace them with new ones.

Last weekend we went out and, boy, did we get pissed! Stoned out of our heads!

But there's good glass underneath all this paint. And I don't really have anything better to do.

It seems to take forever, but I notice that the clean glass now outweighs the dirty. One more soapy wash will get rid of the turpentine.

Jen, you did good work here. This shows you're using your head.

The panes are slippery, hard to hold onto. They stick together, resisting again. I have to pull them apart. I suffer momentary heart failure at the thought of dropping one on the floor or chipping a corner.

They aren't fragile. They're sturdy, created to withstand normal wear and tear. But they are breakable. They're created for use, not abuse. Already some of the panes are cracked around the edges.

Here's the note. My dad just signed it. Didn't even read it! I could have written: "Please excuse Kim from school for the next six months!" He was in a hurry to get away to his cabin...Yeah, there's some food in the house.

I cut my hand.

Don't touch me. You're a liar. I hate liars.

Just a surface wound. A minor injury. Occupational hazard.

I rinse the panes and stand them, one by one, in the dish drainer. The water runs down to the drip tray, through the crack in the bottom, over the counter's edge and onto the floor. I dry the panes, one by one, and climb up onto the counter to put them back in place in the window. The winter chill disappears and the sun streams into the room.

It's cold and dirty outside. But the view from this window, right now, is glorious.

Ginny, do you have any leftovers from last class I could have? I skipped breakfast and didn't feel like fixing myself lunch. I'm starving.

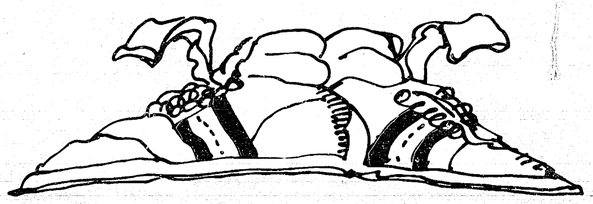
I put the turpentine away and head for the fridge.

Ginny Jaques is a teacher on call in North Vancouver.

Dedicated to Marian and the staff at KLASS. Based on a true story, using fictitious student names.

PELLING PHOTO

Ginny Jaques with sun streaming through this classroom window.



Walk the halls in my shoes

Who are you today?

by Parmjit Mann

When a colleague asks me "Who are you today?" I am tempted to answer, "The same person I was yesterday and the same person I am going to be tomorrow." But such an answer could only be interpreted as rude. My colleague is simply asking "Who are you replacing?"

As a substitute teacher, I want to make sure that learning continues even though the classroom teacher is absent. This requires that I be flexible, adopt different approaches and schedules, and teach various age groups and subjects. In the last three weeks, for instance, I have taught almost everything from French immersion Year 2 to English and library at junior secondary.

Usually, the car ride in the morning is the only time I have to prepare myself mentally. It's like being on an elevator—you never know at which floor it will stop; someone else is pushing the buttons.

Similarly, the approach must differ according to the age of the class. Kids who are taller and physically bigger than I am must be handled one way; children who need their shoe laces tied, or a hug, are handled differently.

I will always remember the first day I walked into a junior secondary school. The secretary gave me a piece of paper indicating the day, the blocks, and the number of the room I was assigned to. She also casually mentioned that there was nothing planned, as the teacher had been away for a week and had been expected back that day. I had neither the luxury nor the time to panic. The first period had already begun.

I walked into a classroom of 30 look-alikes—girls with long hair, boys with pony tails—all of whom were bigger than I. Every one of them was talking or standing around with their buddies.

As soon as I introduced myself and expressed my expectations, this potentially chaotic situation settled down nicely. I was pleasantly surprised to find the students receptive; better still, they had a project to work on. This gave me some time to plan for the rest of the periods.

For a teacher on call, improvisation is the name of the game. As a substitute teacher, I have to be prepared for anything. Even deciding what to wear in the morning can be a dilemma since I don't know what the day has in store. It could be papier-mâché with the early primaries or a soccer game with the intermediate.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of my job is to be neutral and temporary. Getting to know 30 names one day and having to learn 30 others the following day is challenging. To use someone else's ideas, someone else's routines, to *be* someone else, is a remarkable achievement, one that teachers on call fulfil every day.

When people ask substitute teachers, "Who are you today?" they are not too far off! As I am waiting for the substitute dispatch office to call me, I, too, wonder who I will be next.

Parmjit Mann is a teacher on call in Surrey.

Protecting the invisible 10%

As a teacher on call, I see a wide variety of classrooms. As soon as I walk into a classroom, I sense whether or not it is a safe environment for kids. I can tell if children are enjoying themselves without fear of putdowns, name calling, etc.

As I listen to the kids talk among themselves, I quickly analyze the situation and make split-second decisions about how to conduct myself to make the day run smoothly. Every class is different; how I set up those first few minutes can dramatically affect how our day progresses.

Many teachers have classroom rules posted, one of which is "Treat everyone in the class kindly," or something similar. Ideally teachers have explained in detail their expectations for each rule. I must interpret the rules with little or no background information and define for myself what I consider appropriate or inappropriate behavior. I may agree that racial slurs are unacceptable. Derogatory comments regarding ability or physical appearance are equally offensive.

Then come those grey areas, the politically *hot* issues, the ones where I start to wonder how the administration or parents would react? What if I overhear two students making jokes about faggots or lessies? What if one child calls another one of these names? What if I walk by kids in the hallway doing this?

