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B.C. Teachers'
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It's time

by Alice McQuade

It's time we had a new collective agreement. For most of us, it's been two years since our last agreement. After the government decided that we should put our 75 agreements into one provincial agreement, we set up interim structures and worked on language to protect the provisions in our various local agreements, including services for our students. We know what we have to have in the provincial agreement. It is time to get a contract.

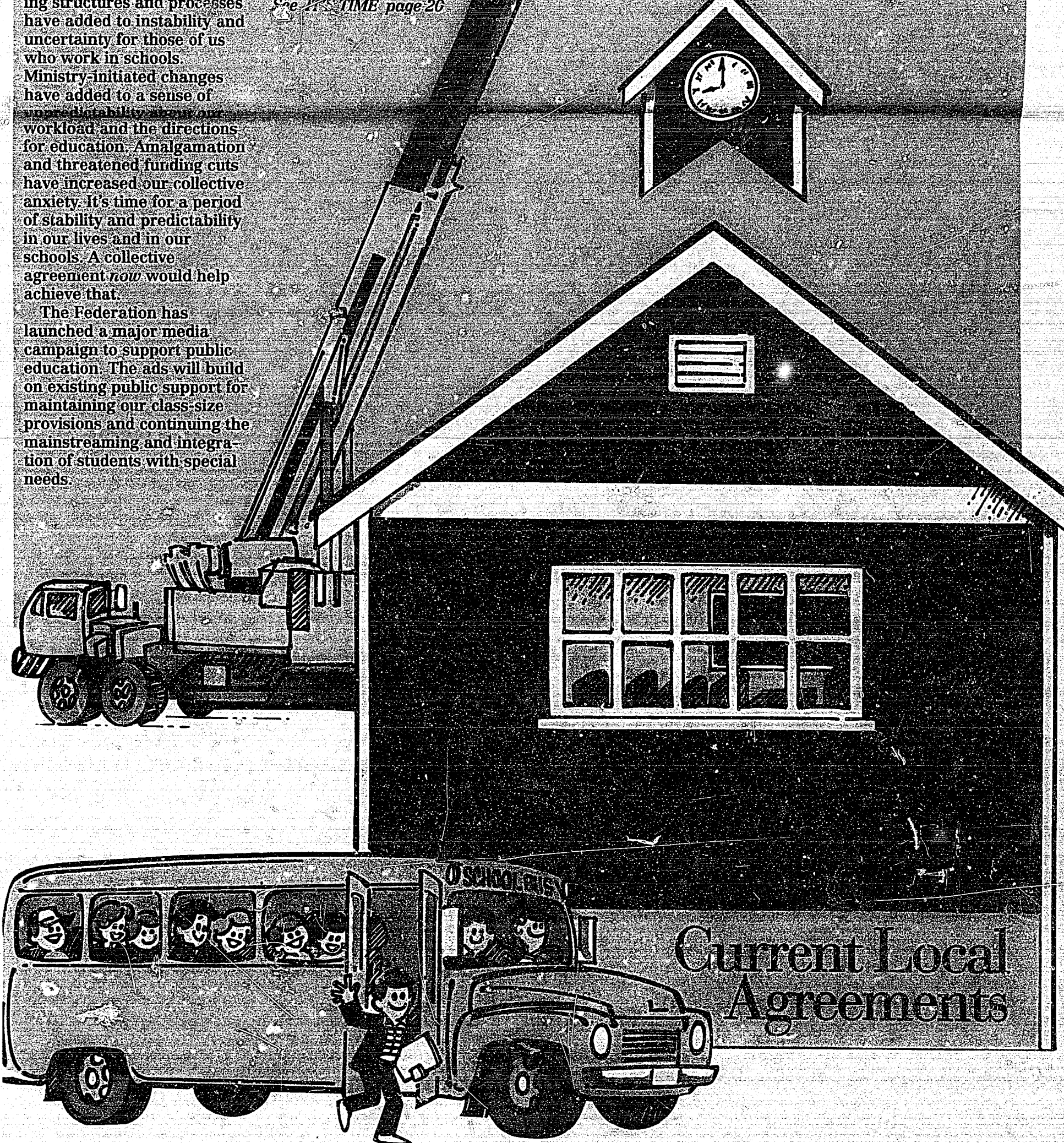
All the changes to bargaining structures and processes have added to instability and uncertainty for those of us who work in schools. Ministry-initiated changes have added to a sense of unpredictability about our workload and the directions for education. Amalgamation and threatened funding cuts have increased our collective anxiety. It's time for a period of stability and predictability in our lives and in our schools. A collective agreement *now* would help achieve that.

The Federation has launched a major media campaign to support public education. The ads will build on existing public support for maintaining our class-size provisions and continuing the mainstreaming and integration of students with special needs.

Our public education system is not part of the country's deficit, but rather a source of our future wealth. We want to ensure public agreement with this statement translates into public opposition to any government or political party that is advocating cuts to education like those seen in Alberta and Ontario.

Our campaign supports an education system that will meet the needs of all our students and counter the misinformation that is being spread to undermine it. We are running ads in community newspapers

See IT'S TIME page 20



READERS WRITE

Many different threads make up the BCTF. Most days these are very separate and distinct threads: professional development work, income security, legal aid, and grievance handling, for example. These distinct threads are bound together to form the BCTF and to carry out our mandate to serve members, enhance the profession and promote public education.

These separate threads are now being woven together as we turn our organizational and personal energies to securing a good collective agreement. The public education media campaign will be running, and teachers and the public will be seeing public education and teachers every day on their *television screens. Local* presidents and BCTF Executive members will be visiting schools to talk about bargaining. We will be meeting with our partner groups, the public, and the government to put forward our message that completing a good collective agreement is in the interest of all in the public education system.

We know, from our experience in the last three rounds of local bargaining, that there is a time for us to come together to bring about a settlement. That time is now. Our message to everyone is clear and very simple: The settling of a good collective agreement will bring stability to the system and will allow teachers to get on with teaching.

