

# Teacher

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### TEACHERS' STORIES

## Turn up the volume on life in schools



by Elaine Decker

**"T**eachers should speak out more than they have in the past about education issues of concern to the public" say 83% of British Columbians responding to a survey conducted by the BCTF in early spring.

For President Ray Worley, this result confirms the decision of the Executive Committee to begin a comprehensive communications strategy about public education. "We know from previous research that teachers have credibility as speakers on education. We know, too, that our members feel frustrated that the good work they do in the classroom every day is overshadowed by reports of conflict about bargaining, or discussions with government. And we know that teachers are sick and tired of so-called 'experts' telling them what to do to cure the ills of society. BCTF members want their organization to speak out positively about education, and they want an opportunity to tell their own story," Worley said. "The polling data suggests that if teachers do tell their own story, the public will believe it."

The Annual General Meeting, in adopting the Leadership Report, directed the federation to increase emphasis on strategies to promote public education, and "solutions to school-based issues," says President-Elect Alice McQuade. McQuade wants to put a human face on the BCTF and build its

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— Ray Worley  
BCTF president

reputation as an advocate for public education. "We know this process will be a long one, but we believe it will build morale among our members and build confidence in public education."

The first "story tellers" were a group of teacher writers who committed a Saturday in February to work with Capilano College instructor and journalist Leslie Savage,

developing the technique, and sharing story ideas. *Teacher* Editor Nancy Hinds has already seen the benefit of this investment in teacher talent. "Some of these writers covered the AGM for the newsmagazine, others have accepted assignments to write about PD events and conferences, and several have made commitments to write for their local bulletins or for PSA publications. They're skilled, energetic, and confident about their subject matter: public education." Watch for these bylines in future issues: Rosemary Bradford, Windermere; Kathleen Cherry, Kitimat; Ravi Gill, Nisga'a; Kathy Gotto,

(Above)  
Images  
from the  
well-  
received  
Working TV  
cable show  
"Integration/  
Mainstreaming"  
tell the story of life  
in our schools.



### Can't put Teacher down

I'm reading the March 1994 *Teacher* that arrived today. I must send you and all involved in putting this publication together a very big congratulations. It's simply excellent in every respect: providing information, anticipating needs or issues, pointing out directions, and all the while holding support for teachers and enthusiasm for all involved in education up high.

Juaneva Smith  
Campbell River

### Taking exception to "Homophobia = Violence"

I am a B.C. teacher, and I appreciate the informative and interesting articles that you bring to us through the *Teacher*, and the encouraging news and experiences that are shared by educators.

The article on homophobia concerns me deeply, however, as it attempts to label those who think that homosexuality is neither a natural nor a healthy lifestyle violent and hateful individuals. I am a caring individual who is concerned that students struggling with their identity, possibly because of dysfunctional families or abusive past experiences, may be labelled gay when their real needs may be for counselling and support while they work things out.

My question is How are these students so sure that they are gay or lesbian? If someone feels an attraction to The Incredible Hulk, is he therefore gay? Let us not make the mistake of pushing these individuals into this stereotype.

The author of this article makes an ominous statement in saying that without compliance to the goals of the gay agenda in our school system, "gay and lesbian youth will continue to have poor academic performance and drop out of school. More children will be forced to live on the streets and prostitute themselves to survive. More will attempt or successfully commit suicide." I do not

believe that my disagreement with the gay lifestyle will lead children to live out on the streets. On the contrary, I do what I can to help students achieve success in their lives. I believe this is the stance of many others. Although we do not agree with homosexuality, please do not label us uncaring. I, too, will sign this letter Anonymous because of fears that I do not stand politically correct on my views and may thus be judged!

### Teachers' mettle shines in Anahim

As long as I can remember, I have been awed by the teaching profession. The dedication, unselfishness, and professionalism displayed by educators makes me proud to be one. Though some would argue that much has changed because of the imposition of the "union model" on educational professionals, teachers are still entering the profession for the same reasons and conducting themselves according to their principles. Teachers in Anahim Lake are no different.

After 13 years as a classroom teacher, I accepted a position as the principal of a small elementary/junior secondary school in September 1993. In early February 1994, I sustained a back injury that rendered me bedridden for more than a month. During that time, the staff at our school displayed their mettle. Not only did they handle their assignments with aplomb, but they all chipped in to support the two teachers sharing the teacher-in-charge duties. These superb professionals all handled more than their share of duties, and I never once heard a complaint.

This is only one of countless examples of educators' unselfishly giving of themselves for the sake of others. I will never tire of being honored to be a part of and praising this worthy profession.

Allen Campsall  
Anahim Lake

### Opportunity in the bargaining crisis

Now that we've had a cooling off period since the announcement about provincial bargaining, let's stand back and assess the situation. We have heard most of the concerns. I hate to admit it, but there may be some major benefits for teachers if we do go to provincial bargaining. To the bargaining table we could bring:

- Transfer of seniority and sick days for teachers changing districts. Right now, an experienced teacher starts off at the bottom when going to a new district.
- Cross-province job bidding with a formula for hiring based on qualification and experience. Our present system seems to work against experienced teachers at maximum or holding a masters degree.
- A bargaining *dream team* able to use good things from existing contracts around the province.
- Stability. We would not have those ugly situations caused by *school boards from hell* affecting our members.

Maybe I am naive, maybe just an optimist, but with provincial bargaining, I see we have more to gain than lose.

Gordon Robinson  
Revelstoke

### Teachers must tackle homophobia

The article "Homophobia at school—violence and hatred," with its quotes from gay and lesbian students, is a poignant indicator of the discrimination, isolation, and fear felt by this part of our student body. How trying it must be to be constantly alert, never knowing whom to trust completely. Imagine instead being in a school where all gays and lesbians, teachers as well as students, could be forthright about issues of sexuality. Imagine the strength and pride homosexual students would feel having teacher role models in their daily lives. As educators, we have an obligation to treat all students equally, accepting

them for who they are, and responding to their needs to learn in a safe and respectful environment. If the environment were safe and respectful enough, maybe gay and lesbian teachers would no longer have to fear discrimination and disdain at school.

All teachers' words, actions, and attitudes around homosexuality influence students, who go on to influence society. We have the ability as well as the responsibility to shape an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance. So let's look at how to offer genuine and effective support to one another. The empowerment of all our students will be a natural consequence.

Nancy Hawkins  
Vancouver

### Allan Bacon "Right On"

I agree with Bacon (March 1994) that "the voice of the critics is over-whelming" and that it's "demoralizing teachers." So I'd like to share a positive event at our school that even brought in the media. For Freedom To Read Week, Ann Alma came to our district. She read from her novel *Skateway to Freedom*, enlightened us on what her life is like now (she taught school before quitting to become a writer), and helped students with ideas for new stories. She even played her drum to put us in the mood.

The local TV station taped the presentation. CBC's program *Daybreak* interviewed Alma.

She created excitement about reading, writing, and activities, from comparative studies of *Skateway to Freedom* and *From Anna* to projects on likenesses and differences between cultures. (Alma talked about her stays in Japan and Indonesia as well as her country of origin, Holland.) We got a better understanding of starting over again and of ESL. *Skateway to Freedom's* main character re-gains her new life through skating and determination; we have to be just as determined to get our messages out.

Penny Hasell  
Prince Rupert

### Getting Inclusion straight

We at the B.C. Association for Community Living were pleased to see your special issue on integration (*Teacher*, March 1994). In particular, we appreciated Larry Kuehn's sensitive and informative article about the history of inclusion. However, we would like to point out that one of the misconceptions the public holds in relation to inclusion stems from a lack of differentiation between those students who were previously segregated from the mainstream and those students who were always included, but who were previously *unidentified*.

Such is the case with the category "students with severe behavior problems" whom Kuehn points to as the biggest unresolved problem for teachers in integration. Students with severe behavior problems may or may not have been previously segregated. Our guess is that some will have a *special needs* label; others will have never been identified as requiring specialized supports.

We believe inclusion has created greater awareness of those unidentified students who also need supports. A backlash against integration, however, will likely target previously segregated students, rather than students who have always been in the mainstream.

We would also like to recognize teachers and the B.C. Teachers' Federation, for their support regarding inclusion in the regular classroom. We look forward to the time when all students and teachers will receive the supports they need in a truly inclusive classroom setting.

Again, thank you for your special issue on integration.  
Maria Squance  
Chairperson,  
BCACL Education Committee

### Write to us

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

# Have a super summer!

## TQS hits 25

The Teacher Qualification Service (TQS)—the longest running joint venture ever undertaken by the BCTF and the BCSTA—celebrated 25 years of service in February 1994.

During 1968, the senior officers and staff of the BCTF and BCSTA agreed to create the TQS as an independent, jointly funded society charged with evaluating the academic and professional qualifications of teachers for salary

purposes. The evaluation service would be advisory only: school boards and associations would decide, individually and independently, whether or not they wanted to use the new system.

The creation of the TQS in 1969 was a *first* in North America.

The Teacher Qualification Board has steadily sought to provide a fair, objective, and consistent evaluation service. The success of the service is

largely attributable to the members of the board (nominees of the BCTF and BCSTA and the chairperson) and the TQS staff.

The service has evaluated the documents of more than 100,000 teachers. Its classification structure and evaluation service have been consistently used by every school board and local association as the basis for local salary schedules. And, on the administrative side, the organization has met its

budget every year.

The initial evaluation principles and procedures, although amended to recognize changes in teacher-preparation programs and developments in the school system, have served the organization well. The rules have stood the test of time.

The TQB has chosen its chairpersons wisely. Art Kratzmann, Chris Taylor, Stewart Graham, Art Holmes, and Stewart Martin have fulfilled the role with distinction. Each in his own

fashion displayed the necessary blend of patience, tact, good sense, and firmness required to direct the affairs of the board and the office. The current chairperson, James Cairnie, former BCTF staff person, strives to match their style.

The TQS is a rather special example of long-term co-operation between the BCTF and BCSTA, not matched in any other area in which the two organizations share an interest.

### Changing secondary school project

April 16 wrapped up a year of teacher discussion about secondary education in B.C. Funded by a ministry grant, the BCTF's Changing Secondary School Project has resulted in over 100 recommendations to government on secondary education. Twenty-four teachers led close to 60 discussion groups and distilled volumes of feedback into the final report, which was sent to the Ministry of Education at the end of May. Topping the list of concerns in the report is assessment/evaluation/reporting, specifically the role of provincial examinations. Teachers spoke on both sides of the issue.

We are grateful to all the associate teachers and staff involved.

Contact Wayne Rowley or Betty Goto at the BCTF for the report.

### What's up in your local?



### The globe comes to Golden

Golden recently enjoyed its second annual Global Week (March 14-19), in honor of the United Nations' "Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination" (March 21), reports Laurie MacDougall, an ESL teacher at Golden Secondary School. (See photo above.)

The community came together to talk, listen, laugh, and celebrate a global evening. Events throughout the week included a school-based, teacher-organized, community global fair, the theme of which was "One Human Family," in recognition of the Year of the Family. The fair boasted 15 displays of Golden's cultures. Along with the displays, the 100+ visitors enjoyed a multi-cultural fashion show, an international taster table, East Indian dancing, a chapati-making demonstration, and a Tai Chi show. Involved in this event were students of all ages, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members.

We are proud of our diversity and intend to honor it in as many ways as we can.

### Social studies à la Langley

ada is a political experiment that the whole world can learn from," said Thomas Berger, former B.C. Supreme Court Judge and human and native rights activist, as he opened the May Langley Social Studies Teachers' Association full-day student conference, *Social Perspectives on the Future of Canada*. More than 250 senior students attended with their teachers and participated in 14 workshops with such divergent themes as racism, NAFTA, violence, immigration, urbanization, First Nations, civil disobedience, the role of media, the role of Quebec, and the future of social programs. Conference convenor Ken Novakowski commended the many participants for their efforts and enthusiasm "which enhance the role of social studies in our schools."

The conference was organized through efforts of Peter Adams, George Clulow, Vaughan McCormick, Ken Novakowski, Peter Owens, and Barrie Southam, and a host of teacher and student volunteers. (A longer article on the conference, written by Gavin Hainsworth, will appear in the September issue of *Teacher*.)

### Salut VESTA!

In April, the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association executive approved the creation of a new French immersion and Programme Cadre section. This designation allowed the local specialist chapter of the APPIPC (Association provinciale des professeurs d'immersion et du Programme Cadre) to be represented at the meetings of the VESTA executive. Immersion and Cadre teachers welcome this new opportunity to share with their colleagues.