Do I pretend I didn't hear it? Do I wait for a child to have the courage to bring the comment to my attention? Do I remove the children from the class and talk to them privately? Do I publicly address the class and tell them that this type of comment is unacceptable? *or* do I smirk and laugh along with the class?

TOCs always walk a tightrope trying to please everyone and make a good impression. Even though we are professionals, people pass judgments on our abilities all the time. We are always cognizant of the fact that we don't yet have a permanent contract. How do we deal with the issue, or do we dare?

I believe that as teachers, we must ensure that all children feel safe in the classroom. Sometimes that means taking risks. One in ten children is gay or lesbian. One in four extended families will have a homosexual member in it. Some child in the class may have two mothers or two fathers. We have no way of knowing this.

It took me months before I had the courage to stop children and take a public stand against homophobic comments in classrooms. I explained to children that this was a putdown, just like any other, and that it was unacceptable. Sometimes I've talked to a group quietly, or just one child. Sometimes I've addressed a whole class. I believe that we all have a responsibility to protect and bolster a child's sense of self, regardless of his/her background. By letting homophobic comments pass by, or by smiling and laughing along with the kids, we are promoting hatred in our society.

– Anonymous by request

GALE (Gay and Lesbian Educators), 1170 Bute Street, Vancouver, BC V6E 1Z6.

A NEW COLUMN ON TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Electronic Chatter

Technology at your service: laptops adapt to learning styles

by Tim Trivett

Picture a Primary classroom in which six- and seven-year-olds move fluidly among activities of a project: some students are researching in books, some are drawing pictures, some are cutting out photographs from magazines, and some are typing their work into portable computers while sitting on the carpet, on the couch, and at desks. A scene from the future? No. Students in British Columbia schools are benefitting now from the rapid emergence of portable technologies.

A number of innovative projects have been tried in B.C. schools to ensure that computers are not treated as add-ons, but as tools to enhance the curriculum. The use of laptop computers is one way that technology is being integrated into classrooms.

Several projects involving portable computers have taken place in Burnaby. At Confederation Park Elementary School, Primary students use laptop computers in their classrooms—an alternative to the more typical model where students go to a computer lab. Rather than have educational activities revolve around computers, the activities revolve around students, with computers supporting learners as just another classroom resource.

Confederation Park does not have space for a dedicated computer lab. Laptop computers are means for a school with limited space to have sufficient equipment in a classroom to make certain projects feasible. The computers circulate the school on a shelving unit mounted on castors. The unit is wheeled into a classroom and plugged into a wall outlet that powers the battery rechargers and the accompanying printer. Students take computers from the shelf and work in their own space.

The feedback received from staff members has been enthusiastic. Teachers particularly appreciate the flexibility laptops offer. Children are able to work on projects in their own classrooms, and within their own spaces in those rooms: on the carpet, in the cloakroom, at their desks. Laptops are therefore well-adapted to individual working styles. Other activities using the resources of the classroom can take place simultaneously with computer work.

Because the computers are an extension of the classroom resources, students may be working on different parts of a project at a given time. In other words, not all students are using the computers at once. This has led to a more flexible use of computers than that possible in a lab, with students using the technology when they need to—not when it is their "computer time."

"We use the computers in diverse ways," says one teacher, "and all the other equipment we need is in the room at the same time. A child who is finished with the computer can go to other work or to something related. It's more flexible." Staff report that the children's excitement about their work and the comfort level with the computers is high.

The model of computer use has proven successful enough that it is now being used in Burnaby's newest elementary school, South Slope Elementary, where two mini-banks of computers circulate among Primary, Intermediate, and classes for the hearing impaired. At South Slope, portable technology was chosen as an alternative to a lab.

Computer technology has changed rapidly, and more sophisticated portable equipment is now available. The students at South Slope have the benefits of an easy-to-use, mouse operated "graphical" interface in a full-featured computer no larger than a three-ringed binder.

The days of students' adapting to technology are numbered. As the miniaturization, sophistication, and reduction of prices for computer technology continue, we can expect to see more schools in which computers come to the students and adapt to their learning styles.

Tim Trivett is technology consultant in Burnaby School District.

KERRI JOE, BURNABY, PHOTO

Primary and Intermediate students at Burnaby's new South Slope Elementary School tap into portable computers at all times of the day and for all kinds of reasons. (Computers used: IBM N51)

GLOBAL NEWS

Nova Scotian elected vice-president of world's largest union

Greg O'Keefe, of Nova Scotia has been elected vice-president and chair of the finance committee of Education International, the largest union in the world.

O'Keefe, a past president of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), most recently served as vice-president of the World Council of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP). He was chief spokesperson for WCOTP during negotiations to set up the new union. The talks had been under way since the 1990 general assembly of WCOTP, when delegates voted to undertake a merger with the International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions (IFFTU).

WCOTP represented 120 national teacher organizations, including CTF and the National Education Association (NEA) of the U.S.A. IFFTU was a similar federation composed of 72 national teacher organizations.

At January meetings in Stockholm, both teacher organizations approved a new constitution, by-laws, and standing orders for Education International. Both assemblies ratified proposals and dissolved their respective organizations. The new organization is headquartered in Brussels.

BCTF Past-President Ken Novakowski and Executive Director Elsie McMurphy were in Stockholm for the final WCOTP general assembly and to witness this historic merger.

– Nancy Hinds

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP from page 16

halls was a treat. "I like Whiteside because I get to make new friends." "I like hot dog days." "We have a good computer room." "I see students helping one another." This first cross-grade meeting went very well. Enthusiasm and excitement buzzed in the staffroom. Kids stopped in the halls to read other posters and to show their ideas to playmates.