If all goes well, we may be celebrating the completion of our first provincial agreement by the next "President's message."

Alice

Thinking to some purpose

We begin by speaking as we think. We end by thinking as we speak. The words we use determine what and how we think. What we think determines what we do, or don't do.

We use the word *war* a great deal. We war against drugs, war against crime, war against poverty, war against child and woman abuse.

Drugs, crime, poverty, abuse are identified as enemies against which we must fight. So, as in any war, we work to arm ourselves so that we will become strong enough to defeat the enemy. We demand more police, sterner punishment, restoration of the death penalty, the lash. Beat the hell out of the enemy.

But these wars have not brought success in the past and there is no indication that using force, war, will be any more successful now or in the future.

Suppose we change our words. Instead of war against crime, let us speak of the problem of crime.

A problem requires study and thought; the rational, scientific approach; the asking of questions. What is crime? Why is there crime? Where does crime originate? What are the causes? When, under what conditions, does crime occur? Who is the criminal? Why is that person criminal, anti-social?

Would it make any difference to our action if we identified anti-social action as unwise?

A youngster misbehaves. Do we call such conduct bad? Or do we consider it unwise? Would our choice of words determine our response?

Think on these things.

Frank Snowsell
Kelowna

Powerful layout

Please convey my contratulations to designer Betty Sommerville. Her cover illustration on the Jan./Feb. *Teacher* gave an attractive and intriguing invitation to read Elaine Decker's cover story.

But I was stopped in my tracks as I flipped through the rest of the issue. Yes right in the middle of the sidewalk outside the post office I stood and read page seven. I didn't read the words on the page so much as I read the message through one of the most powerful and dramatic page layouts I can remember seeing in a newsmagazine.

What an effective way to dramatize the topic of violence. The stark white on black reversed print, the orange popout subheads and the photo by Chuck Russell all complement the story.

More could be said about a wonderful photo by Chuck Russell of the *Maple Ridge Times* and the work of the members in Local 42 in facilitating the violence prevention day in Maple Ridge, but I really want to say thanks to Betty Sommerville.

Hugh Jackson
Agassiz-Harrison

Oops

In the October '95 "Readers Write" we inadvertently credited Sally Ringdahl with an M.D. instead of an N.D. (a Naturopathic doctor).

And, in the Nov./Dec. '95 issue, author of "Green Gifts," Chantelle Desharnais, works for the Western Canada Wilderness Committee. We apologize for the errors.

BCTF Online

Access BCTF Online on the World Wide Web. The web site address or URL is: **http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bctf**

To join the open BCTF listservs or mailing lists:

Send an e-mail message to: **majordomo@bctf.bc.ca**

Leave the subject line empty.

Type the following command on the first line in the body of the message:

subscribe *listname*,

e.g., subscribe bctf-news

The list names are:

bctf-news
bctf-research
bctf-pd-issues

If you need assistance, e-mail Whitney Burgess at **wburgess@bctf.bc.ca**

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.

Your federation inside out

by Berniece Stuart

January and February are low on the scale of favourite months. If you're anything like me, you are having to divest yourself of the eggnog-, chocolate-, and shortbread-pounds accumulated over the winter holidays, and your budget limits your leisure pursuits to the odd movie from the video store.

It strikes me that there are other good reasons for January and February's poor rating. Apart from the freezing temperatures, grey skies, and icy roads, we have to contend with winter boots. Have you ever seen a pair of winter boots that made a serious fashion statement? Mine are a wrinkled grey, with water stains running up both sides. The heavy coats and scarves give one the appearance of an approaching woolly mammoth. Can you feel truly elegant as you tunnel out from inside those layers of insulation, only to contend with that dreaded STATIC CLING!? And what those woolen toques do to a coiffure gives new meaning to "bad hair day."

So while we can all be excused for feeling less than scintillating these days, we here at the BCTF refuse to be caught up in the winter doldrums.

The Research and Technology Division hosted its annual Robbie Burns single malt whiskey sampling session after work on January 31, and our resident connoisseur, Jim Caldwell, who has attended several single malt seminars, lectured on the evils of blended Scotch. Our administrative services supervisor Dorothy Robinson waxed poetic with her rendition of "wee sleekit cowerin' timerous beastie," whatever that means!

Organizers attempted to schedule a Scottish Elvis Impersonator contest, but because of a faulty sound system that screeched and honked, and a dearth of Elvis impersonators on staff, the contest was abandoned. Not, however, before Charlie Naylor's version of "Hunka Hunka Burnin' Love" brought tears to the eyes of many avid fans.

On February 14, staff celebrated "Warm Your Heart" day by bringing in homemade soup to share. And don't think we just tossed a couple of cans of Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup into a crockpot. No siree. We enjoyed steaming pots of Mulligatawny, black bean and sausage, seafood chowder, and lentil, to name just a few. And trust PD staff to do their bit for hypoglycemia by scheduling dessert Wednesday throughout the month of February.

What are you doing to fight the winter blues? If you have some really creative ways of making these months as much fun as your favourite time of the year, let me know and I'll add them to my file of blues-fighting techniques, which already include the following:

- Make an audition tape for that Hollywood movie that's going to be shooting in your locale. You might be the answer to that international talent search.
- Get your AGM wardrobe in order. Why wait till the last minute to shop for those perfect electable ensembles.
- Colour your hair. It doesn't have to look natural—just fabulous. Men, try some copper highlights; you'll be amazed at the looks you attract.
- Practise jumping into your pants. Although this is seldom actually a successful way to put on a pair of pants in the morning, attempting it burns calories and works those flabby thighs.
- Actually read and fill out those Publishers' Clearing-house forms that promise such vast rewards. By the time you've gone through the contents of the envelope, applied the stickers correctly, and made notes on how you'll spend the money, you'll be well into March.
- Apply to the federal government for a grant to study the burning question "Do centipedes have way more legs than are absolutely necessary"?

There's one scary thought that, for me at least, makes the dreary months of winter simply fly: Bathing-suit season is just around the corner.