BCTF president-elect, Alice McQuade (third from right), boards a six-seater plane to visit teachers in the Stikine. "Here goes," she says. "This is the only option if I'm to get back before school's out."

### Defend local bargaining update

Activists and members from around the province continue to lobby MLAs on teacher-bargaining legislation. The purpose of the lobby is to make known to our representatives our fundamental opposition to government's announced intention to introduce two-tiered provincial bargaining. Teacher representatives are most fearful that a new province-wide system will strip hard-won provisions from local agreements and remove any effective mechanism for resolving issues that remain at local tables.

Government refuses to provide legislative assurances that there will be no contract stripping. At the same time, government seems unprepared to preserve the local right to strike on issues that remain at the local level. In addition to the lobby, province-wide media ads were featured at the end of

May to make known to the public our positions on these important issues.

The federation has also scheduled a Special Representative Assembly for late August to plan our next course of action.

Contact your MLAs to make him/her aware of your opposition and concerns about government bargaining legislation. Local officers and offices will be happy to give you details.

—Al Cornes

### Annual APPIPC conference: Fêtons en grand!

For every season, there is a time to celebrate and a time to reflect. There was plenty of evidence of both activities as the APPIPC PSA (Association provinciale des professeurs d'immersion et du Programme Cadre) held its annual conference April 28, 29, and 30, at Simon Fraser University. Realizing the paucity of PD opportunities in French and despite the struggle to secure funds for the conference,

## Your federation inside out

### Building bugs

by Berniece Stuart

As you are no doubt aware, we are no longer the "Burrard Street staff" but your "6th and Ash staff." We moved into a spanking new building in March and are still getting the bugs out of our new digs. The heating and cooling system has entered the

technological age. Nothing as archaic as turning a thermostat up or down. Some higher power knows the exact temperature at which we will be comfortable. Consequently, when an icy draft wafted down my neck during an Executive Committee meeting, I had absolutely no one to holler at. "It's computerized!" said the maintenance staff. "Monday morning will be warmer." In

anticipation of another chilly meeting the following Saturday, I wore a fleece-lined sweatshirt, and by 11:00 in the morning, the room temperature was well over 23° C. We were unaware that we had to press the *comfort zone* button. Little by little, we're learning.

We have a balcony off the staffroom, with a wonderful view, but the city inspector has padlocked the door. Apparently a design flaw in the railing needs to be

corrected, and the city will get to the permit when it gets to the permit. We should have access to the balcony no later than November.

A space specifically designed in the staffroom for our microwave oven was built too high for anyone under 5'5". The shorties on staff object to having hot soup spill over them as they remove a bowl from the microwave.

A design flaw in my office makes it difficult for me to finish blow-drying my hair and

answer my phone at the same time. Given my close attention to careful grooming, this is a particularly frustrating oversight.

Don't get me wrong—we love our new workspace. It's light and airy, and so far no one has been trapped long by the security system. Drop in, and see for yourself.

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

**Teacher**

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STORIES from page 1

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Also taking up the writing challenge are PSA leaders and local presidents. Worley explains, "Many teacher leaders tell us they are not short of ideas or skills, just short of time. We've tried to address that problem in our communications strategy by purchasing a day of release time for a teacher for research and writing, or preparing background material for a local president to customize or embellish." Cindy Gautier's article (back page of the April newsmagazine) on the school counsellors' role in reducing violence was the result of such BCTF support. Likewise the publication of articles in the *Northern Sentinel*, by Kitimat District Teachers' Association President Lydia Picucha, and *The Record*, by Vancouver Island West President Linda Willis. Picucha thanked the BCTF for the background material, saying "it helps the small locals as well as profiles education more in our community."

Media expert Michael Pertschuk advises that "no contemporary-issue advocate can afford to ignore or to be inept on television," but doesn't address the serious barrier created by the cost of the electronic media. The

BCTF has found a cost-effective alternative in *Working TV*, a by-labour, about-labour cable television program. Producer Julius Fisher explains that a program like *Working TV* is necessary to balance the virtual blackout of labour stories and labour issues on mainstream television. Although the show is only on the cable system now, Fisher says, "The channel surfing habits created by the advent of the remote control make it more likely that viewers will cruise past the cable stations, and if they see a show about something interesting to

**"No contemporary-issue advocate can afford to ignore or to be inept on television."**

—Michael Pertschuk

them, with high production values, they'll stay tuned."

Fisher is pleased with the success of *Working TV's* first year, and the participation of high-profile unions like the Hospital Employees' Union, Canadian Auto Workers, and the B.C. Teachers' Federation. Teachers, too, are pleased to see their working lives honestly represented on television. The pilot programs featured teachers in Surrey, Vancouver, and Peace River South, working to integrate students with special needs. Future shows will include segments on media education, safe and healthy schools, career prep/work experience, and valuing diversity.

"We negotiated the right to duplicate segments of the program on video," says Alice McQuade, "so that we could use the pieces with parent groups or in PD sessions. Eventually, of course, we'd like to see *Working TV* on prime time."

Members will see the BCTF name in other prime locations. Federation sponsorship of educational events and projects is part of building our advocate reputation. Initiatives funded by the BCTF include the Dorothy Livesay Prize for Poetry, an evening of *Mamu: the currency of life*, power play by Headlines Theatre, Open Learning Agency films on victims of violence, and a Knowledge Network multi-media project on violence prevention. Other reading-related projects are being considered for the next budget year.

"As a union of professionals, we try to balance our commitment to improving the working lives of our members, and improving the standards of our profession," Ray Worley concludes. "Our communications strategy is designed to help people appreciate the whole work of the teacher in the classroom, and in the federation."

Elaine Decker is communications officer and director of the BCTF's Organization Support Division.

**Wanna watch Working TV? Tune in to Rogers Cable on the first Saturday of each month at 19:30. The show is rebroadcast the subsequent Sunday at 20:30, Monday at 15:00, and Thursday at 21:00.**

## Reflections by a president returning to the classroom



KAREN KILBRIDE PHOTO

"You're going back to the classroom?" I don't know how many times I've heard that in the past six months. By January, it was general knowledge that I wasn't seeking re-election at the AGM in March. The president's term ends June 30, so I've had plenty of time lately for reflection on my five years as a full-time table officer (three years as first vice-president and two years as president).

There have been many highlights. The best part of the job has been visiting teachers at local meetings, rallies, picket lines, and schools.

I was the courier for the Fernie strike-pay cheques.

The president's direct line, which I introduced, also helped with important two-way communication with members.

Increased member participation has been another highlight. More and more members are now involved through PD training workshops, increased staff-rep training, and, as representatives of their colleagues, on a myriad of internal and external committees. And support for locals has increased enormously.

After years of frustrating government stonewalling, we're close to seeing improvements in the pension plan, as well.

More and more members are using the Salary Indemnity Plan as age and stress take their toll. The government decision to exempt teachers from market-place regulations saved each of us \$200 annually. This was a personal highlight for me; as I worked with the Minister of Finance to bring about that exemption.

Our initiatives on mainstreaming and violence have been both relevant and practical. We've successfully supported locals in bargaining, reversed Bill 82, and balanced the books throughout.

And at long last, too, we've moved to a new building with much improved facilities.

As I head back into the classroom in Vernon, I know the BCTF will be in good hands with my successor, Alice McQuade. The challenges won't stop, especially with provincial bargaining on the horizon. Yet I leave office with my key belief intact, that "if we stick together, we can weather any storm."

—Ray Worley  
BCTF President

## Speaking personally

### Are teachers born or made?

and provide learning experiences that are authentic reflections of the learners' needs. The personalities we take to the classroom are inherited; the pedagogy we employ as educators is learned. It is my hope that all educators bring the best of both traits to their classrooms.



Rosemarie Bell-Coghill

The nature versus nurture question has been posed once again as to the essence of an educator. Are we born, or are we made? The educator who provides a safe, nurturing, healthy, and challenging learning environment for the learner, probably grew up and was educated in a like environment. However, that many teachers believe they have always wanted to be teachers may indicate a genetic trait. The committed educators I have had the privilege of working with are a combination of both factors. Each brings to the profession a wide range of talent and experience. Our challenge as educators is to recognize the individuality of all learners, nurture their development,

Some people are "natural" teachers, and others grow into the job.

While I am certain all teachers improve their professional skills with experience, certain people seem to be born "with the chalk in their hands." The aptitude to communicate clearly, to inspire other people to participate in learning, and to organize groups of people to get tasks accomplished come naturally to some people.

When you were growing up, did you know a child in your neighborhood who organized a "play school" in basement or backyard? Did you teach other children their ABC's before you even entered school? At what age did you know you wanted to work as a teacher?

As an elementary teacher with experience at both the primary and the intermediate levels, I have identified students in my classes I feel certain will "grow up to be teachers." I have found it fascinating to observe these students as they volunteer enthusiastically to present information, whether in the classroom or at full-school assemblies. They speak with the confidence and organization of seasoned professionals. They also demonstrate a passion for participating in the learning process that far exceeds that of their peers. They have a gift for teaching and they thoroughly enjoy being at school.

My school has a very successful peer-tutoring program that involves many of the intermediate students in teaching. Volunteer student tutors work with the learning assistance teacher to plan the instruction for their "tutees."

The program has helped

many primary students to develop skills and overcome learning difficulties.

The intermediate students who work as tutors thoroughly enjoy teaching their partners. They are committed to the program and will often ask me for tips to improve their instruction. It is amusing to listen to them complain about a tutee who does not listen properly or who fools around too much.

How interesting it would be to know how many of our students who have the "right stuff for teaching" actually become teachers!



Beth Dye  
West Vancouver

"You're a born teacher!" This was often said of me long before I entered a teacher-training institution. People all around me could detect what

I, a Girl Guide leader, a Sunday School teacher, a swimming instructor, and even a public-speaking winner, could not. The rough gem lies within all of us in this profession.

The gem, when polished, possesses many facets that together create a valuable, recognizable, yet unique, stone. Leadership, approachability, competence, ingenuity, dedication, enthusiasm, flexibility, sincerity... These qualities can be compressed into two categories: a keen interest in young people and a love for learning, with the desire to encourage a similar response in others.

The classroom experience, the imprinting of training and in-service education, and the pressures of many societal changes impinging on our teaching and personal lives are the forces that polish the gem within each of us. To truly shine, we, like a gem, need the right setting, be it in a classroom, one-to-one tutoring, or in a specialized position. Each of us, given the opportunity to allow our individual teaching talents to shine, offers a valuable gift to our profession, our educational system, and most important, to our students.

## Contract stripping: an issue for everyone

The government's rush to legislate provincial bargaining and demands have left little time for serious consideration of the implications of the proposed legislation. The strong local contract provisions for which teachers fought hard—in many instances even took strike action—are under attack by this government.

Individual MLAs have suggested that everything's up for grabs. The government refuses to include in legislation a no-contract-stripping clause, a key BCTF demand. In the words of one NDP MLA, "Government will not contract strip. Government will only pass legislation for provincial bargaining. Teachers must be good negotiators and get the best possible contract. If we lose something, it will be a loss at the negotiating table. Everything is on the table when you bargain. When 75 contracts are converted into one, you can't expect to have the best language around."

Without legislative guarantees that protect our collective-agreement provisions, bargaining a provincial contract will be extraordinarily difficult because of the necessary process of analyzing all 75 agreements, drafting the best possible clause on each of the hundreds of issues, researching the issues in preparation for the actual negotiations, and then finally negotiating with the employer.

School boards will be pressing to ensure that the prevailing standard will be the average of the contracts, not the best. The local that has achieved a unique provision that does not exist elsewhere, is likely to hear demands from its own board and other boards that such a provision not form part of the new central contract.

Quebec experience confirms this predicted course. The locals with the best contract provisions lost them, and the locals with the worst contract provisions gained as middle-of-the-road clauses were ultimately negotiated.

The government sets the stage. The real work by the new education employers' association (PSEC) is done. As you read this, the legislature will be putting the final touches on the new provincial bargaining structure for education, and the education employers' group will be meeting to plan its approach to the upcoming negotiations.

To protect our hard-won gains and maintain and enhance the quality of education, we must continue to oppose the legislation, making it clear that we will not tolerate contract stripping. The long, hot summer which we hope will be relaxing for most, may well turn into a long, hot fall and winter for all of us.