Some weeks later, we asked, not without trepidation, students to share the negative aspects of school life. We followed a similar process: class discussions followed by cross-grade meetings. Each student was invited to tell a story about a not so good day at Whiteside and share the need or wish underneath the statement.

Identifying the need was not easy, especially for younger students. On the other end, one Grade 7 teacher reported having to spend a couple of sessions to get to more serious comments. Initially, some of the students felt they needed a full-choice McDonald's menu for hamburger days at school. As before, the words were put on a mural posted in the hall.

To our surprise, our students identified *respect, friendship, caring, co-operation,* and *sharing* as their top five needs. We discovered that the students have many of the same needs we, the staff, do. The importance of inviting the students to express their needs cannot be underestimated. Rather than draw us apart, the identification of these needs brought us closer together.

The code was built around these five key needs. As throughout the process, we were careful to take the behavior code back to the students and parents. The code was shared at another student cross-grade meeting. We wanted the statements to come alive, so we asked each student to commit to one action for our upcoming Sports Day. For example, Jamie, a Grade 6 student, said, "I'm going to try to encourage other students even if they are running slowly." Colin, a Year 3 student, said, "I'm going to try to listen to the instructions at the different stations."

Outcomes

Sports Day proved to be more relaxing because many of the students knew each other fairly well. At our finishing kite-flying event, we saw younger and older students talking to one another and sharing kites—evidence that the cross-grade groupings have contributed to more positive interactions between our older and younger students. One teacher told us of a student arriving late because he had stopped to accompany his younger buddy, who had fallen. Teachers on duty reported enjoying it more because they knew a greater number of students by name. The principal and vice-principal found that fewer students were being sent to the office for fighting on the playground.

A parent wrote, "...I have found the atmosphere of the school to have improved dramatically, especially over the past year. Where conflicts were more likely to be settled with physical or verbal fighting, now I see the children using discussion more and more to resolve differences of opinion."

Key ideas

Three ideas gave us the organizational structures used throughout the project. First, we came to accept that change depends on ownership. If teachers, students, and parents have no part in creating rules, it is easy for rules to be misinterpreted, ignored, and defied. So we went to the teachers, the students, and the parents to solicit information and to hear their viewpoints.

Second, we acknowledged that change can come only when we describe the feelings underneath the problems. We used Allan and Nairne's Problem Solving Model (1989) to organize our many discussions. Third, many problems occur between students from different classrooms at recess and lunch. Therefore, we organized students into cross-grade groups because they needed to hear one another speak.

Remaining questions

Not all our problems are solved. Students are not always more polite during recess and lunch times. We do not have consistent rules and consequences in place as we had hoped. The odd fight still occurs between students. Students still don't feel they have a strong voice in decisions made around the school.

But we have made a strong beginning in creating a school in which we all are beginning to see how our actions contribute to a respectful learning and playing environment. We are excited. It has been a lot of work, but we feel we are on the right track to creating a more permanent, positive atmosphere at Whiteside.

Maria Medic a French immersion teacher at Whiteside Elementary School, in Richmond, is working on her master's degree in counselling psychology in education. John Allan is a professor in Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, UBC.

References are available upon request from the newsmagazine desk.

Salary Indemnity Plan: What is it, and what can you expect from it?

by Karen Harper

All federation members contribute 1.6% of salary as of September 1992 toward a wage-loss-replacement plan called the Salary Indemnity Plan. The plan provides income to ill members after all available sick leave is used. The plan has three parts: short-term; long-term: disabled from teaching; and long-term disabled from all occupations. All benefits are tax free.

At the end of December 1991, more than 821 teachers were in receipt of short- or long-term benefits; that's one in every 40 teachers. The plan fills a definite need, and it is important for teachers to be aware of the plan and what it offers.

Short-term benefits

Short-term benefits are available to any teacher who misses work because of illness and has no available sick leave. The benefits replace a portion of lost salary and contribute to the Superannuation Commission on the teachers' behalf to maintain full pensionable serve. The wage-loss benefit is between 60% and 50% of salary, depending on gross salary.

There is no waiting period for short-term benefits. A teacher can apply even if he/she misses only one day of salary because of illness. Short-term benefits are paid for a maximum of 120 working days for any one illness. Benefits are paid only during the school year, not during July and August. Application forms and more information are available through the Income Security Department of the BCTF.

Long-term benefits—general

If a teacher continues to be unable to work, because of an accident or illness, after the expiry of short-term benefits, he/she may apply for long-term benefits. A stricter medical adjudication pertains to long-term benefits. Long-term benefits are administered by the Great West Life Assurance Company according to the regulations adopted by the BCTF AGM.

Long-term benefits—disabled from teaching

If a teacher is considered to be disabled from teaching, benefits are payable for up to 12 calendar months, including July and August. As of September 1992, benefits are 65% of the first $25,000, 50% of the next $40,000, and 40% of any balance. There is no maximum-salary cap. The disabled member continues to earn the usual pensionable service.

Once accepted on the long-term portion of the plan, the teacher may return to other types of work, to a part-time teaching assignment, or to school to retrain on what is known as *rehabilitative employment*. The teacher must apply for permission to undertake such employment, and his/her doctor must support the activity. Benefits are offset by a part of employment earnings so that the teacher does not net more than 100% of salary.