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

Teacher

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

ORGANIZATIONAL

Grievetalk

Contract language and classroom reality

In a follow-up to the article "Get it in writing" in the Jan./Feb. issue of *Teacher*, here are more results of class-size arbitrations. These results illustrate why strong membership support for bargaining proposals is warranted and necessary.

MISSION
Class size/SST classification

The union had negotiated a class size of 15 for resource-room teachers. The school board subsequently renamed the position to "student support teacher" and argued that there was no longer a class-size limit. Arbitrator Allan Hope disagreed: "The board was not free...to rename the classification, maintain substantially the same duties, and then exclude teachers in the new classification from the class-size limit negotiated on their behalf.

VANCOUVER
K/1 class size

A teacher grieved her class size, claiming that her K/1 split class was oversized. The employer responded by moving some of the Kindergarten students from the morning to the afternoon in an attempt to circumvent the class-size limits by "creating two classes." The teacher and the union pursued the grievance, arguing that in a K/1 split, the Kindergarten students all had to be placed in either the morning or the afternoon so that the teacher had time to cover the Grade 1 curriculum and that there was only one class, with a limit of 23. Arbitrator Chertkow ruled that the employer could not split Kindergarten students in a K/1 split into both morning and afternoon, citing the teaching premise of K/1 and the violation of the collective agreement workload limits. The class was reconfigured correctly, with a reduced size.

LANGLEY
Thirty-five additional enrolling classroom teachers

A strike over class size had been settled by a letter of understanding that stipulated that 35 additional enrolling classroom teachers would be hired in targetted areas. The school board spent the money on photocopiers, paper clips, computers, and so forth, arguing that with school-based budgeting, all they had to do was allocate the money, not hire the teachers. Arbitrator Don Munroe disagreed: "...I simply cannot agree with the employer's limited view of its obligations under the collective agreement... There is nothing oblique, ambiguous, or even doubtful about the language used by the parties to express their bargain." Additional teachers were hired for a full school year.

–Lynne Sinclair

Voice mail arrives at the Federation

When you call the Federation after February 28, 1996, you will have the option of using the new voice-mail system.

The BCTF is instituting a voice-mail option to assist communications between members and staff at the BCTF. We are making a special effort to ensure that callers continue to receive the same personal assistance when contacting our employees and officers plus having a new option of leaving a voice-mail message if that person should not be immediately available to answer your call.

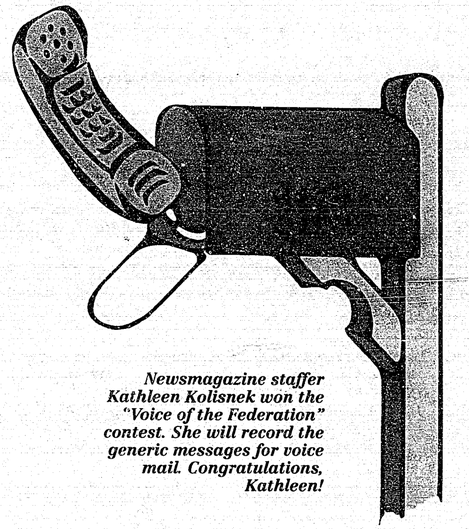
We anticipate this new service will be helpful for officers and members of the locals who regularly contact the Federation's staff and wish to leave a longer, more detailed message. Our voice-mail option will improve the efficiency of our communications while maintaining the personal involvement of the staff in handling your phone call.

If an individual you are calling cannot answer your call, you will have the option of "personal assistance" during regular office hours. As an alternative, you may choose to leave a detailed message in the staff person's mailbox. Voice mail will also enable you to leave messages at any time, including those times when the switchboard is not normally staffed. Federation employees will regularly access their voice-mail messages and update their mail greetings with information useful to callers (i.e., when they will be available to return calls).

Over the past year, a BCTF staff group has been researching voice-mail systems. The research has included a member and staff survey, surveys of other teacher unions across Canada, and surveys of other unions in the province. The data gathered from the research has been used in developing the implementation plan for the BCTF's voice-mail system.

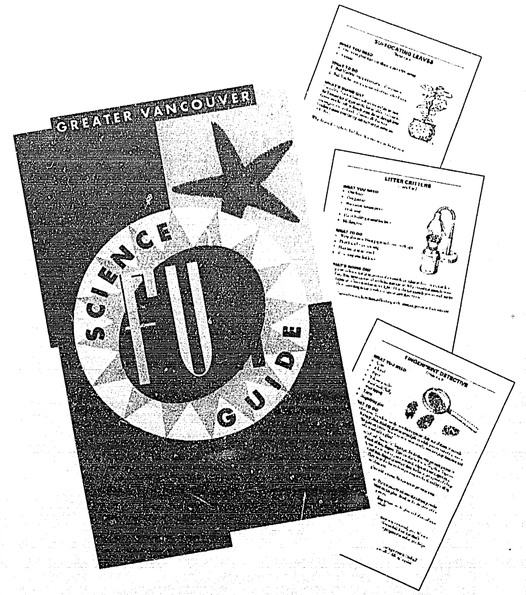
The BCTF believes that effective two-way communication is crucial in serving its members. The implementation plan will include an assessment of the effectiveness of the new voice-mail option in meeting members' needs. Your comments on our voice-mail option are welcome at any time. To provide direct feedback on the voice-mail option, just ask for extension 2113, or dial directly to 871-2113. We hope that you will find that the new voice-mail option improves our communication with you.

–Elsie McMurphy



Newsmagazine staffer Kathleen Kolisnek won the "Voice of the Federation" contest. She will record the generic messages for voice mail. Congratulations, Kathleen!

Yours for the asking



Science is fun

Science and technology are everywhere in our lives, every day.

The Greater Vancouver *Science Fun Guide*, Science World's first book, contains 70 *simple, enjoyable activities* for the classroom and the home, using inexpensive materials—everything from making a cake-pan guitar to building your bog.

This guide is available for $12.95 at the Science World Gift Shop and other selected bookstores, or by phone at (604) 443-7506.