—Al Cornes



## Is it time to teach ethics?

Students today need more opportunities to "do good" for others, like in the Richmond-Guatemala orphanage project (depicted below).

by Patrick Clarke

A lasting memory of my first year of teaching, so long ago and far away, is a discussion I had with a Grade 9 English class on stealing. The topic came from a story they had read, the name of which I can't recall. I remember the discussion because I found it so distressing. The class fell into three roughly equal groups, each holding a different view. One group saw stealing as wrong and made exceptions only in extraordinary circumstances. Another group saw stealing as wrong but were prepared to allow considerable flexibility with the concept; for example, they thought that stealing could just be a long-term loan. They had a novel approach to borrowing. The third group had no difficulty with stealing; getting caught was the problem.

Either my dour Irish Catholic upbringing or my general angst about the future made this an egregious event.

**Ethically appropriate behavior is more crucial than ever before. The consequences of amorality on a crowded planet are increasingly dangerous.**

It made me realize that we may be creating a virtuous society. The imperatives of a consumer culture encourage social norms that have more to do with self than society. That Grade 9 class gave some substance to the notion that a critical aspect of a modern education is development of personal morality or ethical codes of conduct.

Traditionally, public schools, and modern society in general, have dealt with ethics or morality in social terms. We have concentrated, for example, on discouraging

stealing by emphasizing that crime doesn't pay, and that such behavior will have personal consequences, because society does not tolerate it. We do not spend much time on the moral question of why stealing is wrong.

The role of public schools with regard to morality has been quite tightly confined to teaching the importance of duties and following the rules. The moral questions have been left to the churches and the family. There are good reasons for this approach. Our schools are supposed to be secular. Deep considerations of ethics inevitably lead to religious prescriptions, and once we're on that road, the "open and public" nature of public schools can be in peril. One religion's moral prohibitions can be another's founding principles, and we have in our schools children from all religions and none at all. Teachers have always found the prospect of teaching ethics at best controversial and at worst a recipe for a visit from the administrative officers.

It has all changed now. Ours is a society where the school is about the only institution cohesive and pervasive enough to affect the social landscape. The conventional concern with secularity is as legitimate as ever, but other considerations should have us re-evaluating our roles. Ethically appropriate behavior is more crucial than ever before. The consequences of amorality on a crowded planet are increasingly dangerous.

There are more questions of ethical consequence than their used to be. The environment, human rights, animal rights, genetic engineering, and violence are contemporary concerns that require ethical points of reference for their resolution. It may not be against the law to pour an old can of paint down a drain or buy a carpet made by child labour, but is it ethical? In individual terms, the consequences of behaving unethically in these matters are not serious, certainly no deterrent. We must rely on a

well-developed sense of virtue or goodness. How does this happen? And in the North America of the '90s, if children don't learn in school about ethics, where will they?

Teaching ethics in public schools now is not about a set of rules or applying some sort of moral template to make judgments. It is a matter of

**Students need to have the opportunity to see the importance of morality and to define themselves in those terms. They need the chance to do good.**

integrity, of helping the next generation develop personal value systems based on decency and a concern for morality. An individual student's motivation for acting with integrity derives from learning experiences that connect ethical behavior with a positive self-image. "It is important for me to act with integrity because that is how I am true to myself and how I define myself as a human being."

Teachers have not had much experience with such an approach. We have, because of our own educations and the various constraints and requirements of the public-school system, almost entirely concentrated on learning as a commodity rather than an odyssey or a voyage of discovery. We may talk about schools as places where young people develop self-images based on ethical principles and moral conduct and write out school mission statements, but we have great difficulty actually enacting them. As is common in so much of formal education, the saying is much easier than the doing.

So how would an ethics approach to teaching look? How do we make ethical behavior an outcome of what we do day to day? The *Learning for Living Program*

provides a good frame of reference. In its distilled state, it is a curriculum about ethics. The challenge is to make the intentions real and the program central not marginal. Learning for Living cannot simply occupy the vacancy left by guidance classes.

To have an impact, Learning for Living must be dramatically innovative in the teaching practices it encourages. Students need to have the opportunity to see the importance of morality and to define themselves in those terms. They need the chance to do good. In our towns and cities, seniors need companions, streams and beaches need to be "adopted," cleaned up, and taken care of. Poor communities overseas need partners.

One of the most effective school projects in ethics development I have seen is the Richmond-Guatemala orphanage project. The Richmond students who have had the experience of going to Guatemala and working with disadvantaged children have almost without exception taken part in an experience that has profoundly affected them and given many of them a sense of moral purpose they will carry their entire lives.

One of the challenges for schools in the '90s is the creation of venues such as the Richmond-Guatemala project so children and youth can experience the fulfillment of being nurturers and begin to internalize the concepts of ethics and morality.

Public-school teachers can teach ethics. Many of us will have to stand back from our experiences and reconceptualize who we are as teachers. We are mostly from cultures that teach ethics didactically. Our classrooms need to be places where ethics are learned through experiences of kindness and co-operation and caring, with people we know and people we don't know, within our school, our community, and our world.

Patrick Clarke is co-ordinator of the B.C. Global Education Project.



## School finance fiasco

by Mavis Lowry

On the last day of January 1994, the minister gave us the good news.

Education grants for the coming year would increase by 3.9%. Special-education funds would increase for students with behavior disorders, administrative expenditures would be capped, and although reducing those expenditures would not be easy, the reductions would allow more money for teaching students in the classroom.

Newspapers all over the province ran government ads in February proclaiming the news and also stating that government would ensure that funding allocated to aboriginal programs and children with special needs would indeed be spent in those areas.

Boards have now set their budgets for the coming year (July 1, 1994 to June 30, 1995). Their plans are in place.

In March, the government sent out fiscal frameworks or block allocations to each district. On average, districts received budget allocations 3.1% higher than last year's. But the range was great. Twelve districts received less money than last year; the hardest hit were Stikine and Nechako. Five districts received 6% or more: Grand Forks, North Thompson, Abbotsford, Central Coast, and Qualicum. Nineteen districts received a special growth grant on top of their allocation. Government acknowledged that some funds will be held back until fall when the enrolment is counted.

What is the effect of the targeting of special education and aboriginal funds and the new money for severe behavior? A good question. And hard to answer. Some districts are threatening to lay off teachers. Other districts are saying they must cut teachers to provide some of the programs. Some districts are cutting one special-education program to provide for another. Such reports leave us incredulous. How can such actions possibly improve services to aboriginal children and children with special needs.

Along with these shocking reports comes another under the heading *Administrative Caps*. We had every reason to expect boards to restructure administration this spring to comply with the directive to cut up to \$69 million from administrative budgets. We expected to see additional classroom services for children as those funds shifted. Our disappointment grows daily as reports indicate that administration will not be cut but that teacher numbers will be reduced and class sizes will increase.

The ministry's new Accounting Manual, dated March 4, 1994, has given school districts the loop-holes

they needed to avoid any administrative cuts. As the secretary-treasurer notes, "All the rules have changed!" Most districts are reporting they are well under the cap; they have simply recoded many of their administrative costs in accordance with the new manual. For example, a principal who spends time supervising before and after school or at lunch hour will charge a portion of his/her salary to instruction. At least one district claimed it would be charging part of administrative-officer salaries to instruction for time spent coaching and supervising field trips or dances.

Vancouver has charged 84.4 administrators to the instruction account. Powell River has recoded 60% of its AOs to instruction. Central Okanagan has even recoded 1.2 directors of instruction from central office to the instruction account. Many districts are now charging half the school clerical costs to instruction even though that work will still be completely directed by the administrator. Some clerical staff who never set foot in a school will be charged to the instruction account. Abbotsford was required to cut almost \$5 million from administration; yet as far as the local can determine, even the most generous observer can identify only \$100,000 in actual cuts. Instead, the district plans to slash the ESL and library programs.

Several local presidents, outraged at what they see happening in their districts, have written to the minister with details. Ned Alexander, of Campbell River, states: "It appears as if the Minister of Education's objective of reducing administrative expenditures to maximize resources to students is lacking in substance and that the children of British Columbia are being shortchanged." Bill Gorkoff, of Castlegar, writes: "My conclusion at this time is that your net catches no fish."

On May 19 BCTF reps discussed our concerns with the Minister of Education. He acknowledged his intentions of January have not been realized. The minister expected at least \$30 million would shift from administration to instruction. He is disappointed that the new accounting manual is allowing so much recoding and appeared to be thinking out loud as he explored ways to do damage control. He talked of possibly revising the accounting manual or requiring changes to board final budgets in February. BCTF President Ray Worley strongly urged the minister to immediately investigate any district where layoff notices are being issued to teachers while at the same time the district is reporting there is no need to make administrative cuts due to their recoding process.

As for what we are to expect in our schools in September—the news is unfortunately no longer optimistic.

Mavis Lowry is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division.

## VIEWS ON THE YEAR 2000

### A response to the "new" Intermediate Program

by Dean Chatterson

I see the current Intermediate Program policy as a step backward in education. It will impede rather than promote improvements to the education system. It will lead to a lack of confidence in and support for the public schools in B.C.

In this document there is a shift away from development of a program based on sound educational principles arrived at over a long time by a large, diverse group of people engaged in extensive research, consultation, and response. The shift is toward ill-conceived, deceptively simple, attractive "fixes" arrived at through shallow political invective.

The former, with time, patience, hard work, courage, and support, would have given us a system designed for kids. The latter will give us a system even more stilted and less responsive to the needs of students and society than what we've had for the past 20 years.

The shift in the document is pervasive yet subtle. This latest version uses some of the language of real education but loses the spirit of change necessary to be meaningful. It retains some of the phrases of improvement but then mandates contradictory processes that will prevent progress. Throughout the document, phrases indicate

that the politicians influencing the writing still hold assumptions and beliefs impeding positive change. This recent document was created through political demand, not educational consultation.

It seems the government and some vocal members of the public have built their education belief system on a foundation of myths.

They believe that if we clearly define what we expect kids to learn, test them

*After reading the Revised Intermediate Program document, two Grade 10 students said that it describes our current system, and that system is boring and ineffective.*

regularly and uniformly, and inform them clearly of their progress, then we'll get all kids to be successful.

This general view describes closely what we've tried to do for the past 50 years. After reading the Revised Intermediate Program document, two Grade 10 students said that it describes our current system, and that system is

boring and ineffective.

We have clearly defined, detailed curriculum in our present curriculum guides, like math and language arts/English. We have taught courses with high expectations for the quality and pacing for kids. We have school-, district- and province-wide tests. We also have a uniform system of letter grades in the upper grades and report regularly to parents. Still we notice unmotivated, dissatisfied students learning much less than is possible.

So, if our current or mythical education system won't work, what will give us the results we want? The answers as to what will work are long, unfinished, complex, and not so well defined. The answers involve risks, mistakes, and unknowns that will change the fundamental culture of schools so that education focusses on the learner rather than on external (provincial) required standards and expectations.

The program framework section, pages 1-4, retains much of the philosophy and sound principles of the previous intermediate document. It does need, perhaps in a companion document, richer explanation and detail so that educators get a clearer vision of what it means to provide a learner-focussed education.

## Self-directed means self-destructive

by Dennis Bégin

The Year 2000 conjures many different images of where B.C. education is headed.

There is, however, a difference between educational philosophy and educational practices. One of the founding principles behind the Year 2000 is child-centered teaching. This means that the child and not the teacher is the centre of the learning experience. Students progress at their own rates, with programs structured to the individual in a non-competitive, non-failure system. The student must be self-directed or self-motivated to learn.

The program as it exists in some Alberta schools is called Self-Directed Program (SDP). In educational practice, this program means that students never attend a traditional class on a daily basis but obtain learning packages from their teachers (called facilitators). Students must attend a seminar or lab once a week, where they can receive help from their subject teachers. The work is completed at home with the help of friends or parents.

Students progress at their own pace with no pressure, spending more time on

courses they find difficult and finishing courses early they find easy. Students are encouraged to be self-disciplined and take charge of their lives.

One of the goals of SDP is to develop positive self-esteem or to feel good about oneself. Autonomy, self-fulfilment, goal setting, and self-evaluation are important attributes. In addition, the individual must see how he/she fits into the community or the metapattern, which is to understand the big picture of life. Students develop the idea that learning is for life, not just to graduate from high school.