Long-term benefits—disabled from all occupations

If, at the end of the first 12 months of long-term benefits, the teacher is still unable to return to teaching, the question then becomes Is he or she disabled from all occupations, or any gainful employment? Regulation 17.2 defines *gainful employment* as:

"Work which the member is medically able to perform and; (a) for which the member has the requisite qualifications by reason of education, training, or experience, and (b) which will provide a gross income of at least 60% of the pre-disability gross employment income within 5 years of starting the new employment, this income to be adjusted annually to reflect the cost of living allowance the member would have received since the date of disability." Thus, the teacher unable to teach because of a hearing problem, but who has accounting skills, might still be able to work in an accounting position. Such a person would be ineligible for further long-term benefits. The question is not whether the position is actually available, but whether the teacher is medically fit to do the work for which he/she has the necessary qualifications. This is probably the least understood part of the plan. Many teachers are unaware of the number of positions for which they could qualify, given their university education and job experiences. The ability to undertake part-time teaching of 60% or more would also invalidate further benefits.

Options for teachers who are not totally disabled, but who continue to be disabled from teaching:

1. Teacher's disability pension.
2. Unemployment insurance sickness benefits for up to 15 weeks if available.
3. Canada Pension Plan disability if available.
4. Working at another job until able to return to teaching.

Anyone who wishes more protection against being disabled from teaching only, can buy additional insurance (prior to becoming ill) through the various major insurance companies. Such coverage is costly.

If you have further questions on the plan contact your staff representative, your local association president, or BCTF income security staff.

SIP Exempt

The Salary Indemnity Plan has received an exemption from the provisions of the Financial Institutions Act. This means that the SIP is not required to meet the conditions imposed on insurance companies by the FIA, such as operating at a surplus. Specifically, it means a required levy of 1% of salary to eliminate the unfunded liability and create a surplus is no longer necessary.

The SIP will continue to report its financial status to the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. The plan continues to be evaluated twice yearly by an independent actuary to determine appropriate fee and benefits levels.

Help from income security

The Income Security Department has installed an answering machine to help staff deal with the plethora of calls received daily. The answering machine should help provide prompt and efficient service to members. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Karen Harper is the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan administrator.

Group RRSP coming

The federation has launched a group RRSP for its members. A partnership with Phillips, Hager, and North, investment counsellors, and Royal Trust, administrative services, has been established to offer teachers a variety of investment options.

Phillips, Hager and North, located in Vancouver, is known and respected for its conservative long-term approach to investing. Its performance results have been, and continue to be, outstanding. The BCTF invests its staff pension plan with Phillips, Hager and North, and a portion of the teachers' pension fund is also invested with them.

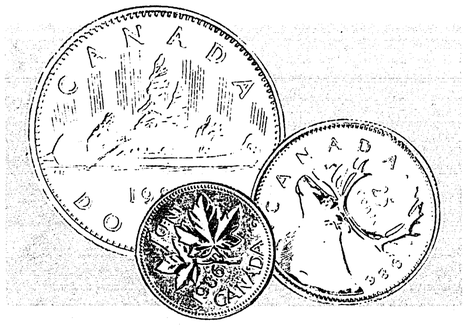
Royal Trust is the largest trust company in Canada.

Royal Trust's function in the RRSP will be to provide record keeping and reporting, safekeeping of stocks and bonds purchased on advice from Phillips, Hager and North, and offering a GIC (Guaranteed Investment Certificate) account insured by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC).

Detailed information will be available soon, with deposits accepted from September. Members will participate through monthly payroll deductions, providing an instant tax refund; contributions are deducted prior to income tax calculations. A participation agreement between the local association and the school board will be required.

The cost of running the plan will be borne by plan participants.

–Ken Smith



Pension fund in good health

B.C.'s auditor general continues to raise concerns that the public-sector pension plans are in financial trouble. In not reporting its unfunded pension liabilities, the government is distorting the financial picture of the province. Government's debt is greater than reported.

The unfunded liability in the Teachers' Pension Plan—assuming that the plan continues to enrol entrants and accept contributions from active teachers, i.e., on an on-going basis—is $1.9 billion. That sounds like a lot of money, but it must be kept in perspective; the ongoing assets are $5.7 billion. Therefore, the unfunded liability represents only 25% of the projected liabilities. This ratio makes the B.C. teacher pension plan one of the best funded teacher pension plans in Canada.

Another way of measuring the funding level in the plan is to assume that the plan is terminated—no new entrants and no further contributions. On this basis, the unfunded liability of $1.9 billion represents 41% of the established liabilities.

It is unclear which funding assumption the auditor general would like to see reported. From a plan member's perspective, it is important to know that both the federation and the government are aware of the unfunded liability, that they have been for decades, and that the plan is not in jeopardy. The unfunded liability arose from past insufficient contribution levels. In 1979 a deal was struck with government that increased teachers' contributions to 7.5%, with government's contributions fluctuating to maintain the unfunded liability as a constant percentage of teacher payroll. Unfortunately government has not fully kept its end of the bargain; and today it should increase its contribution rate by 1.5%.

The shortfall is part of the ongoing discussions with government.

Reminder

Teachers 64 years or older, or with at least 35 years of contributions to the Teachers' Pension Plan: enrolment in the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan, Long Term, is optional.

If you fit the above criteria and wish to withdraw from the long-term part of the plan, write or telephone the BCTF's Income Security Department for withdrawal application forms.