The students' bill of information rights

The Students' Bill of Information Rights, published by the Association for Teacher-Librarianship in Canada, is available in either French or English. The 21 cm by 35 cm posters are $2 each for 1–10 copies, plus $5 shipping and handling; 11–35 copies are $1.50 each, plus $10 shipping and handling. Send prepaid orders to Marlene Turkington, 782 Warv Street, Woodstock, ON N R1.

Ge ady for Earth Da 96—April 22

Earth Day Canada operates year round to improve the environment by motivating and helping Canadians to take positive environmental action.

For more information on what you can do, contact Earth Day Canada, 205–144 Front Street West, Toronto, ON M4J 2L7, (416) 599-1991, F: (416) 599-3100.

K–7 PE IRP

Are you an elementary generalist teacher in B.C. who has not seen the K–7 Physical Education Integrated Resource Package (IRP)? Probably not enough copies were mailed to your school. The Ministry of Education distributed only a few copies to each school. The Physical Education Provincial Specialist Association (PEPSA) believes that if teachers are required to deliver this *program, they must have the* IRP to do so.

To receive your free copy, have your school administrative officer fax the Learning Resources Branch at 1-604-387-1527, on your behalf, requesting the PE IRP at no charge. For further information, contact Debbie Keel, president of PEPSA, at (604) 465-5828, F: (604) 465-8632, e-mail: dkeel@cln.etc.bc.ca.

Cable in the classroom

Cable in the classroom announced another exciting resource with the launch of its new World Wide Web site. Educators, parents, and students can visit the online companion for Cable in the Classroom by pointing their web browser to http://www.cableducation.ca/

The Cable in the Classroom web site is a bilingual collection of computer files and Internet links designed to facilitate teachers' use of the television offerings.

Cable in the Classroom also produces a bilingual magazine three times each year. Member cable operators distribute this magazine to each school, free of charge. The winter issue, now being distributed, includes more details about the web site, an extensive listing guide, as well as feature stories about how to use video, themes teachers can develop, and how individual teachers are using Cable in the Classroom.

For more information, contact Shari Baldwin (613) 232-2631 or Paul Temple (416) 391-7215.

– Karen Peterson

"Move back in with your parents during your first year teaching." "Accept a wide variety of teacher-on-call assignments if you want to find a job." "Be visible in the school." This was some of the advice beginning teachers heard from their colleagues on the Thursday-evening panel at the Beginning Teachers' Conference organized by the BCTF, January 11–13, 1996.

During the opening session, participants heard Executive Director Elsie McMurphy give her personal history of involvement in the local and the BCTF. Later, Executive Committee members conducted tours of the Federation building.

Friday and Saturday, participants attended workshops on teaching strategies, BCTF services, and coping mechanisms like financial planning and wellness. Publishers' representatives donated prizes, and winners returned to their assignments with useful teaching materials. In scheduled networking sessions participants shared, problem solved, and widened support systems.

The 150 beginning teachers attending the conference came from 40 locals. Some first-year teachers in full-time positions were first-year graduates of university teacher-education programs. Many more, two or three years out of university, have worked as teachers-on-call and in part-time positions since graduating.

It was an exciting and fun-filled conference for all who attended. Calls for information about the next conference are already coming to the PD division, reflecting the fact that we are welcoming more and more teachers to the profession annually and that these newcomers are eager to make a connection with their professional organization.

– Margaret Ross

KATHLEEN MACKINNON PHOTOS

First-year graduates from teacher-education programs attend the Beginning Teachers' Conference organized by the BCTF, January 1996.

Ontario's education nightmare

Earl Manners, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, was the keynote speaker at the BCTF's Representative Assembly February 25–26, 1996. He warned teachers in B.C. of the dire consequences of not anticipating the New Right attack on public education. Manners described the assault on public schools and teachers by the Mike Harris Conservatives, an attack that has just begun:

- A $400 million cut to school budgets for next year.
- Apparent plans to remove teachers' preparation time and extend the school day.
- Reduction of sick-day credits from 20 to 6 per year.
- Implementation of *differential staffing*—the replacement of qualified teachers in such areas as guidance, libraries, and computer education.
- The new College of Teachers will have draconian powers to investigate questions of competence, including the power to search teachers' homes.

PETER OVENS PHOTO

Earl Manners, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

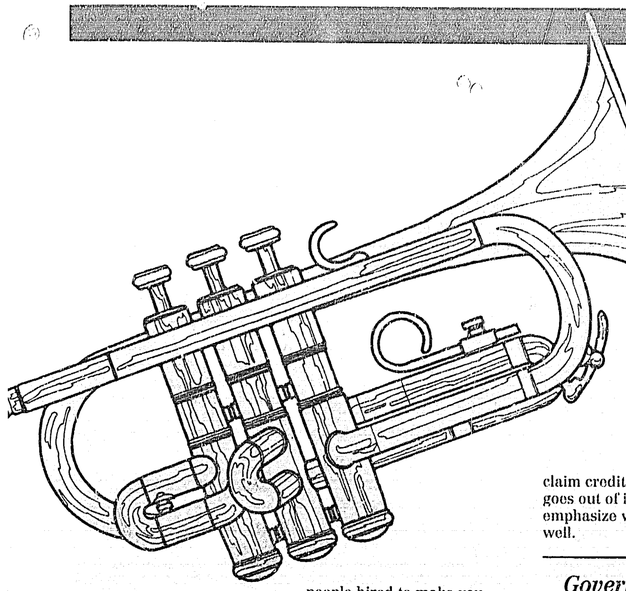
Manners had a message for B.C. "You can't rely on the Rockies to protect you from the revolution of the Right. You have to be vigilant."

He also cautioned about false promises. Mike Harris stated repeatedly during the election campaign that he would make no cuts in education.