It would appear that the SDP has found the perfect educational model, but this program is founded on non-educational research and lack of common sense.

Many of the principles and their underlying concepts have their origins in the world of some educational guru from Southern California. These concepts may have some appeal and success in the adult workplace, but not in the hormone-crazed world of teenagers brought up on the steady diet of *Nintendo*, *Bart Simpson*, and *Hockey Night in Canada*.

Under this system, students are expected to master complicated conceptual material in calculus, interpret historical documents, understand Shakespeare's soliloquies, or diagnose acid-base reactions in chemistry. The benefits obtained through classroom activities and discussions do not exist using this model. The majority of our students rely on the guidance and motivation of their teachers.

The brighter, more mature, and self-motivated student can probably learn from this system, but what about the average non-motivated student?

### Some questions

The self-directed program raises some interesting questions. If highly motivated and directed students are withdrawn from the classroom, leaving the less academic students, a two-tiered academic system is created. On the basis of academic abilities, students will be streamed, and any classroom teacher understands the implications of academic streaming. The streaming of students is not an objective of our present educational system.

The number of teachers now employed will be unnecessary with self-directed programs. Facilitators can handle "many more" students than the present system. We are talking about a major downsizing of the teaching profession.

The Year 2000 theorists explain that a self-directed program, structured around individual progress, is the most effective basis for instruction—rather than large group or teacher-directed instruction. Educational research does not support this founding principle. In a research project ("Extract from an Address to York

Region Quality," *Education Network*, Ontario, 1992.) Mark Holmes concludes:

"There is no large-scale empirical research which shows that child-centered activity-based learning...or individualization...is superior to direct instruction in the teaching of basic skills...all the large scale studies show direct instruction is superior."

Those individuals supporting the Year 2000 and ideas like the Self-Directed Program, have neither considered the practical applications of the model nor provided enough educational research to

The section on program design contains some of the contradictions that will impede effective implementation of the program. Where previous documents described a learner-focussed experience, this document talks, on page 7, of "standards of achievement for the Province," "expected learning outcomes

*Decisions should be made based on what's good for kids, not what's easy for politicians.*

for grade level," "some students exceed expectations while others are unable to meet expectations," and on page 8 of, "working on basic skill development to reach required standards."

The statements exemplify the shift from what we know about teaching and learning. They contradict and deny the validity of the principles of

learning and "accommodating students' different ways and rates of learning." (p.3). These statements, combined with the section on standards and evaluation in *Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia*, show that the government has moved away from learner-focussed philosophy. A mistake.

In summary, this document represents a wrong direction. I hope that politicians heed advice gained through the consultative process and provide support for educators to make meaningful change instead of mandating poorly considered political ideas. Decisions should be made based on what's good for kids, not what's easy for politicians.

The call for mandatory letter grades in the Intermediate Program represents another poorly conceived political notion. Although I recognize that some teachers and members of the public are asking for letter grades, many educators have, using sound educational

principles and practice, moved beyond letter grades. They are implementing systems of assessment, evaluation, and reporting that are accepted by students, staff, and parents as far superior to what the government is currently demanding. They need the option to continue to grow and improve. Those still using letter grades need the same option.

Government policy cannot guarantee change in classroom practice; at best, it can provide an enabling vision with examples of what's possible. Ultimately, only teachers can bring about the real effective change that is better for students. Our government should be encouraging and supporting leaders and innovators in education, not mandating policy that restricts positive change.

Dean Chatterson, a member of the Intermediate Program Steering Committee, teaches at Selkirk Secondary School, Kimberley.



FORMER BCTF PRESIDENT DIES

## Tribute to Bill Allester

by John Church

William Vernon Allester, 1920-1994, former BCTF president, 1953-54, and first director of the Professional Development Division, 1958-75, was always a pioneer.

Elected president at the 1953 AGM, Bill was the BCTF's youngest president thus far. Appointed to the BCTF staff in 1958 to work in the diverse fields of salaries, in-service education, and curriculum development, Bill quickly coordinated various BCTF responses to the Chant Royal Commission Report on the status of public education, K-12. That report, released in late December 1960, provided an opportunity for teachers to initiate fundamental changes—always a Bill Allester goal. At the same time, in the early '60s, Bill inspired, organized, and directed workshop after workshop, conference after conference, and seminar after seminar to ensure that teachers would improve public education and elevate the teaching profession.

In 1967-68, the federation sponsored its own investigation of public education. Bill, the staff representative to the commission, soon became a full-fledged member and helped write the report, *Involvement: The Key to Better Schools*. It is a credit to the four commissioners that most

of the recommendations are now public school practice.

The word *involvement* symbolizes Bill Allester's earthly journey. He was a faithful worker for his church and a good family man. Tragically and ironically, Bill lost his first wife, Joy, and his older daughter, Rhonwen, both to cancer, 10 years ago. Bill's later years were enriched by his wife, Meg, his

*In his always modest way, he was truly a giant among teachers.*

son, David, his daughter, Mary, and seven grandchildren. At the BCTF, Bill always gave his full consideration to the needs and concerns of any teacher.

William Vernon Allester was a kind, gentle person, always the gentleman in the finest sense. He was rightly and truly honored by his colleagues with both an honorary life membership in the BCTF and the prestigious Fergusson Memorial Award. He belongs with a small cadre.

Bill, all who knew and walked with you, salute and laud you. I, who profited much from your counsel, common sense, and friendship, laud, praise, and thank you. May you always be in peace.

As always, as you did, respectfully submitted, John Church.

*"The [teaching] occupation today requires the patience of a saint, the reserve of a Supreme Court magistrate, and the caring of Mother Teresa...If you react to a situation (in the classroom) in most of the ways that a real human being, not a robot, would react, you could end up being charged with misconduct."*

—Edward Spetch, SFU graduate student thesis on teacher dismissals



Students at work in a Prince George school.

support their point of view. Teachers are being asked to accept the new programs, an educational philosophy filled with educational jargon, euphemisms, platitudes, and impracticabilities and based on dubious or non-educational research. Parents, administrators, teachers, and students should take a closer look at concepts like self-directed programs and realize that students are being short-changed.

Dennis Bégin teaches at Steveston Secondary School in Richmond.



# Start the "wellness" habit

by Viren Joshi

## Worthiness

*Thinking no less of myself when I make mistakes*

## Energy

*Seeing change as an opportunity to grow*

## Leisure

*Taking time for myself; knowing it's okay to say "no"*

## Loving relationships

*Letting people see who I really am and accepting others as they are*

## Nutrition

*Safeguarding my health by not using food self-destructively*

## Expression

*Feeling safe in communicating how I feel*

## Self-responsibility

*Recognizing and meeting my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs*

## Should-free

*Letting go of guilt and worry*

Source: *Brutahl-Pollos, BCTF News, Vol. XXVI, No. 8, April '94.*

**D**o you ever get the feeling that your life is a whirlwind? that things move in a dizzy circle at enormous speed and fall not too far from where they take off? Look at the Year 2000: now on now off; the changing colors of educational policies in B.C. politics; the recurrent teacher bashing in the media; the personal stuff we struggle with in too rapidly changing family and social value-systems; the resultant pummeling our minds and bodies receive in the maelstrom.

More Employee Assistance Plans are needed, more teachers are currently on medical leave than ever before, and 40% of these leaves are directly stress-related. Do you wonder why it is so, and what you can do to reverse this trend?

In spite of this bad news, my optimism in our well-being is sustained by two philosophical tenets. One: All whirlwinds are temporary, and in the long run, calm prevails. And two: Teachers are intelligent. The ultimate evidence of intelligence is in self-preservation through critical times, be they personal, social, or environmental. My faith in our collective intelligence was recently renewed when I attended a *Teacher Wellness Conference*, sponsored by the BCTF, in Vancouver. Whether you are one of my energetic, upbeat colleagues who expresses your optimism by being fit and active, or you are one of those who feel, at times, that demands of work and life are funnelling away your energies, you may find this summary of things I learned at the wellness conference useful.

### Health is not only a physiological matter

The most recent research and discussion on health indicates that health is not only a physiological matter and it does not constitute merely an absence of disease. Perfect health is a harmonious working-together of body, mind, emotions, and spirit. The workshop topics ranged from fitness and nutrition to laughter and humor, including topics like "living through grief to wellness," "getting a grip on yourself," non-conventional medicine, developing emotional relations, and teacher and institutional wellness. Unless physical and mental health are synchronous, a person cannot feel or be considered healthy. You need a physically healthy body in order to maintain positive self-esteem, high self-

*Unless physical and mental health are synchronous, a person cannot feel or be considered healthy.*

confidence, and positive attitudes toward life. Similarly, you need a positive attitude and high self-confidence in order to reduce negative stress and to feel better physiologically.

### Holistic health approach for stress and chronic pain

Dr. Michael Greenwood, who recently gave up his successful family medicine practice of 17 years to focus on chronic pain, acupuncture, and alternative medicine, emphasized the importance of body-mind unity in his keynote address. Whereas he acknowledged the place of western traditional medicine in the treatment of acute illness, he recommends the application of "holistic health" approaches in the treatment of chronic pain and stress. He believes that 90% of chronic pain is linked with a person's emotions. Similarly, even though the devastating physiological effects of stress in terms of fatigue, pain, and lack of energy are well-known, as Dr. Greenwood put it, there is no bone broken and there are not positive results on medical tests. The physical symptoms of stress result from a patient's mental responses to social, emotional, and environmental situations. For chronic pain management and stress-reduction, Dr. Greenwood recommends the holistic health approach, which works on the following principles:

1. Mind and matter are not separate. We have to end the body-mind split prevalent in modern medicine.
2. In order to cure disease, you must own it. Illness has meaning if you explore it.
3. In listening to symptoms, you connect with a deeper understanding of yourself.
4. In the light of that understanding, the physician and the patient work together to work out a cure.

### Personal well-being, healthy families, and healthy organizations

Psychological and emotional health depends on the relationships with family members as well as work associates. It makes sense to examine these relationships periodically to see what can be done to improve or strengthen them. In a workshop called *Healthy Families*, Denis Boyd, a Vancouver psychologist, gave some basic, no-nonsense suggestions on sustaining and improving long-term (intimate) relationships, such as:

1. Be open to growth.
2. Come to terms (peace) with the past.
3. Love unconditionally, with a commitment to the relationship.
4. Watch less television (or whatever) to allot time to relationships.
5. Become a better listener (and learn the skills).
6. Consult and collaborate (or compromise).
7. Use a "time-out" strategy to take cooling-off breaks.
8. Work hard on marriages, just as you do on your job.
9. Forgive frequently.
10. Have fun or play together (don't forget how you did it during courtship).
11. Be flexible. Traditional roles are changing.
12. Encourage always! Remind each other of your love, particularly in difficult times.

### Healthy life-style: A matter of choices

The foundation of all wellness is a healthy lifestyle. Sometimes you need to take a look at your lifestyle and consider whether or not our personal habits are conducive to good health. To encourage wellness in your family and among your students, you

*...making a change in lifestyle is not easy, and it takes up to five years of effort to incorporate a new behavior.*

must exude wellness in your person. If your self-examination reveals that you have to change some daily habits or attitudes in order to promote wellness, you need to be willing to do so.

Another keynote speaker, Barbara Crompton, a former B.C. teacher, the founder and executive director of The Fitness Group, and the chair of UBC's Board of Governors, emphasized the need to embrace sound health habits for wellness. She emphasized that making a change in lifestyle is not easy, and it takes up to five years of effort to incorporate a new behavior. Moreover, you cannot change unless you have a supporting environment that can help you to make that change. So you may have to choose somebody to help you in following the path of change determinedly. Here is Barbara's list of habits that will help you live longer and experience more vitality. The list may sound simplistic,

### The foundation of all wellness is a healthy lifestyle.

but is well supported by research. So don't be fooled by its apparent simplicity:

1. Eat breakfast.
2. Wear a seatbelt.
3. Give up smoking.
4. Exercise regularly (get up and move!)
5. Adopt health-enhancing attitudes (love somebody, love yourself, laugh, learn to deal realistically with loss).
6. Have eight hours of sleep a night.
7. Take more deep breaths.
8. Choose diets low in fat and sodium.
9. Maintain ideal body weight.
10. Drink six to eight glasses of water a day.
11. Drink (alcohol) moderately.