–Ken Smith

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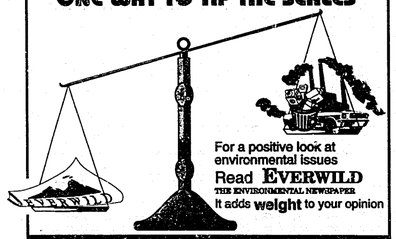

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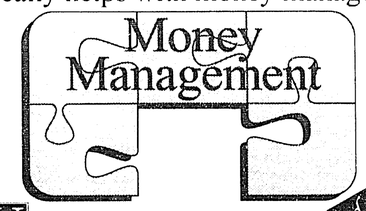

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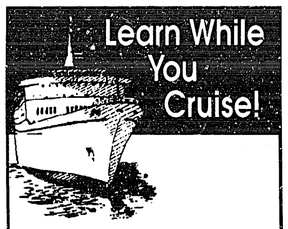

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NEW BEACHFRONT CONDO located on beautiful Rathtrevor Beach in Parksville, Vancouver Island. Large 2 bdrm., 2 bthrm. condo with all modern conveniences including gas fireplace and outdoor barbecue. Sleeps up to eight. Golf, horseback riding, hiking and fishing are minutes away for those who can tear themselves away from the warm waters and the hot sandy beach! For more information on weekend or summer rentals, phone 477-6825 or fax 388-5811.

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SAIL. B.C.'s Gulf Islands. Learn to Sail Cruises, crewed charters, etc. Discounts for teachers. Brochure: 3581 Country Club Drive, Nanaimo, BC (604) 758-1827.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND CHARTERS. 9 days on a 51 ft. sailboat, July – Aug. Spectacular scenery, old growth forests, visit ancient Haida villages. CYA cert. included. Reasonable rates, 892-7516.

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STANDING PEOPLE FARM, Denman Island. B & B, workshop and meditation space, hot tub, beach, woodland walks. Susan and Paul 335-0542.

KELOWNA–VICTORIA. Teacher attending UVic's summer session, wishes to exchange houses with Victoria family for 6–8 wks., July-Aug. Joanne L. 765-8685.

VANCOUVER. Studio apartment, self-contained, available weekends. Easter break and summer. Reasonable rate. Nelson 255-6410.

VANCOUVER. 3 bdrm. furnished house in Vancouver westside. July and August. $1200 per month. 876-4383.

SUBLET DALHOUSIE Campus, Halifax. May–June and/or July–August. 2 bdrm. furnished, security building, $700 per month. (604) 365-7438.

KELOWNA–VANCOUVER. Teacher needs rent/exchange, 2 bdrm. furnished condo (June), July, August, Kitsilano, Pt. Grey. No smoking, pets, children for same near beach/amenities, Kelowna. Phone 862-8256.

SUMMER SUBLET. Small, clean, 3 bdrm. home. Fleetwood area (Surrey). Large yd/patio, fruit trees & garden. July 1–Aug. 30. $750/month. Call Beverly 589-7761 (6–10 p.m.)

BURNABY. Completely remodelled 2 bdrm., 1750 sq.ft., 3 blocks south of new B.S. High School. Large kitchen, sundeck, ensuite, separate garage. Available May 1/93. N/S. $1135, call 432-6862 after 5 p.m.

HOUSESIT. Married Ontario home-owners want to housesit from April 93. Terms negotiable. Good with pets and gardens. 988-8517 (N.Van.) evenings.

VANCOUVER. False Creek luxury 1 bdrm. suite with spectacular city skyline and mountain view. Available from June 93–Aug. 93 for $1200 month. Call anytime (604) 738-7119. (Non-smokers please!)

VANCOUVER. Central Richmond: Lovely fully furnished 1 bdrm. apartment suite, July and/or August. $475. 279-1570

COQUITLAM. Spacious executive home on quiet cul de sac, 10-15 min. drive to SFU, available July 3–Aug. 24, $2000. 3 bdrms., guestroom. Very private yard, backs onto wooded parkland. Refs. required. Phone 464-2436, Fax 464-1142.

PORT ALBERNI. Luxury 3 bdrm. house on Sproat Lake. Available July/August. $1000/mo. or $300/week. Nonsmokers, references needed. 723-0925 (Bev).

DELTA. Comfortable family home in Tsawwassen available for rent during the summer. Quiet neighborhood, just minutes from beaches, ferry and US border. About 1/2 hour from UBC, N.S. No pets. Phone 948-1562.

VICTORIA. Comfortable 3 bdrm., 3 bthrm., family room, split-level in Gordon Head area. End of quiet cul-de-sac. Five min. from UVic. Fully fenced, private yard. All usual amenities plus a cat. Available July and August. $400/week or $1500/month. References and rental agreement required. Contact Noelle Clark or Roger Emery, 1870 Penshurst Rd., Victoria, BC V8N 2P3. 477-8894.

SHARE. Female teacher seeks room mate to share deluxe Vancouver condo, July–Aug. $450/month. 431-7859.

PARKSVILLE. Beautiful large 2 bdrm. furnished house, July/Aug. Big yard. Close to beach and ocean. Well located. Utilities included. $850/mo. Sorry no pets. (604) 248-1041 (even.)

SUNNY OKANAGAN. Fully furnished family home, fenced backyard with pool. Available for July. Quiet rural setting close to all amenities, beaches, lakes, golf and bike trails. Non-smokers, no pets. $700/week. Write House, RR1, S14, C9, Oliver, BC V0H 1T0.

VANCOUVER. 3 bdrm. west-side house, 10 min. to UBC, beach. July 3–July 24. $900. 734-4685.