– Murray Dobbin

PETER OVENS PHOTO

The BCTF Negotiating Team. (Back row, left to right) Jim Iker (Burns Lake), Sharon Wood (Sunshine Coast), Don Briard (Vancouver Secondary), Alice Rees (Central Okanagan). (Front row, left to right) Jean Rands (staff), Doug Hogg (Cranbrook), Alice McQuade (President), Ray Worley (Vernon), Brian Porter and Al Cornes (staff).



It's time to acknowledge our success

by Kit Krieger

Picture this: A political leader appears on television to confess that his government has failed. Its programs have not met the needs of the electorate, but it is going to try again.

Not likely, you say. While middle management and clerical jobs are fast disappearing, opportunities mushroom for spin doctors, people hired to make you believe that the latest increase in unemployment figures signal government's success in increasing the leisure time of the citizenry!

Governments are quick to claim credit for successes, even those manufactured by chance or by others, and quick to deny responsibility for their mistakes.

Public education is the exception to the rule. Government is reluctant to claim credit for success, and it goes out of its way to emphasize what isn't going well.

Government can demonstrate success more credibly in education than in most other areas...

Does the forestry minister suggest that government's forestry practices are leading to ecological disaster? Does the health minister point out increases in the death rate? Does the minister responsible for welfare claim that under her watch, welfare fraud is on the rise?

I wish that ministers of education and premiers would promote the successes of public schools to the same degree that they crow about other, more modest, successes.

Why do government's believe that they can score political points by denigrating the school system they superintend? Couldn't they gain more points by crowing that schools are better than ever and still improving?

Government can demonstrate success more credibly in education than in most other areas:

- More children are going to school and learning more than at any time in our history.
- Public schools are providing educational opportunities to students with special needs who were once segregated from their communities.
- School programs are more diverse, offer more choices, and are more meaningful than ever before.
- Our schools include visa students whose parents have chosen Canadian schools over the vaunted systems in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea.

It's time to acknowledge the contribution public education and teachers make to our society.

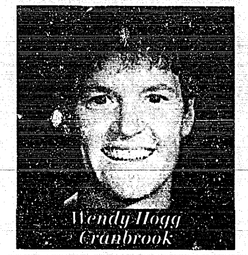
This continuous improvement is occurring despite schools' assuming responsibility (sometimes sole responsibility) for addressing social issues such as racism, sexism, family violence, AIDS, and poverty.

It's time to acknowledge the contribution public education and teachers make to our society. We need to counter the misinformation that is eroding confidence in public schools and fuelling such misdirected trends as charter schools and back-to-basics schools.

Kit Krieger is president of the West Vancouver Teachers' Association and a product of the B.C. public school system.

Speaking personally

How do you handle the pressure of report-card writing?

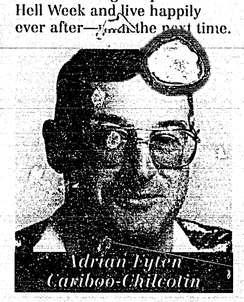


Wendy Hogg Cranbrook

Report-card time again! I have a dilemma; I set high standards for myself. I want the report cards to be accurate reflections of my students' progress, to be easily read and understood by parents, and to look professional. But all of this takes time.

How do I find the time in my already busy schedule to add 25 hours? What do I cut out? Housecleaning has already taken a blow. Lesson preparation can be minimized, but how many videos can one show in one week? Family time runs a deficit; the youngest daughter has to survive with a quick hug at night instead of a bedtime story. I can usually take time from my sleep budget, but the kids seem harder to teach and proper words harder to come by when I'm tired.

Every time I do report cards, I say to myself, Next time, it won't be so bad; I'll start earlier, and I won't push myself to perfection. But it seems that the immersion method is the way I operate, and I still have trouble lowering my standards. Somehow the family and I make it through Report Card Hell Week and live happily ever after—until the next time.



Adrian Tyten Cariboo-Chilcotin

I am a public school teacher in a privately run provincial resource program teaching behaviourally challenged young offenders. Report-card writing occurs monthly, and the feedback, evaluation, and assessment of student performance goes on daily.

Within one month of a student's entry to the program, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written based on past successes and goal-appropriate, age-appropriate grade placement. The monthly reports I write receive wide circulation to caregivers, social services, probation, school permanent records files, parent/ guardians, and school files. Reports include criterion-referenced academic evaluation in English, social studies, math, sciences, physical education, business education, and a work pre-employment course.

The most significant feedback I receive is from the students, who say they have done more school work and learned more in the six months they are with the program than in any previous secondary school. Is there a report card or system out there that can do better? Please call me if there is.

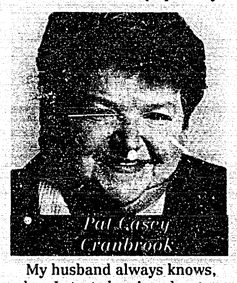
Kathryn Sihota Sooke

How many times do we write report cards each year? Is it 12? I can't keep track. Seems every time I think I've just rounded that bleary-eyed curve and watched the last photocopy spew out of the machine, it's time to start again. Not only start again, but *learn* again. What will it be this time? Seven-way conferences? Letter grades, but only if your surname begins with M–Z? Criterion-referenced recess?

Don't get me wrong. I think change is necessary and beneficial. In fact, I'm one of those attempting to leap onto each bandwagon that rolls by. But couldn't we stick with one idea for more than 30 seconds? Aren't we supposed to actually interact with the kids? I wouldn't mind limiting myself to one new ministry guide per day, would you?

How do we avoid this stress? Easy. Remember those photos you have from 1962. Aren't they screaming for an album? What about that closet that holds your platform shoes and your pet rock—doesn't it need looking into? OK, what about Auntie Lily in England? Don't you owe her a letter?

Avoid reports as long as you can. Don't bother planning ahead or starting a month early. Don't scribble anecdotes each day after school or madly collect work samples. Do it all in one blur of a weekend. Avoidance is the only avenue. I should know. It's my specialty.



Pat Casey Cranbrook

My husband always knows, when I start cleaning closets and catching up on overdue correspondence, that it's report-card time! My avoidance techniques keep me busy until I can postpone the dreaded task no longer.