### Here is a challenge !

Attending this conference challenged me to make a couple of positive changes in my lifestyle on the road to wellness. I challenge you to reflect on what positive changes or decisions YOU might like to make in your life-style. For a day of reflection for yourself and your colleagues, you might book a BCTF workshop on wellness in the fall. The workshop is a part of the BCTF's thrust for teacher wellness, and a wellness associate will deliver it right in your district free of charge.

Viren Joshi, a BCTF wellness associate, works for the Vancouver School Board as an area counsellor.

## Working harder isn't working

**B**ruce O'Hara, guru of the shorter work week, believes he has the solution everyone is looking for to high unemployment and stressed-out workers. And he says the Liberal government had better start looking to his radical solutions or face serious social unrest.

"The employed are stressed out," he says. "The unemployed are in pain. The Earth is dying. A shorter work week can save them all."

Speaking in January to a meeting in Toronto, O'Hara said he had grown frustrated with the gobbledygook spewed out by economists who think low interest rates and high consumption are all we need.

He's the author of a recent book whose title says it all: *Working Harder Isn't Working: How we can save the environment, the economy and our sanity by working less and enjoying life more*. In it O'Hara uses a roadable style to name the disease: 1950s work habits that make a toxic brew when combined with '90s technology.

"The future is now," said O'Hara. "Instead of one breadwinner working 20 hours per week, most families have two working 40 hours a week. Despite extra breadwinners, longer work hours, and higher productivity, real family incomes in Canada have been falling for the last 15 years."

Rather than liberate us from the burden of work, O'Hara said, the computer age splits the population between the unemployed and the overworked. And the only way to reverse this is to make labour a commodity in demand again.

"The economic elite tell us we have to work harder for less money if we are to compete in the new global economy. What happened? How do we explain this paradox: advances in new technology mean we can produce more wealth in less time; yet we work harder for less money?"

The answer, according to O'Hara, is unemployment. It puts the employer in the driver's seat and cheapens labour, pushing wages down while productivity goes up.

O'Hara is a likable speaker, but his proposals drew quizzical looks and skepticism from many in his audience at the Metro Toronto Social Planning Council meeting. Many wondered whether his plan for a four-day work week is practical—would employers exploit such a plan by taking away all job security? Could a four-day week even be implemented, given the growing number of workers who fall outside the traditional work environment?

But O'Hara says he developed his theories from actual experience counselling unemployed and working people while running *Work Well* in B.C., Canada's first think-tank and resource centre for alternative work habits.

*Working Harder Isn't Working*, by Bruce O'Hara, is published by New Star Books, Vancouver, 1993, \$14.95, ISBN 0-921586-33-7.

Source: David South, CALM, *Labour News & Graphics*, February 1994.

## Work-week factoid

**I**n 1990-91, nearly 200,000 Canadian workers switched to four-day weeks for six months, with UI paying for about half their days off. This saved about 43,000 jobs that year.

Source: CALM, *Labour News & Graphics*, February 1994.



## TEACHER INTERVIEWS TED AOKI

## Aoki inducted into Education Honor Society

TEACHER: You've been a colleague of B.C. teachers for some time, you have recently been inducted into the laureate chapter of the honor society in education called Kappa Delta Pi. This is an honor indeed, as there are only 60 members at any one time. Some of your contemporaries are leading educators many of us have read as well—John Goodlad, Elliott Eisler, Maxine Green. What are your hopes or expectations in becoming part of that group?

AOKI: I really don't know why I'm being awarded. But I have a sense that particularly in the United States, among the curriculum people, I'm looked upon as a fellow who not necessarily led but allowed phenomenology of teachers' lived experiences to be legitimated as an area of study and concern for curriculum people. If we take that to research in curriculum, that means introducing a research mode that is different from the established conventions of research. The word *research* itself becomes very fuzzy because it is too caught up in one way of understanding the world: the scientific way.

Phenomenology gives us a strong, legitimate scholarship and access to the lived world of teachers and students. And out of that kind of language comes forth the notion of the lived curriculum, giving us a chance to break the monopolistic hold of the word *curriculum* as curriculum-as-planned. One of the nice things about acknowledging multiple curricula is the opening up of spaces where teachers really dwell, where they're doing their work, where they're struggling. What the teachers constitute in these spaces, as they struggle through making sense simultaneously of the curriculum-as-planned and of the kids' lives in the classroom, is a tough game. Living in the spaces is what teaching is. It's not merely implementing a given curriculum into a situation—although that's a part of it.

TEACHER: What does this mean for teachers?

AOKI: As we come to understand, we change ourselves. Coming to an understanding in a deep sense is at the same time to modify ourselves in such a way that we will act differently in the world. Such thinking breaks from the notion that we think first, then do. Thinking and doing are entwined.

More recently we're looking at the limits of phenomenology and are beginning to see that phenomenology has its own boundedness. So our effort right now is to try to move beyond phenomenological assumptions.

TEACHER: Say more about that.

AOKI: Contained in the notion of phenomenology is the notion of the whole person. And it's that wholeness, that totality that we are beginning



to question. Is not the notion of wholeness or totality still caught in modernism or metaphysical thinking which is reflected very much in the Cartesian dualism "I think, therefore I am"? No matter how much we try to understand everything, we find it impossible. There is always something left over—something more—and it's that something more that resists wholeness and yet keeps us stirring, keeps us forever moving.

If there is no excess, then we can come to know everything. That general presumption of phenomenology is questioned.

TEACHER: How do you encapsulate such post-modernist thinking?

AOKI: Shifting from modernism to post-modernism is a displacement from the texture of one language to another. So, for instance, if we're interested in the question Who am I? we don't have to reject that question, but we need to supplement that question with Where am I when I ask that question? I am at a place where I can ask, what are the conditions that make it possible to ask, Who am I?

TEACHER: How do I use this notion in my everyday teaching life, in my school and my classroom?

AOKI: For a teacher, it may well be a re-exploration of life-as-lived in the classroom. The conventional notion of "applying theories to teachers' situations is okay to a point, but what is more important is coming to an understanding of lived life. A teacher might remember that every word has multiple meanings.

TEACHER: As a teacher, what would I do differently with my students?

AOKI: I think one way is for you to understand the place where you are with the students; that is, how you understand this landscape. So, if I'm living in this landscape with students, then understand this place in terms

of the relationship that exists between teacher and students.

Often, we hear of *equity*. Equity is okay to a point, but the danger is that it hides the differences between teacher and students. There are differences, and the important thing is to understand that if in my class I have 20 students, then there are 21 interspaces between me and students. These interspaces are spaces of possibilities. So what we allow to happen, what can be constituted and reconstituted in those interspaces is what we mean by life in the classroom.

TEACHER: What does planning look like? And evaluation—is there such a thing? And what are my tools in this context?

AOKI: Let me try the first one. Planners should plan, knowing that they do not yet know what will happen with that plan in the lived situations, which differ from one to another. The curriculum planner should accommodate the plan in such a way that he/she does not destroy the possibilities of life yet to be.

Planning for life is not planning if everything is written down.

Any plan has to have a lot of dot, dot, dots. Incompletes, incompletes. Allowing spaces of possibilities. It could be risky. But risk always goes along with good things that are possible.

TEACHER: The teacher's humanness is essential. The relationship you form with the students matters. It's a scary place because there is not as much control.

AOKI: Yes, it's a scary place but a vital place—not a place

*Planning for life is not planning if everything is all written down. Any plan has to have a lot of dot, dot, dots. Incompletes, incompletes. Allowing spaces of possibilities.*

to be controlled. Control has to be not eliminated but dissolved. We need some other language than the language of control.

Let's go back to the notion of human—you rightly indicated teachers have a concern for humanness. The very word *human* is undergoing change. The words *humanity* and *humanism* come forth in the age of reason and enlightenment, together with the notion of the individual (self-contained individuals who think and act).

I think we need to break away from that narrow version of humanness by reconstituting the meaning of *human* in terms of, perhaps, relation to the earth. If we were to link the word *human* with related words like *humility*, we begin to see a new relationship between self and others. It may help to remember that *human* has kinship with *humus* and

*humor*. We need to move to an earthly place where we can have fun and laugh, too.

And the very notion of laughter—why do we laugh? Laughter emerges from the notion of difference, difference from what we expect somebody to say, and what he/she does say. Because of the difference, we laugh; laughter is truthful. And like laughter, life is paradoxical, caught in the midst of tensioned differences. Without the tension we'd be dead!

TEACHER: Explain how Eastern thought influences post-modernist thought. The yin the yang—the together yet separate. Are we in the Western world catching up to Eastern beliefs?

AOKI: Post-modernism is a Western word indicating it comes after Western modernism. Yin and yang and such non-exclusive oppositional thought came before modern Japan, modern China, so in this sense Western post-modernism may be likened to pre-modernism in East Asia. So who's catching up to whom? They are culturally and linguistically so different, but there are interesting surface resemblances.

TEACHER: If tomorrow I want to go down a different path in my teaching, what will I get curious about? What might I do with my students? Is there, something new I could do?

AOKI: I think there are many new ways possible. One way to be in this kind of a realm is to consider the kind of language within which we live.

We have not been taking advantage of the spaces between (the interspaces) where possibilities abound to produce a new language of living practice. For example, I would like to see teachers help in vitalizing the language of curriculum by participating in legitimating the language of lived curriculum or living curriculum.

TEACHER: So if we have a difference of opinion, one of the things I might do is try to understand your orientation and then I would like some space and time to talk about mine, and see where the common ground or in-between might be. Then together we could decide what are we going to do about this? Does it have a mutuality about it?

AOKI: Yes, a mutuality but not necessarily a mutually approved one answer. You speak from your perspective and your understanding, I from my perspective, and we have an inter-subjective dialogue. But keep in mind that in post-modernism, it's less you and me talking, but more your text and my text in inter-textuality—a dialogue of texts. And in the dialogue two things can happen—new texts are created and you and I are transformed.

TEACHER: What skills or techniques must people learn?

AOKI: Let me respond personally. Whenever I write a story, I not only produce a narrative but I'm reproducing myself. The very narrating acts upon me, and I'm changing. If I start using a

skill to do something, I become the skill. So I have to learn to ask, Am I aware that I'm just concentrating on skills right now? Or is something more happening?

We need to break away from the privilege we've given language as a tool of communication and reunderstand language.

TEACHER: Some of the current teacher inquiry, the teacher-story groups, the teacher-research groups, wherein teachers talk about and question their practice are seeking something deeper and richer.

AOKI: Let me just give you an example. When a teacher has written a story, I would like the teacher to take that story and relive it. That's the *RE*—again—and in the very reliving, the story will change and as well the story's meaning. I want the teacher, in that rewriting, to begin to see how that particular story is enmeshed into a bigger story—a metastory.

We have become stuck in the conventional metastory of beginning, middle, and end, or

*Equity is okay to a point, but the danger is that it hides the differences between teacher and students.*

in the belief that a story must cohere into a whole as a totality. Can a narrative break into a space where many voices come in, to let narrating itself begin to question the notion of beginning and end, breaking seriality? Can narrating create spaces making it possible for readers to come in?

TEACHER: In the context of spring 1994, do you have anything to say to teachers about teaching? There are very many tensions in trying to be a teacher in B.C. today.

AOKI: Over the years, I feel that teachers have become much more deeply understanding of their own situation as teachers within the educational system, and have critiqued and confronted issues.

I think there is now a possibility for a movement beyond that. In that movement, teachers may well ask questions about their past experiences and come to an understanding of those past experiences by re-collecting and re-presenting the essence of their experiences. That's understanding one dimension of experience.

Teachers can also think of the experience as ongoing, right now in the present. It's a living experience ongoing now. And in the now teachers are somewhere in life, somewhere in the midst of differences, in that space constituting and reconstituting themselves and the program...

Nancy Hinds, editor of Teacher, talked with Dr. Ted Aoki, professor emeritus of the University of British Columbia, about his career and current interests.

## Racism, in spite of multiculturalism

by Lisa Yamashiro

"Go back to Hong Kong where you came from!" This has been said to me several times in my 24 years of life. Ironically, I am not even Chinese—I am Japanese. But this fact does not matter, because "all Orientals look alike anyway." I still feel the sting of these words just as much as if I were Chinese, because of the obvious hatred with which these words are spoken.

Am I bitter? Yes and no. I hold no grudges toward these people; I feel sorry for them because I realize that their words are spoken out of ignorance of human equality. What I am bitter about is that I live in a country with an unprecedented multiculturalism policy, a country that is proud of its efforts to combat racism, yet a country where racism is rampant.