WHITE ROCK. Teacher's luxury condo, 2 bdrm & den. Available 6 weeks during summer. 4 blocks to beach! $1200. 535-7317.

VICTORIA. Waterview 2 bdrm. home adult oriented. N/P, N/S. 15 min. from university. July $800 utilities included. Aug. negotiable. References. 727-6747.

NORTH VANCOUVER. 3 bdrm. home near Grouse Mtn. from July 15 – Aug. 15. $1400. Clean, tidy, non-smokers. Call 988-4227.

SHARE. Wanted: Female, UVic summer school student, N/S, to share quiet waterfront home. Close to university. Some meals provided. $750/month. Phone 477-7549 (evenings).

SOUTH SURREY. Ocean Park house, 2 bdrm, L.R.-D.R., sunroom, decks, F.P., 5 appliances. Quiet location, 1 block to transp. From July 1 for 6 months to 1 year – your choice. N/S. No pets, suit working couple. $895/month includes utilities. Ph. (604) 531-1082.

NORTH VANCOUVER. 3 bdrms., 2 bthrm., view home renting July 1–Aug. 20, Delbrook area, 30 min. to UBC & SFU. $2000 for 7 weeks. Non-smokers/no pets. Daryl Samson 987-4701 (W), 985-5301.

OKANAGAN. 2 bdrm. home, 12' x 34' deck, 112' private beach, 100' wharf. 937-3095 (Coquitlam).

VANCOUVER. 3 bdrm. home near UBC for 1 week periods July/Aug., $500/week. Call Sherry 228-9697.

VANCOUVER. 2 bdrm. furnished townhouse on UBC campus. July 1 – Aug. 20, $1600. 224-1831.

VANCOUVER. Summer at UBC/SFU? Central location, 1 bdrm. apartment available July 1–Aug. 31. Five min. to UBC, beaches, downtown. N/S, no pets. $630/month includes hydro. ($200 damage deposit.) Call (604) 739-3881.

CENTRAL RICHMOND. Summer studies at UBC/SFU? Sublet this deluxe 2 bdrm. condo. July 1–Aug. 31. Fireplace, in-suite laundry, stereo, microwave; pool, squash court, sauna, hot tubs! Walk to shopping, parks, cinema. 30–40 min. drive to UBC/SFU. Cost: $2000 plus $250 damage deposit. Sorry, N/S, no pets. 273-0966.

PARKSVILLE BEACHFRONT. Rent for next school year. New 2 bdrm., 2 bthrm. condo. 275-5573, 273-3756.

COQUITLAM. Fully furnished 1 bdrm. townhouse available for July. Includes use of MacPlus, French reference books. 15 min. from SFU. $600 plus damage deposit. References required. Phone 520-5780.

BURNABY. 3 bdrm. townhouse to sublet July and August, 5 min. from SFU. $625/month plus damage deposit. 421-6073.

EXCHANGE: English teacher wishes to exchange family home near Oxford for all or part Aug. 93 for similar in Vancouver area. Contact Alan 272-4034 p.m. (Richmond).

MILL BAY. Furnished executive waterfront home, 3 bdrms., 3 bthrms. Easy access to safe swimming beach and boating. Rowboat and mooring buoy available. Close to shopping and 45 min. to UVic. Available for summer school, July 4–28. $1250 or rates available by the week. N/S (604) 743-9491.

VANCOUVER. Studio apartment, furnished, balcony, mountain view, swimming pool. Close to shops and bus routes, 5 min. to downtown. June 27–July 30, $300/week, $1000/month. 926-6957.

EXCHANGE: house in Winfield for house on sunshine coast of Queensland. November to March 766-2530.

HOUSESITTER WANTED. Single wanted for newly renovated house very close UBC, July/August, N/S, No pets. 224-6447.

VANCOUVER. Room for rent on UBC campus. Sunny, furnished, shared laundry & kitchen. Female, N/S, no pets. Phone 222-3389 leave message. $375/month (includes utilities).

WANTED TO RENT: Waterfront cabin on Savory, one week in August. Call Sherry 228-9697.

HOUSESIT. Kelowna teaching couple would like to care for your home while they attend SFU, July 6–27. Call Gilles Leclerc 762-3209 (S), 762-8905 (H).

TEACHER EXCHANGE: Wanted – Teachers to act as English assistants in both elementary and secondary school placements in CIS (Moscow, St. Petersburg). Room and board and honorarium are provided. 5–10 months. For more information, call Victoria–Judy 595-0946 or Harry at 721-2320. This program is sponsored by the Russian Ministry of Education under the auspices of the Russian firm TACT (Tutoring Assistance Knowledge Travelling).

GALE (Gay/Lesbian educators) meets at BCTF building, 7:30 p.m., May 12, June 9. New members welcome. Call 688-0924.

REUNION. Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary or Surrey High School. June 5. Call 574-7407 for more information.

PENPALS. Canadian penpals wanted, all ages. Contact Emmanuel N. Coleman, c/o Mark Quansah, PO Box 73, Manbessim, C/R, Ghana, W. Africa.

CHILDCARE AVAILABLE. For July & August at UBC daycare, 3-5 year old. Call Sandra. 228-0309.

CONFERENCE B.C.'s Quality School Conference "Creating Quality in Your School." with William Glasser and the Quality School Faculty. Key themes: Lead management, self esteem, self direction, non-conflictive environments, curriculum, control theory, quality teaching/quality learning. Burnsview Jr. Secondary School, Delta, May 14–15, '93. Contact Anne Fitzgerald 536-4200.