At 06:00 on the Saturday before reports go out, I gather all my data, fire up the computer, and work until I have finished. Then I feel a great sense of relief.

I used to feel a great sense of accomplishment and, yes, even pride at a useful job, well done. But now I settle for relief. Perhaps it's my advancing age and diminishing intellect, but I don't feel that my report cards are as good as they used to be.

My report cards used to be like friendly letters home to the parents, based on a mutual understanding that I would tell them how their child was doing and they would read the report card and probably understand it.

Now my report cards read like computerized résumés, and I have the awful feeling that the principal and I are the only people who read many of them. The parents and children seem content just to look at the letter grades.

Report card stress is increased by uncertainty—Do I really understand criterion referencing? What happens to the In Progress (IP) if the goal is never reached? Why are the report cards so long? Why did the government cut out conferencing time by limiting early dismissals?

I plan to retire within the next few years, and that will solve my problem of report-card stress. I'll miss the kids, and I'll miss my colleagues, but I won't miss doing report cards.

COLLEGE INSTITUTE EDUCATORS

by Roseanne Moran

Eight of the province's 22 colleges and institutes were the target of job action on January 31, 1996. Locals of the College Institute Educators' Association of B.C. (CIEA) exercised strike mandates following the breakdown of historic provincial talks. Following the January 31 action, the CIEA locals have been rotating strike action.

The institutions affected by the job action are Douglas College, East Kootenay Community College (College of the Rockies), Kwantlen University College, Okanagan University College, Langara College, North Island College, Selkirk College, and Vancouver Community College. More CIEA locals may join in as their contracts expire and they take strike votes.

The impetus for provincial talks began in the fall of 1995, when bargainers and presidents of CIEA local associations and unions came to an understanding that bargaining could not be business as usual. The threat of federal funding cuts to post-secondary education, concern about the provincial economic picture, and the centralization of the bargaining process created uncertainty and confusion.

By early fall, eight locals of the CIEA were either in strike mode or coming to the end of unproductive bargaining. Bargainers, local presidents, and members were feeling pressures that had to be factored into bargaining.

Faced with a difficult situation, and with the knowledge that the answer to problems no longer lay with individual employers, the CIEA embarked on a novel and controversial path. In an attempt to defend members' job security and to achieve fair compensation, the CIEA lobbied to solve some of the emerging problems through a provincial forum.

At the table, employers are represented by the Post Secondary Employers' Association (PSEA), which includes a combination of board members, human resources managers, and the president (CEO) of each college and institute. A representative of the Ministry of Skills, Training, and Labour is also at the table. From time to time, other ministry representatives, including the deputy minister and the assistant deputy minister, have appeared. A representative of the Public Sector Employers' Council assigned to the PSEA is also at the table.

> *The outcome... would not be a master agreement; instead, it would be a framework agreement, with changes incorporated into a letter of agreement attached to local collective agreements when ratified by the local parties.*

All employee groups are represented in the process: faculty, support staff, and even non-union employees. Twenty-five local unions, represented primarily by the CIEA and the B.C. Government Employees' Union (BCGEU), are at the table to bargain system issues. The current dispute, however, concerns only faculty collective agreements.

The Joint Union Caucus, representing faculty and instructors, identified two system-wide issues as paramount: job security and compensation fairness. Measures are needed to prevent the reduction in funding (layoffs) and the effects of restructuring (displacement and termination) and privatization. Compensation fairness would end the disparities in salaries across the province, end pay discrimination against non-regular employees, and provide inflation protection.

During the multi-institutional discussions, the Joint Union Caucus identified new forms of work, placed a high value on job security, and exposed the anomalies and inequities among the faculty groups in the province. The outcome of discussions would not be a master agreement; instead, it would be a framework agreement, with changes incorporated into a letter of agreement attached to local collective agreements when ratified by the local parties.

To give the provincial process time to work, the eight CIEA locals who had taken successful strike votes prior to the beginning of provincial bargaining had agreed to delay any job action until January 5 and then again to January 31.

On January 26, 1996, after four months of pressure by the CIEA and its partners to establish the process and to get results, provincial talks broke down. Bargaining ended when the Post Secondary Employers' Association sought productivity gains by proposing roll-back provisions in the unions' collective agreements. CIEA President Ed Lavalle said that college and institute

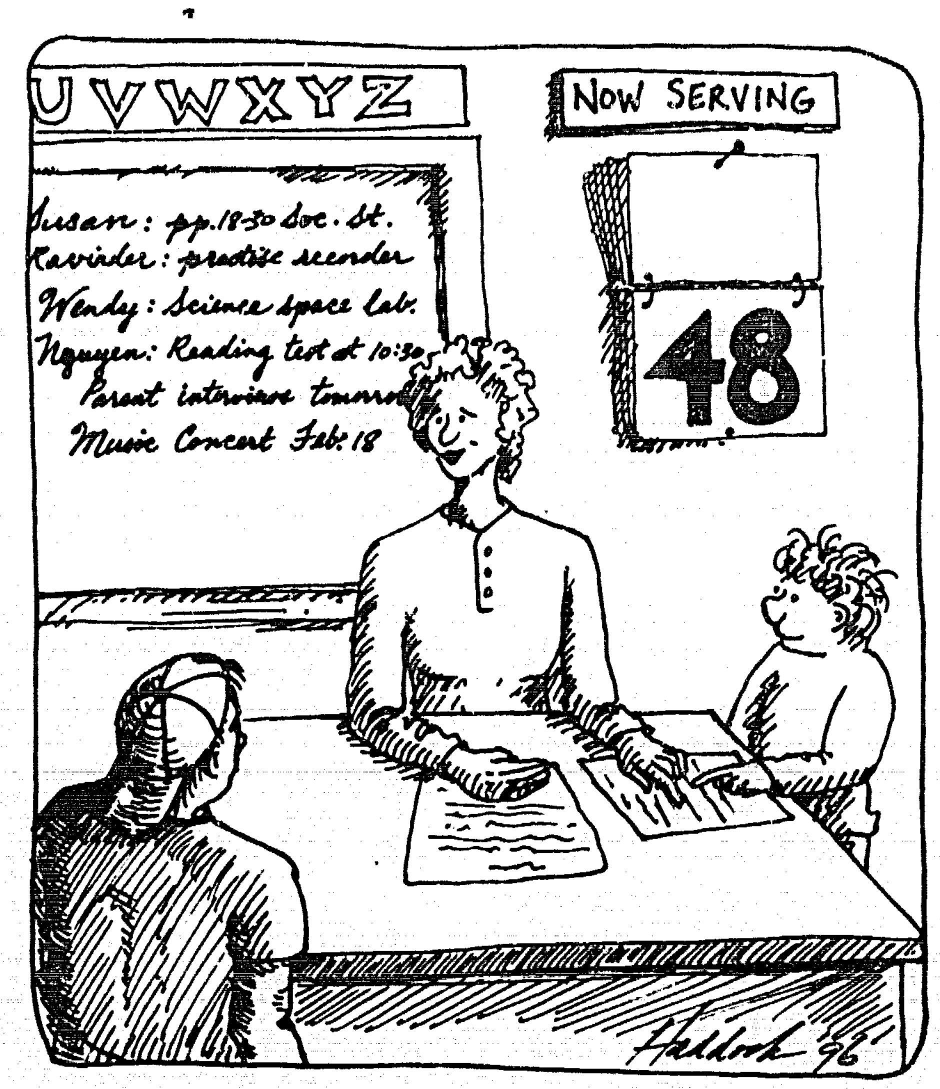
> *CIEA President Ed Lavalle said that college and institute employers had given every indication that they prefer conflict over co-operation.*