The issue of managing diversity is a difficult one, and I regard our multiculturalism policy as a sincere attempt for coping with various issues in our pluralistic society. However, Canada's multicultural policy does not focus enough on how to combat racism—more effort must be made to counter racist attitudes.

In her article, "Racism as a barrier to Canadian citizenship," Simms defines racism as "the application of discrimination based on skin color or the identification of groups of people as belonging to racial categories" (p.334).

She cites many disturbing examples of the racism that still pervade our society. One of several examples Simms cites is the case of Helen Betty Osborne, an aboriginal woman murdered in 1971. The RCMP were unable for 16 years to charge anyone for the racially motivated murder because the townspeople chose not to co-operate. They considered aboriginals to be

*...the Canadian government's effort to preserve cultural diversity, with its emphasis on dining, dress, and dance, is superficial, and teaches us little about other cultures.*

—Neil Bissoondath

"less than human" and therefore considered her death "unimportant."

Neil Bissoondath (1993) also feels that our multiculturalism policy is not doing enough to combat racism. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) states it is the government's policy to "recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage."

Bissoondath feels that government attempts at promoting cultural diversity are at best feeble, and more effort should instead be focussed on racism. According to Bissoondath, the Canadian

government's effort to preserve cultural diversity, with its emphasis on dining, dress, and dance, is superficial, and teaches us little about other cultures. "They merely reduce cultures hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years old to easily digested stereotypes...multiculturalism, with all of its festivals and its celebrations, has done nothing to foster a factual and clear-headed vision of the other." (p.374)

Resulting cultural misunderstandings are obvious in our society. In a recent case, Sikhs were banned from the Surrey-Newton Legion Hall on refusing to remove their turbans. These Sikhs had valiantly fought for Canada in the war and yet were denied entry to the hall on Remembrance Day 1993. Removal of all headgear before entering the Legion, out of respect for the Queen, is a Legion policy, and Legion members used this as their justification. Legion members insisted that their refusing the Sikhs entry was not racially motivated, but was motivated by their desire to uphold their rules.

To a Sikh, a turban is not merely headgear. It is an integral part of his culture and religion, of who he is and what he believes in. Such ignorance of a group of people who have been prominent members of our society for so many years shows just how our multiculturalism policy is failing us in regard to cultural acceptance and racism.

According to the 1991 government publication *Multiculturalism: What is it really about?*, only \$7 million of the approximately \$27 million the federal government

spends on multiculturalism per year goes directly toward fighting racism and discrimination. However, \$14 million is dedicated to promoting cultural diversity, such as through the building of multicultural centres. "The substantial funds involved could be put to far better use than the building of community halls and social facilities for specific, ethnically defined groups... More funds must also be dedicated to battling racism?" (Bissoondath, 1993, p.386)

Section 15.(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of

*"My, you speak good English." Inside I feel enraged by such comments. I want to shout back, "Well, why shouldn't I? I was born in Canada, my parents were born in Canada, English is my first and only language..."*

—Lisa Yamashiro

the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability." I, for one, as an Asian, often do not feel equal. Others still do not see me as equal. In my part-time job in a gift shop, customers have occasionally

looked at me and remarked, "My, you speak good English." Inside I feel enraged by such comments. I want to shout back, "Well, why shouldn't I? I was born in Canada, my parents were born in Canada, English is my first and only language, I minored in English at a Canadian university. I probably know more about the English language than you do..." But I never say anything, I just smile politely and say, "Thank you."

I put up with patronizing comments and just accept them as something I will probably never be free of. I excuse such comments because I feel that these people just do not know any better. But I feel sad at my resignation, and that I feel the need to make excuses for others. Because if Canada's present multicultural policies were working, they would know better.

Lisa Yamashiro at time of writing was completing her B.Ed. at UBC.

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## A MUST READ FOR ALL TEACHERS

*My field trip to the museum an adventure in archaeology or a social anthropology*

by a B.C. teacher

"Are any of your 27 Grade 6 and 7 students in a wheelchair?" asked the museum's field-trip secretary over the phone. Let's see. I have students with an age range from nine to twelve, a reading-level range from Grade 2 to 12, a height range from three feet to six feet, a classroom-temperature range from 50° to 88°F, but I have no student in a wheelchair. I have two children with

hearing-impairments without hearing aids, three ESL students who may understand little today, three students who won't wear their glasses, five students who are receiving learning assistance, but I have no student in a wheelchair. I have two children with their own wing of the house, two children on welfare, and four children whose lack of home care has caused me many sleepless nights. My class lacked textbooks until Christmas. Teaching a split class means double the

preparation and teaching time. And I have three behavior problems. But really, they are all nice kids. I have several students who would do anything for me, a few angels, some terrific artists, actors, and comedians, and a huge number of kind, considerate, helpful, enthusiastic students. I also have a girl who steals, two children who tell horrendous lies, a very hostile child, a child who shakes badly when she writes, a child who stutters and won't look me in

the eye, a depressed child, a chronic crier, a Miss-know-it-all, and a child who farts loudly. "No," I told the secretary, "I don't have anyone in a wheelchair—just a regular class, and they are all nice kids." Having arrived safely at the museum, we moved on to the education room. "Eeeeeek! PINK HORRORS!" shrieked the docent, pointing to Mary's running shoes. Mary, a kind,

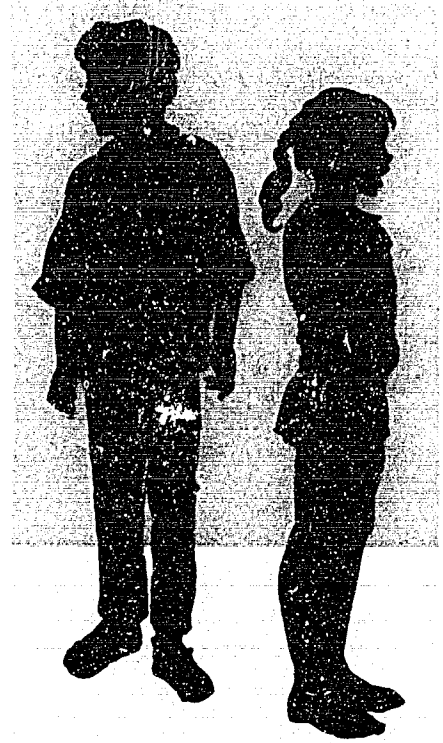
See FIELD TRIP page 12



## FIELD TRIP from page 11

gentle, delightful girl, wilted. The docent, her aged and lined face telling of many battles with school children or some other unseen force, continued to point at the shoes. Mary stared back, non-plussed. Our spry 80-year-old leader knelt down and tied up Mary's shoelaces while saying, "There, there my dear, it's all right. It's just that last week on a school tour, a boy's shoelace was caught in the escalator. He is a very lucky boy, because he only lost his shoe."

Another docent, with a fierce expression and arms folded across her ample bosom, asked the children to divide themselves into their four prearranged groups. Before we left the school, I had promised the students that for once they could work with their friends. I am constantly forcing my split 6/7 class to work in cross-grade, cross-gender, cross-friend groupings. The docent insisted on four gender-equal groups, which made my students mad.



She then insisted that the mothers who had driven us on the field trip, were not to go with their child's group, which made the mothers mad. Horace misbehaved three times in the first five minutes, and that made me mad. So we all started off in a snit.

As we wandered through the exhibits, Rose-Ann sidled up and leaned on me, a habit I find annoying. She proceeded to tell me that her mother, on welfare, had just bought a new bedroom suite so there would be more room for her new boyfriend. This news annoyed me. (The family of three children has no money for

school supplies, so Rose-Ann steals them.) Then April confided that her single mother is three months pregnant. These intimate revelations embarrass me. Searching for a non-judgmental response, I asked, "How does she feel about that?" "Oh," said April, "she's horrified." They may have to move again—the fifth time this year.

I left April and Rose-Ann hoping their attention would turn to archaeology, and I wandered over to another group and gazed at my students happily sitting on a Hudson's Bay blanket bartering for trade goods. I enjoyed watching them interact with another adult and observed their range of interest, emotions, and participation, one of the great bonuses of a field trip. All the docents turned out to be kind, hard-working, and knowledgeable. I regretted using their appearance to make snap judgments on their characters, a lesson in life I frequently need to relearn. Another good topic to discuss with my class.

Noticing Parvinder all alone, and worrying that she had been the only girl in one of the cars, I approached her and tried to cheer her up. "I sure like your sweat top, Parvinder. Is it new?" "Yes," she replied. "I got it because of my baby brother." "Oh, really?" "Yeah, it's our custom. When a boy baby is born, we all celebrate and exchange gifts." "That's great," I rejoined, "and what happens if the baby is a girl?" "Oh, nothing," Parvinder replied. "Cuz, you know, when a girl grows up and gets married, the man can do anything he wants to her, so we don't celebrate."

This depressing answer so debilitated me that I returned my attention to the docent to regain my equilibrium. She began her next presentation. "So, when the archaeologist decides, SHE..." at this point the docent stopped, winked at me, nudged me, and then proceeded in a lower tone, "or, HE..." I hoped Parvinder was listening.

I wondered how Mark was doing and if his earnest off-topic remarks had surfaced and annoyed the docent.

While learning the correct procedure for doing a dig I learned that Henry, who regularly had no lunch, is being cared for by an older

brother. His father is in Japan and his mother is in Vancouver caring for a sick relative. "Who's cooking your dinner?" I asked him. "Oh, no one," was the reply. "We just get our own."

We finished our dig, returned the precious artifacts, and thanked the docents for an interesting experience. On the way out to the car, Rose-Ann told me about life when she was in the Women's Transition House and her upcoming EEG. Her mother had warned us that if Rose-Ann looks a little vacant and confused at school we should go up and shake her because she may be having a petit mal seizure.

We all returned safely to school. My students went to their next class and I prepared for a parent-teacher interview. The father in question had made an appointment for 11:30, not being able to come in at 08:20 as he was still in bed at that time. He arrived in a rage wanting to know why my class was only on p. 198 in the math text while the Grade 7 class across the hall was on p. 219. I was tempted to ask him why he got up at 09:00 when the rest of the world was up at 07:00. It turned out he is dyslexic, had never finished school, and is worried that the same fate will befall his daughter.

An hour later, he left and my partner caught me up on the latest educational excitement. She informed me that yesterday Henry had locked the entire class out of the gym during P.E. Aaron, who had beaten up Henry on Monday, had once broken his dog's leg. The father, on his third marriage, was reluctant to take Aaron to counselling.

I then filled my partner in on the morning events, wished her a pleasant afternoon teaching, and walked out into the hall. There I found Mary. I simply couldn't resist. I pointed to her shoes, giggled then said, "Eeeweeek! Pink Horrors!" Mary was not amused. I apologized for my crassness and gave her a quick hug.

As I left the school, my mind drifted back over the many wonderful children I have taught. Suddenly, I remembered Jane, who had died of a debilitating disease. She had been a student in a wheelchair.

Written by an anonymous B.C. teacher.

## Unemployment insurance and you

Teachers whose term contract expires or continuing teachers who are laid off and not recalled before June 30 are eligible to apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits for July and August. Teachers going on a leave of absence or quitting will likely be ruled ineligible to receive benefits unless they demonstrate "just cause" for leaving their employment. You should apply no later than July 3 to ensure that no weeks of UI benefits are lost because of late application. There is a two-week waiting period before benefits are paid.

### What to do to qualify for UI benefits

Apply for unemployment insurance benefits as soon as you become unemployed, that is, as soon as you are without a teaching contract. The waiting period begins the day your application is received. A delay in applying is a delay in obtaining benefits.

To remain on claim, you must be available for work and be seeking work. This means you must seek non-teaching employment daily, even if the chances of finding employment are slim.

Keep a detailed record of the employers you visit, the dates of the visits, and any other of your employment-seeking activities.

If you have young children, arrange for their care during working hours so that you will be able to accept a job when you find one.

Arrange for transportation to and from prospective jobs.

### What not to do

Do not restrict your search for work to one small local area.

Do not restrict your search to teaching.

Do not restrict the hours of work that you will accept.

Do not restrict the wage or salary you will accept. (If asked, say, "I will accept the prevailing rate of pay for the job.")

Do not allow your search for work to become too narrow. Be prepared to accept any work that is suitable and you are able to perform, especially after a long period of unemployment.