GANDHI ESSAY AWARD 1993. SFU Institute for the Humanities, in co-operation with the India Club of Vancouver and the Thakore Charitable Foundation, awards annual prizes for essays written on the theme of Peace, Justice and Human Rights. The awards committee asks you to reflect on the influence or contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to these causes. 1993 essay topic: "Imagine a society in B.C. and in Canada, 25 years from now, in which some of Gandhi's insights have been acted upon to create a just, secure and egalitarian society for recent immigrants, the population of longer standing, and First Nations people." Contact Trish Graham 291-5855 for more information.

PD CALENDAR

APRIL

29 Surrey. Surrey Support Services Teachers' Display. Surrey Conference Centre (formerly Kwantlen College).

30 Vancouver. B.C. English Teachers' Association Spring Conference, Student Union Building, UBC. Contact Kathy Puharish, Johnston Heights, 381-5500, F: 583-9286.

30 Vancouver. Open evening with Malcolm Parlett, Ph.D., editor of British Gestalt Journal, speaking on "The Role of Support: How To Avoid Burnout and Survive Everyday Life—A European Perspective." $16. 19:30, Christ Church Cathedral, 690 Burrard Street, Vancouver. Contact 925-2012

30 Vancouver. B.C. English Teachers' Association Spring Conference, Student Union Building, UBC. Contact Kathy Puharich, Johnston Heights, 581-5500, F: 583-9286.

30–May 2 Burnaby. Congres de l'APPIPC '93, "Fiers de notre carriere." SFU. Contact Gloria Gietz, Reynolds Secondary School, 393 Borden, Victoria, BC V8P 3H9, 478-3110, F: 479-6677.

30–May 2 Edmonton. "Multi-faceted Learners," conference of the English Language Arts Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, Hotel Macdonald. Contact Wendy Mathieu, 43 Grandin Woods Estates, St. Albert, AB T8N 2Y4, (403) 459-3363.

MAY

5–8 Regina. Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts conference. Contact John F. McGuinness, 12725 56th Avenue, Surrey, BC V3X 2Y7, 596-5315.

7 Nanaimo. Community Connections, Multicultural Education Conference and Resource Fair, Malaspina College. Contact Anne MacMillan, 754-8746, or Jo Anne Blackman, 753-6911.

14–15 Delta. Glasser Quality Schools Conference. Phone 536-4200.

14–16 Manning Park. Environmental Educators' PSA conference. Contact Deborah Davies, H: 537-4797, S: 537-9944, F: 5637-9512.

27–28 Vancouver. "Supporting yourself while supporting others," two one-day workshops by Mark Sweet, Ph.D., sponsored by CBI [Creating Integrated Options for Persons with Disabilities] Consultants, Ltd. Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street, Vancouver. $95. Contact CBI, 251-1057 (telephone/fax).

29–31 Toronto. International Conference on Co-operative Learning, "Learning Together," Radisson Hotel. Contact Anne Low or Kemp Rickett, F: (416) 393-1062.

JUNE

18 Prince George. "Solutions to School Violence: Transforming Violence into Co-operation." Contact The Co-operative Leadership Institute of Canada, 210-2 Renaissance Square, New Westminster, BC V3M 6K3, P/F: 522-0525.

10–13 Vancouver. Biennial Children and Youth with Developmental Motor Disabilities conference, "Transitions," Hotel Vancouver. Contact Venue West, Ltd., 645-375 Water Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5C6, 681-5226, F: 681-2503.

JULY

2–5 Cowichan Lake. Annual conference of the Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators' Association, Cowichan Lake Education Centre. Keynoter: Milt McClaren; panel on aboriginal fishing rights. Contact Lisa Thompson, Box 22, Whaletown, BC V0P 1Z0, 935-6375.

3–4 Vancouver. "Solutions to School Violence: Transforming Violence into Co-operation," University of British Columbia. Contact UBC Distance Education, S22-2013, F: S22-2015.

12–16 Victoria. Advanced Placement Institute (English literature), Camosun College, Victoria, BC V8P 5J2. Contact Dr. Jim Sexton, chair, English Department, 370-3352, F: 370-3662.

31–August 5 Waterloo. 7th Biennial Gender and Science and Technology Conference, University of Waterloo, Ontario. Contact conference chair Ann Holmes, Ontario Women's Directorate, 480 University Avenue, 2nd floor, Toronto, ON M5G 1V2, (416) 597-4587, F: (416) 597-4594.

AUGUST

23–24 Richmond and Abbotsford. "Solutions to School Violence: Transforming Violence into Co-operation." Contact The Co-operative Leadership Institute of Canada, 210-2 Renaissance Square, New Westminster, BC V3M 6K3, P/F: 522-0525.

30–31 Cranbrook. "Solutions to School Violence: Transforming Violence into Co-operation." Contact The Co-operative Leadership Institute of Canada, 210-2 Renaissance Square, New Westminster, BC V3M 6K3, P/F: 522-0525.

OCTOBER

14–15 Richmond. Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association Conference, "The ABCs in '93," Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre, Richmond. Contact Paul Wood, Box 634, 7726 McCallum View, Grand Forks, BC V0H 1H0, H: 442-3330, S: 442-2135.

15–16 Kelowna. B.C. Teacher Librarians' Association annual conference, Capri Hotel. Contact Marjorie Buckham, Rutland Junior Secondary School, 715 Rutland Road, Kelowna, BC V1X 3B6. H: 765-2706, S: 765-2988, F: 765-7092.