employers had given every indication that they prefer conflict over co-operation.

The CIEA's Bargaining and Co-ordination Review Committee also expressed concern that employers seem intent on proposing solutions that would gut collective agreements and would place the burden of maintaining access on the shoulders of faculty and other workers in the system. The employers' proposals include longer teaching hours, larger classes, and less time for professional development.

The eight unions are now engaging in rotating strikes. No talks have been held since bargaining broke down January 26.

Roseanne Moran is a staff representative with the College Institute Educators' Association of B.C.



"I'm sorry, Johnny. Your number doesn't come up 'til Thursday."

GALE

by Murray Warren

A young man in Grade 12 walks into school wearing a skirt. The school-board office's response is that he be sent home. It attempts to justify its decision by saying it's too close to final exams and other students will be adversely affected by the boy's actions. Where were this young man's school counsellors, teachers, and principal when he needed their understanding and support?

Partially in response to situations such as this, and feedback from classroom teachers, counsellors, and other educators, GALE BC (Gay and Lesbian Educators of B.C.) has developed a resource package for all junior- and senior-secondary schools on issues of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students.

With funding from the Ministry of Education (Gender Equity and Women's Programs) in 1994, GALE initiated a project to develop the resource package in co-operation with the BCTF, specifically with the Federation's School Counsellors' Association, Children's Rights Committee, and the Status of Women Committee.

The project developed a counsellor's handbook, a

> Counselling Lesbian and Gay Youth, *includes sections on advocating for gay and lesbian youth, dealing with homophobia in the school system, and counselling gay and lesbian students.*

poster, a brochure, a resource list, and workshops. The resource package went to all junior- and senior-secondary schools in September 1995.

The handbook, *Counselling Lesbian and Gay Youth*, includes sections on advocating for gay and lesbian youth, dealing with homophobia in the school system, and counselling gay and lesbian students. The handbook will raise awareness in educators regarding the issues lesbian and gay youth face in schools.

The poster depicts a positive image of lesbian and gay youth and includes a list of resources available to them, particularly if they are struggling with sexual identity. In a non-threatening way, it makes information available to students who might not otherwise have access to those resources.

The brochure, *I Think I Might Be Gay or Lesbian*, gives students direct access to information regarding this question. Its dispels myths and stereotypes about gays and lesbians. It should be prominently displayed in counselling suites, where students can pick it up easily.

Developed over the past two years for people who want to learn more about lesbian and gay issues or who are themselves exploring their sexuality, the GALE "Recommended Resource List" provides titles of materials available in most public

> I Think I Might Be Gay or Lesbian, *gives students direct access to information regarding this question.*

libraries and in many bookstores. Counsellors are encouraged to pass the list on to teacher librarians, who may wish to use it in selecting resources for school libraries.

In April 1995, the GALE Workshop Committee planned and facilitated a workshop for Lower Mainland school counsellors, teachers, classroom assistants, daycare workers, and special-education assistants to raise awareness of and sensitivity to the issues lesbian and gay students face. A follow-up workshop is being planned for 1996.

Feedback on the resource package from counsellors and other educators has been positive. To obtain copies of any of the materials, contact your school counselling department, or write to GALE BC, Box 93678, Nelson Park PO, Vancouver, BC V6E 4L7.

Now that these resources are available to schools in B.C., counsellors and educators will be better able to assist lesbian and gay students struggling with sexual identity. Silence and inaction on the part of educators need not continue. Let's hope that from now on, situations like the one described at the beginning of this article will be handled in a more positive and supportive manner.

Murray Warren is a member of the Media Committee, GALE BC.