Do not confine yourself to one method of job search. Make telephone calls, answer newspaper ads, contact personnel offices, and check with friends.

Do not avoid a UI request to submit to an interview to find out whether you are available for and looking for work.

Do not sign any statement presented by a UI interviewer unless you understand and agree with everything it says. You are not required to sign any statement.

Do not be led into making any statements that indicate you are restricting your chances of obtaining employment.

Request a copy of any interview form prepared by the UI officer and check it for accuracy before you leave the UI office.

## What to do if benefits are denied

You have the right to appeal any decision of an insurance officer within 30 days of being disqualified or disentitled.

Your appeal will be heard by a three-person board of referees. You should attend the hearing if possible, and/or ask the Income Security Department of the BCTF to assist you. If you wonder about the advisability of appealing, contact the Income Security Department of the BCTF.

### Still have questions?

Contact the Income Security Department of the BCTF, 871-1920 (Lower Mainland), or 1-800-663-9163 toll free.

## Group BCTF RRSP under way

The BCTF has selected Phillips, Hager & North, one of Canada's most respected money managers, to provide investment-management services for the new Group RRSP. The Vancouver firm has over \$10.0 billion in assets under management. The company's impressive track record over 29 years and strong recent investment results led to its appointment from among a number of solid candidates.

Members of the Group RRSP will select from a Balanced Pension Trust, a fund investing in a mix of equities, bonds, and short-term investments; a Pooled Pension Trust, investing in common stocks in Canada and the U.S.A.; a Bond Fund; a Money Market Fund; and Royal Trust's five-year GICs. Royal Trust provides a preferred rate to members investing in the BCTF Group RRSP.

Royal Trust Corporation of Canada will administer the RRSP. Canada's largest corporate custodian, Royal Trust recently became a member of the Royal Bank Group of Companies, Canada's largest bank.

Prince George, Coquitlam, and North Vancouver are the first school districts off the mark. The locals have conducted enrolment meetings with presentations by both Phillips, Hager & North and Royal Trust.

Locals that have agreements in place with their boards to make payroll deduction and contribution to the Group RRSP should contact Ted Wormworth, director, Client Relations, at 662-2276 for more information and to establish the plan.

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Ken Smith and Karen Harper, of the Income Security Department, write this column for Teacher.

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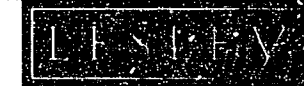
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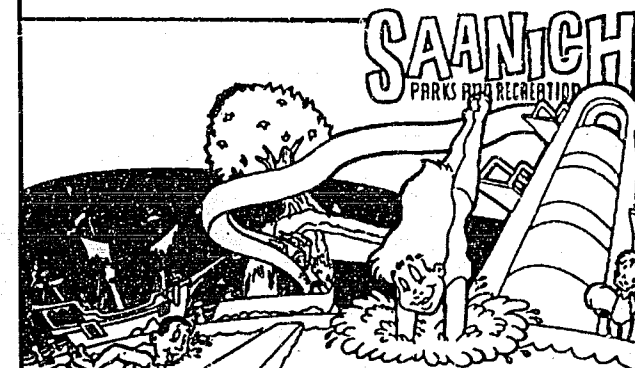
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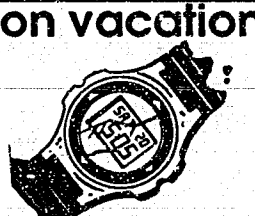
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## Global education: Opportunities for grants

The B.C. Global Education Project offers grants to B.C. educators interested in developing global-education learning materials.

Leading the list of topics:

- the state of children or youth in a global context.
- global issues concerning girls and women (gender issues).

• alternative perspectives on history as it relates to North-South development or critically analyses events, such

as the first encounters between European and indigenous people in Canada and British Columbia.

• sustainability as a local and a global issue.

• perspectives on international development such as cash cropping, debt restructuring, environmental degradation, population, human rights.

Materials that are interdisciplinary and cross-grade, directly connected to existing curricula, or designed

for application to new programs such as Learning for Living, Society and the Individual, or the environmental education elements of new curricula will be given high priority.

Funds will be allocated on the basis of the scope, need, and longevity of the material, up to \$2,000.

Direct inquiries about grant details to Pat Clarke, B.C. Global Education Project co-ordinator, and send proposals to the project office at the BCTF.

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- Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (R.I.E.) Levels I, II, III
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**WHISTLER.** Luxury townhome, Beachlands. New large 2 bdrm. 2 bthrm., dishwasher, microwave, washer/dryer, patio, fireplace, TV/VCR, Sleeps 6. Ski in ski out, next to tennis and golf. 943-4927 or 943-3354.

**PARIS CENTRAL.** 1 bdrm. fully furnished accommodation for \$520 weekly. Newly redecorated. Call 738-1876.

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**WHISTLER.** One bdrm. condo (Whistler Creek) sleeps 4, fireplace, hot tub, swimming pool, & sauna. Near stores. Summer & fall rate \$50/night. Book early. Phone Jan or John 530-0958.

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**QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS.** Join us for a memorable 10-day sea kayaking adventure in the beautiful South Moresby wilderness. Completely outfitted trips. No experience necessary. Contact Colin MacNeil, Ocean Sound Kayaking Co. 886-9330 or at Templeton Secondary 255-9344.

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**VESUVIUS BEACH.** Holiday accommodation on Salt Spring Island offers deluxe, self-contained, family suite with kitchenette, sun deck and private entrance. Privacy, scenery, swimming. (604) 537-4123. \$375/week. \$59/double.

**EDUCATORS BED & BREAKFAST NETWORK.** \$25 a night for two people. Stay with over 1900 members world-wide in this private travel network of B&B's for educators. Join our new house-sitting exchange. Choose your destination and we do the rest. Call (800) 377-3480, write Box 5279, Eugene, OR 97405, or fax (503) 683-8494.

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**BEACHFRONT CONDO.** Fabulous Bath-trevor Beach in Parksville on Vancouver Island. Spacious 2 bdrm. 2 bath condo. Linens and BBQ incl. Golf, horseback riding, hiking and charter fishing minutes away, or relax, place your beach chair on a sandbar and watch the tide roll in! Per night, off-season or summer weekly rates. For more information 477-6825.

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**OKANAGAN LAKE.** To rent, by week, tranquil summer home. Large sundeck and wharf. Phone 337-3695.

**BEACH HOUSE.** Salt Spring Island. Scenic tranquil private beachfront. Luxury 1 bdrm. self-contained apt. for exchange or rental for July/August 1994. Ph (902) 443-9566. Exchange: Vancouver/Victoria areas.

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**VERNON.** Bed & breakfast in an 1893 heritage home. Centrally located. Full breakfast, hot tub, shared bath. 545-9504.

**WHISTLER CREEK.** Large 2 bdrm., 2 bath, condo, dishwasher, TV, pool, jacuzzi, sauna. Janet 274-6774.

**PUERTO VALLARTA.** Two beach condos: Studio—Cdn. \$50/night includes 2 persons. Two bdrm., 3 bath Penthouse—Cdn. \$100/night includes 4 persons. 874-6643 or 874-0012 messages.

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**WHISTLER.** Two bdrm. cabin in Alpine Meadows. 3 min. from Valley Trail and Meadow Park-tennis, cycling, playground, water park. \$80/night. 433-4343.

**WHISTLER.** Alta Lake Resort 2 bdrm., 2 bathroom condo. Tennis. Beach. Phone 420-0725.

**BRITANNIA.** France. Oceanview house for rent. Brigitte 872-2728.

**CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY CRUISE.** Sail the sunny Caribbean for 10 days on Holland America's "Neordam". New Orleans to Ft. Lauderdale. Departs Dec 18. From \$2630 Cdn. including air from Seattle. Book before June 30 for 35% savings (cruise only). Special bonus for BCTF members. Call Kirk 687-2505 or Ruth 421-5396.

**SUMMERLAND.** Fully furnished 2 bdrm., 2 bath, home in orchard setting; exchange for accommodations in UBC area. July 1-Aug. 13. Willing to rent. \$1000 for 6 weeks. Non-smoking. 494-8978.

**WEST VANCOUVER.** July & Aug. 1 bdrm. apartment ground floor, furnished, private garage, water view. \$495. 921-7780.

**PARTS OF JULY-AUG.** Small summer cottage, private bay, wharf, two people car top boat required. Near Lund, B.C. 921-7780.

**VICTORIA.** Commonwealth Games, Aug. 18-28. Two bdrm. plus, new waterfront condo for rent, 1-2 week stay. Five min. to vesting, cycling, lawn bowling, 15 min. to track and ceremonies. \$150/day. Best deal in town, teacher owned, 474-1157 (H) 478-3232 (W).

**LANGLEY.** July & Aug. 1000 sq.ft., 2 bdrm., furnished home. Quiet, close shopping, backyard deck. Utilities, phone, heat included. Perfect for 1-2 non-smoking teachers completing coursework (30 min. SFU, 5 min. Kwadlen). \$1150/mo. Call 533-2666.

**KELOWNA.** June-Sept. 2 bdrm. fully furnished executive, lakeview home in sunny Kelowna. Close to amenities, large sundeck & yard, no maintenance. \$1250/mo., utilities included. Non-smokers, no pets. (604) 765-8417.

**KELOWNA.** Furnished new executive house only blocks from park beach, shopping, Okanagan College KLO campus. Available July/Aug. 94. Non-smokers. References, security deposit. \$880/mo. including utilities. 862-3414. 3596 Athlmer, Kelowna, BC V1W 3Y5.

**TSIAWASSEN.** Summer 94. Large family home. 5 min. to ferries and beaches. 35 min. to UBC. NS. Also avail. during Christmas break. (604) 948-1562.

**SURREY-VICTORIA.** July. Surrey teacher seeks house exchange in Victoria/Esquimalt area. July 10-29. (Will consider earlier July). Call Beverly 839-7761.

**PENTICTON.** Summer rental avail. 4 bdrm. home with hot tub, large fenced yard, & kids play area. Teacher exchange allows charts to hang freely. It has a tackboard on one side and a magnetic chalk board on the other \$149.95. We also

references apply for July/Aug. \$650/wk. 492-3974.

**VANCOUVER.** Large comfortable Keesdale house avail. Aug. 6-31. Close to UBC and 3 bus lines. 2 cats to care for. Children welcome. (604) 263-4646.

**WEST VANCOUVER.** July & Aug. 94. Fully furnished, bright, quiet, 2 bdrm apt. to share. A block to library, seavalk, bus route-stores. Call 926-1988 or 926-7197 for information.

**PRINCE GEORGE.** I.L.C. Fully furnished 1 bdrm. apt. for July & Aug. sublet. Close to bus routes and shopping. Non-smoker. \$340 per mo. Includes utilities and phone. 563-4147.

**NORTH SHORE.** Summer sublet. Apt. within walking distance of Lonsdale Quay and Seabus. Appropriate for single or couple for university study or Lower Mainland/Gulf Island exploration. Beautiful city view for that after dinner glass of wine. Bill 986-9484 for details.

**SALESPIRING ISLAND.** Delightful country home close to ocean, 3 large bdrms, 2 bthrms. Tastefully decorated. Suitable for two families for holiday/sleeping accommodation for 10. Close to all conveniences, sporting activities and beaches. No pets. Ref. required. Avail. June 1-Sept. 30. \$1200/wk. (604) 537-9607, 655-3970.

**VICTORIA.** S. Oak Bay. 1 bld. from beach, bus route to Uvic. 3 bdrm. furnished, large 1 bdr & den. June/July/Aug. \$800/mo. (604) 731-6831.

**NORTH VANCOUVER.** 1 bdrm. rental, approx. July 1-Aug. 15. Quiet, ideally located. NS. NP. \$600/mo. 985-4430.

**VICTORIA.** Centrally located, on Rockland between Linden and Cook, furnished, quiet, ground floor, quality apartment to share May-June and/or sublet July-Aug. Rent negotiable. Call 385-3189.

**QUALICUM BEACH.** 4 bdrm. house, fully furnished with all appliances. Walking distance to beach, beaches on nature trail. Weekly or monthly rates. July 4-Aug. 14. For more information, call 752-9119 or 752-3316.

**WORTH BURNABY.** Furnished 3 bdrm. townhouse, 2 baths, fireplace, airport, every appliance, quiet park-like setting. 5 min. to SFU, avail. Aug. 94-Aug. 95. \$1100/mo. plus utilities. 420-1521.