15–16 Vancouver. B.C. Association of Teachers of Modern Languages annual conference, Hotel Vancouver. Contact Graham Mulligan, H: 536-0047, S: 590-2255, F: 590-2588.

15–16 Vancouver. Conference and AGM of the B.C. Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children in B.C., Pacific Pallisades Hotel. Contact Patricia Clough, H: 832-6341, S: 832-2157, F: 832-9428.

15–17 Cortes Island. Workshop for teachers facilitated by Judith Martin, Hollyhock Farm. Contact Box 127, Manson's Landing, Cortes Island, BC V0P 1K0, 935-6533.

28–30 Vancouver. TRI-TESOL IV, "Beyond Borders," Sheraton Landmark Hotel. Co-sponsored by the Association of British Columbia Teaches of English as an Additional Language, Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, and the Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages. Contact TEAL, 177-4664 Lougheed Highway, Burnaby, BC V5C 5T5, 294-TEAL (8325), F: 294-TELL (8355).

NOVEMBER

5–6 Vancouver. Computer Using Educators of B.C. fall conference, "Don't Leave the 20th Century Without It," Hyatt Regency Hotel. Contact Sharon Koshman, H: 266-9916, S: 594-3484.

25–27 Vancouver. Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism, A Vision for the Future: Equality, Equity, and Empowerment, Hotel Vancouver. Sponsored by The Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education, provincial affiliates, and the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada. Contact Sam Fillipoff, 731-8121, F: 731-4891.

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LEADERSHIP

School creates homegrown solution to school tone

by Maria Medic and John Allan

November

An elementary school: 478 students, 24 teachers, 6 support staff, 2 administrators, and the rainy, grey month of November. We heard teachers say, "The students have no respect when we are on duty. They are so lippy. Older students bop younger students on the head as they walk down the hall. What are the rules around here anyway? We need clearer rules and consistent consequences!"

We heard our students say, "The older students are always on the Adventure Playground when it's our turn. When we play hockey, the older boys take away the ball."

March

We hear eight-year-old Meghan saying, "I would like to come to the School Tone Discussions, because I have lots of ideas on how to help Whiteside become a better place to be." Seven-year-old Dylan: "I just really want to come."

April 27

Teachers, students, parents and support staff huddled in mixed groups talking with each other about what they like about the school and what might be different.

These three snapshots are glimpses of how our school, Whiteside Elementary, in Richmond, is engaging in a process of change from the old (we the teachers felt hassled, stressed and discouraged at times, and our students felt a lack of control), to the new (our students feel more included and we feel more encouraged). The process has been exciting, unchartered, and hard work, and it remains unfinished.

In November 1991, when the complaints arose about supervision and inconsistent rules, we did as all modern teaching staffs do: we struck a committee. We knew creating more rules or even clearer rules to be a deceptive goal. Rather, we wanted to create a climate in which individuals could see the need and would want to follow the rules. We made some decisions early.

First, drawing inspiration from an article "Preventive discipline: A parent-teacher coalition" (Nugent, 1991) describing teachers and parents coming together to elaborate a code of behavior for their school, we decided to set aside April 27 for a teacher-parent discussion on behavior.

Second, we decided to adapt the procedure described in the article to suit our needs.

Third, we decided to invite Sabina Harper, a district teacher-consultant, to assist us as a facilitator. A crucial member of the committee, she recorded our ideas, synthesized them, shaped them into lesson plans, and facilitated teacher and parent discussions. Without her, our ideas may have become crushed by our daily duties.

The rest of our process was then unknown, left to unfold by April 27. We wound up designing a step, reflecting, collecting information, and then creating the next step. We would not alter this aspect of the project. This reflective and responsive process is at the heart of change, and as teachers know, there are no magical solutions to improving something as complex as school climate.

Involving all members of the Whiteside community

On April 27, 25 teachers, 10 parents, 27 students, and our support staff (two lunch-hour supervisors, two secretaries, and day custodian) met to discuss how to make Whiteside a better place. In the morning, mixed groups of 8 to 10 people drafted statements about what we want behavior at Whiteside to look like. In the afternoon, the teachers took the draft statements and came up with the following behavior guidelines:

At Whiteside, we respect ourselves and each other. We take responsibility for our own behavior. We try our best to:

- speak and behave in a positive, friendly, and caring way to and about one another.
- take time to listen to one another.
- accept one another's feelings and individual differences.
- ask for help, guidance, and support in order to arrive at a solution where everyone wins.
- honor people's personal space in which to learn and play safely.
- reach out beyond good friends.
- contribute to the working atmosphere by arriving on time, and by using quiet voices and quiet feet.
- look after school and others' property.

Nothing new here. The difference lies in the way the guidelines came about.

Including the student body

Prior to our including parents, students were directly involved in shaping a new climate at Whiteside.

Each teacher asked his/her students to describe a positive day at Whiteside. Specifically, "What does a good day at Whiteside look like, feel like and sound like?" After the class brainstorm, each student wrote his/her favorite idea on a strip of paper.

Days later, the students met in their cross-grade teams. Younger students were paired with older buddies. After sharing their positive statements, students glued them onto a mural that decorated the halls.

Walking down the school

See SCHOOL LEADERSHIP page 11

MARIA MEDIC PHOTOS

Cross-grade teams of students joined with teachers and parents at Richmond's Whiteside Elementary School to write a new philosophy and create a more caring, inclusive school environment. (No off-the-shelf solutions for this school.)