**VERNON.** Enjoy an Okanagan summer. Furnished 3 bdrm. executive house with private pool. Non-smokers to feed cat and cut lawn. July 16-Aug. 20. \$1000 + utilities. Phone 549-2661.

**COQUITLAM.** Large, beautiful 3 bdrm. home and studio space, near SFU, 35 mins. UBC, \$1200/mo. + utilities or weekly (July & Aug.) or exchange. 399-4779.

**STRATHCONA PARK/MT. WASHINGTON.** 2 bdrm. apt., sleeps 6-8, fully equipped. Hiking, biking, horse, riding, daily and weekly rates. No pets. (604) 338-5625.

**FAMILY VACATION.** Cultus Lake (Lindell Beach) 3 bdrm. summer cottage. Great swimming-safe beach. June/July/Aug. \$650/wk. Contact J. Sutherland, 2430 Trailview Terrace, Duncan, BC V9L 3Z6. 748-2965.

**SPECIAL CHRISTMAS** Caribbean Cruise or Spring Break Mexico. Discounts before June 30. Cruise Holidays Surrey 584-7245.

**GULF ISLANDS/STRAIGHT OF GEORGIA.** Enjoy sailing adventure in the Canadian Gulf Islands this summer aboard a 37' sloop. Learn to Sail course avail. Accorn, for 5. All charters are skippered/bareboat basis. Excellent rates \$15000/days/night. July 3-23 still avail. (604) 564-5696.

**THE OUTBACK - MINI RETREAT.** Your own cozy 1 bdrm. cottage in Coombs, Van. Is. Between Parksville & Qualicum. Fully furn. on woodsy acre & min. to gorgeous beaches, forest trails, river parks, horseback riding, golf. Antique shops, country market. (Goats on the roof!) En route to the Pacific Rim. Book by the day or week. Adult-oriented. (604) 248-2439.

**ROBERTS CREEK** Beach House B & B. Peaceful getaway by the sea. Very private accom. Full scrumptious breakfasts, home baked scones. \$600 (Q) couple 885-3310.

**SALTSRING ISLAND.** 2000 sq. ft. family waterfront home, 1 km to Gangos village, 3 bdrm. sleeping room for .0. Close to golf, tennis, kayaking, sailing, cycling, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, beaches. 10 min. away. Suit 2 families for holiday. Available June 1-Sept. 30. \$1100/wk. Ref. req. (604) 537-9607/655-3970.

**WHISTLER.** Exclusive chalet for rent. Low teachers summer rates. Sleeps 6-10. Walk to village, fully equipped. Ph. 244-1986. Please leave message.

## FOR RENT/EXCHANGE

**HAJIFAX.** 2 bdrm. luxury furn. apt. Overlooking Halifax Harbour. Non-smokers with ref. must apply for exchange or rental for July/August 1994. Ph (902) 443-9566. Exchange: Vancouver/Victoria areas.

**OAK BAY.** Comfortable executive family home, prestige address, fully furn., fenced. 23 bdrm, 6 min. to Uvic. References, security deposit. \$1350/month. Negotiable to right family. Avail. summer 1994-95. (604) 592-9932. Owner (714) 841-5456.

**VICTORIA.** Comfortable Oak Bay home near Uvic, beach, downtown, Commonwealth venues. July-Aug. weekly or monthly. Secure accommodation soon. Evenings. 598-8791.

**PENTICTON.** 4 bdrm. home 5 min. from downtown and beaches. \$1400/mo. Available July & August. Phone 493-7493.

**PENTICTON.** July 8-Aug. 20. 2 story home. No smokers or pets. Suitable 2 couples. \$700/wk. References, call (604) 492-7329 after 6:30 pm.

**POINT GREY GUEST HOME.** Elegant accommodation for discerning guests. 5 min. drive from UBC. Close to shops, sports facilities, and restaurants. Incl. TV, tea/coffee making. Single \$35. Double \$50. Weekly and monthly rates available.

**DUNCAN.** Summer '94. Charming, furn. 3 bdrm. home on quiet street 50 min. north of Victoria. \$275/wk. or \$1100/mo. References, deposit required. 746-8789.

**VICTORIA.** 2 bdrm. 1.5 bath condo, 5 appl. gas frpl. Secured uidg. pkg. Close to Uvic. Avail. Sept. 1 thru. or n.furn. w/p. ns. \$900/\$850 per mo. Call Len after 7 pm at 748-6837.

**DUNCAN.** B.C. Character, family home, furnished. Commonwealth Games, Uvic? Non-smokers, references, security deposit. Avail. Aug. '94. \$1200. (604) 748-3415.

**VANCOUVER.** Kits Beach, ocean views, large 1 bdr & den. June/July/Aug. \$800/mo. (604) 731-6831.

**WHISTLER.** comfortable 6 br. plus den cabin in Alpine Meadows. 3 dble. bds, 8 single bds, 2 baths, 1/2 blk. to Meadow Park, pool, rink and valley trails. Ideal for 2 families. Lots of space. Avail. July-Oct. \$700/wk. Call Fran 266-7541.

**BURNABY SUBLET.** Furn. highrise apt. with washer/dryer, in S. Burnaby across from tennis courts at Central Park. 1 bdrm. & den. Avail. June 1-Aug. 31. \$800/mo. Call 430-1044.

**VANCOUVER.** Teacher's deluxe 2 bdrm. & den condo avail. to sublet for Aug. Very bright with large south facing sundeck. \$750 plus util. Evenings 431-7859.

**VANCOUVER HOUSESIT.** July 4-Aug. 20. 5 min. UBC, new home, view, very clean. One female NS (604) 224-6447.

**KELOWNA.** House available. Sept/94 to 8/95. Desirable area near golf course, 4 bdrms. NS 762-8979 leave message.

## TO RENT/HOUSESIT

**WANTED.** Vancouver apartment/suite for July & Aug. (summer session instructor at SFU) Call (306) 653-0371.

**HOUSESIT KELOWNA.** Responsible, young, N.S. married couple wish to housesit July & Aug. Call July 763-5836.

**SAILBOAT/HOME.** Teacher couple, CVA certified, experienced charterers, wish to rent sailboat 28 feet plus or exchange same for 3 bdrm. home in Queens Park, New Westminster. August 1994. Carol or Martin 526-6



## STUDENT CONFERENCE

# Working writers meet aspiring young authors

by Willa Walsh

The audience was expectant, hushed. All eyes focussed on the poet, resplendent in her dress of vibrant color. Lorna Crozier, winner of the 1992 Governor General's Award for *Inventing the Hawk*, proceeded to mesmerize 200 secondary students with her poetry—poems that reflect her respect for the earth and its inhabitants. They speak out against cruelty, shallowness, and deception; they speak for authenticity, wonder, and delight. At the end of the speech, students came to talk with Crozier about her life as a writer and about their interest in writing.

This speech was the highlight of a day of sessions at the 5th Annual Richmond Writers' Festival—an event supported by the Richmond School Library, and the (now defunct) National Book Festival of Canada. The goal of this unique event is to connect students interested in writing with a "real" published author—someone they can see as successful as a writer. A variety of one-hour presentations provide the widest possible range of genres: script writing, poetry, prose, journalism, and non-fiction. Authors read from their works, discuss their lives as writers and share both the joys and the hardships of their field.

Some authors are at the top of their field, and others are just beginning their career, but all are working and writing and being published. Some even read selections from unpublished manuscripts they are currently working on.

What an opportunity this is for students to explore writing as a career and make connections for their future. A young poet finds an author who is interested in his work and is inspired to continue writing; a journalism student learns what makes an article grab the reader's attention and how to submit her manuscript to a magazine. The writers themselves are invariably delighted with the interest, enthusiasm, and ability of these young people. As one writer said of the students, "They are so eager!"

This year, some hesitant students waited patiently to talk to Bill Scherbrucker about his short stories on Kenya during the turbulent Mau Mau era. Drama students fell in love with the warmth, humor, and genuine interest extended to them by Nicola Cavendish, who spoke eloquently and fervently about realizing their creative talents. Students were challenged to ask what endeavors would really fulfill them in their adult lives.

Many writers over the past five years have stated that they wished they themselves

had had such an opportunity to meet a working writer. A spin-off from the writers' festival is an event organized to connect young fine arts students with working B.C. artists. This event, like the writers' festival, is held in the Richmond Cultural Centre—a new building at the centre of Richmond.

Teachers realize that curriculum must be relevant and engaging for students and that we must clearly demonstrate how knowledge and skills are linked to the world beyond school. These festivals make that connection explicit.

B.C. boasts a prolific writing community—1,000 writers reside in our province of mild climate and free thinking. (A huge International Writers and Readers Festival is held every October on Granville Island. Hundreds of students attend. Sechelt celebrates the written arts every August with a four-day festival of around-the-clock readings and speeches by noted Canadian writers. Possibly the largest literary event in Canada took place on May 7 at the B.C. Book Prizes Gala Dinner and Reception, held at the Robson Square Conference Centre and Vancouver Law Courts. This celebration of writing honored B.C. writer George Woodcock and was hosted by Pierre Berton. Hundreds of writers attended as well as the public.)

B.C. also has the highest number of independent bookstores in Canada and possibly in North America. Surveys show that we have the highest number of books read per capita in Canada and have a diverse and thriving publishing industry—despite little government support for the arts. All offer opportunities to writers and readers.

The Richmond Writers' Festival plays its part by nourishing students who are our future writers. As one student put it, "I was really inspired."

*Willa Walsh teaches at Matthew McNair Secondary School, Richmond.*

If you or your district is interested in organizing such an event you may contact Willa Walsh, Norma Jamieson, or Annelies Reeves in Richmond at 668-6575.

*Lorna Crozier, winner of the 1992 Governor General's Award for Inventing the Hawk, left the packed audience of secondary students spellbound by her poetry and stories of her life as a writer.*

*Who is this iron-fisted tribal king that shoulders his brazen cloak of war and humbly devours the stiff entrails of challenge?  
Who is this bard-like jester whose pleasantly subjective humour draws the well-guarded smile into fields of open vulnerability?  
What tellurian child soothes flaming madness of the fiery beast with languid wine of sweet voice?*

*"It's not me!" protests the ignorantly sacrificed eagle from within the bowels of my sown-up fettered chest.  
Don't send me on such laborious quests of dignified commemorative nature (polishing my reluctantly inevitable armour in the warm shadow of my back.)*

*"It's not me!"*

*and you shrug off my incessant rebellion with the threatening authority of a bloated tyrant.*



WILLA WALSH PHOTO

*Jason MacKay  
Grade 10 student  
Cambie Jr. Secondary School  
Richmond*

## Media education makes the grade

by Dan Blake

Are you ready to teach media education? A number of new curriculum guides being developed by the Ministry of Education in 1994-95 will have a media education component.

In late February, the ministry entered into a contractual relationship with the Canadian Association for Media Education (CAME) to produce a conceptual framework for media education and to indicate how media education can be integrated into all curriculum areas.

B.C.'s initiative in media education is unique. Media education has been part of the educational landscape in Ontario, Britain, Australia, and some European countries for several years now, and it has always been part of the language arts curriculum in B.C. Now the plan is to integrate media education into all curricula.

The need for media education has never been more urgent. The BCTF Task Force on Violence called for education about media violence. What is really needed, of course, is education about all aspects of the media. As the rationale developed by CAME for the ministry puts it: "...media and their messages are pervasive in the lives of students today." The document goes on to explain how education about the media will help students cope with the challenge posed by this all-pervasive media barrage:

"Media education encourages students to identify and examine the values contained in media messages. It also cultivates the understanding that these messages are produced by others to inform and entertain for a variety of purposes. Media education helps students understand the distortions that may result from the use of particular practices and techniques." As well, students become skilled in the creation of media products.

The Ministry of Education has entrusted classroom teachers to write what is basically brand new material. It needed expertise and it didn't hesitate to look outside ministry ranks to get it. The ministry is developing long-range plans to support these new curriculum materials by identifying recommended learning resources and developing planning guides for teacher implementation. These ministry initiatives are detailed and thoughtful. It is both exciting and challenging to be associated with this project.

*Dan Blake is an English/Media teacher at North Surrey Secondary School, president of the Canadian Association for Media Education, and a member of the CAME media-education-curriculum work group. For further information, contact him at 581-4433.*