80th Annual General Meeting Agenda

FIRST SESSION

19:00
Welcome
Preliminaries
a. Adoption of chairpersons, scrutineers, tellers, Resolutions Committee
b. Adoption of agenda
c. Adoption of 1996 AGM minutes
President's Report
Constitution and By-laws
Resolutions 112, 113, 114, 115 (pages 14-15)
Introduction to Executive Committee Leadership Report
Overview
Recommendations 1 (page 8), 6 (page 9)

20:30 Timed Item
Greetings from: B.C. School Trustees' Association, B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Council, B.C. Federation of Labour, CUPE

Continuation of Previous Items

21:30 Timed Item
Election Statements: Candidates for Table Officer Positions

22:00
Adjourn

SECOND SESSION

09:00
Minister of Education Questions
Public Education
Recommendations 2, 4, 5 (pages 8-9)
Public Affairs
Recommendations 22-28 (pages 28-31)
Unfinished Business

12:30
Lunch

THIRD SESSION

14:00
Education Policy
Recommendation 9 (p. 15)
Resolutions 116-119 (pp. 15-16)

14:30 Timed Item
Executive Director's Address

15:00
Continuation of Previous Items
Affirmative Action
Resolutions 101-103 (p. 12)
Professional Development
Resolution 139 (p. 28)
Teacher Education
Recommendation 29 (p. 31)
Resolution 142 (p. 32)
Labour Affairs
Recommendation 21 (p. 23)
Resolutions 129-130 (pp. 24-25)
Unfinished Business

16:00 – International Solidarity Award

16:15 – Special recognition

16:30
Election Statements: Candidates for Member-at-Large Positions

17:00
Adjourn

20:00
Dance – Plaza Ballroom

FOURTH SESSION

09:00
Guest Speaker: To be confirmed
Bargaining
Update, etc.
Recommendations 3 (p. 8), 8 (p. 12)
Resolutions 104-110 (pp. 12-14)
Health and Welfare
Recommendations 7 (p. 10), 18, 20 (pp. 19-22)
Resolutions 122-128 (pp. 20-23)
Unfinished Business

12:30
Lunch

FIFTH SESSION

14:00
Pensions
Resolutions 137-138 (pp. 27-28)
Finance
Adoption of the Financial Statements
Recommendations 10-17 (pp. 17-18), 19 (p. 21)
Resolutions 120-121 (pp. 18-19)
Organization of the BCTF
Resolutions 132-136 (pp. 26-27)

16:30 – Timed Item
College of Teachers' Report
Resolution 111 (p. 14)

16:45
Continuation of Business
Ombudservice
Report of the Ombudservice
Resolution 131 (p. 25)
Unfinished Business

17:25
Final Call for Nominations

17:30
Adjourn

NOTE: A Tuesday evening session will be scheduled, if necessary.

SIXTH SESSION

09:00
Elections
Teachers on Call
Resolution 143 (p. 32)
Unfinished Business

12:15
Questions on Committee Reports

12:30
Lunch

SEVENTH SESSION

14:00 – Timed Item
Address: Maureen Morris, President, Canadian Teachers' Federation
Hilroy Award/Other awards

14:30
Status of Women
Resolutions 140-141 (p. 31)
Violence Prevention
Recommendations 30-31 (pp. 32-33)
Unfinished Business
Late Resolutions
New Resolutions

17:15
Closing courtesy motion

17:30
Adjourn

Status of Women at the AGM

The Status of Women Committee will bring forward four recommendations to the AGM: violence prevention; regulation of media violence; female genital mutilation; and the Criminal Code of Canada.

These and other issues regarding the status of women and social responsibility, collective bargaining, and the public education campaign will be discussed at the Status of Women's pre-AGM meeting on the afternoon of Sunday, March 17, in the Plaza East Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Please check the hotel's events board for the mid-afternoon time.

The Executive Committee recommendations are worded as follows:

That the BCTF encourage local school boards to provide or facilitate effective parenting programs, which promote the prevention of violence, for the parents of children attending schools within their district.

That the BCTF urge the government to work in collaboration with other levels of government to monitor and regulate violence in the media.

That the BCTF call upon the Federal Minister of Justice to take the required action to ensure the passage of Bill C-277, a bill to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to make female genital mutilation a criminal offence.

That the CTF, its affiliates and non-affiliates call upon the Federal Minister of Justice to take the required action to ensure the passage of Bill C-277, a bill to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to make female genital mutilation a criminal offense.

– Carole Caldwell

Notice of Special Resolutions

Notice is hereby given in respect of the following Special Resolutions which may be considered by the 1996 AGM "with or without amendments" within the scope permitted by the Society Act.

By-laws

Resolution 112
(Agassiz-Harrison Teachers' Association and the Cowichan District Teachers' Association)
That By-law 3.4 be suspended for a period of two years, ending June 30, 1998.

Resolution 113
(Howe Sound Teachers' Association)
That By-laws 3.4 and 3.6 be suspended to ensure that the BCTF maintain all present levels of service to members and maintain current levels of local representation in all BCTF structures.

Resolution 114
(Kitimat District Teachers' Association and Mount Arrowsmith Teachers' Association)
That By-law 3.4 be rescinded at the 1996 AGM.

Resolution 115
(Greater Victoria Teachers' Association)
That the second sentence of By-law 8.2 be amended to read:

> Each local shall have the right to representation at the meeting in the proportion of one voting delegate for each 0.25% or fraction thereof, of the total membership of the Federation as of December 31st, who are voting members of the local. However, no local with 80 or more members would be represented by fewer than two voting members.

Salary Indemnity Plan regulations

Recommendation 20
That regulation 3.4 of procedure statement 13.C.02 (Salary Indemnity Plan Regulations) (page 75) be amended to read:

> A member applying for benefits under the plan may be required to submit to medical examination by a physician(s), psychiatrist(s), and/or other registered therapist selected by the plan administrator.

Resolution 126
(Burnaby Teachers' Association)
That part 3.4 of procedure statement 13.C.02 (Salary Indemnity Plan Regulations) be amended to read:

> A member, when applying for benefits under the plan, may be required to submit to medical examination by a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist selected by the plan administrator, provided the physician, psychiatrist or psychologist chosen is acceptable to the member and his/her physician.

Resolution 127
(Burnaby Teachers' Association)
That part 3.6 of procedure statement 13.C.02 (Salary Indemnity Plan Regulations) be amended to read:

> A member in receipt of benefits may be required to provide, at reasonable periodic intervals, medical evidence from his/her physician or psychiatrist, or a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist agreed to by the member's physician and the plan administrator, of continuing disability.

Resolution 128
(Burnaby Teachers' Association)
That part 24.1 of procedure statement 13.C.02 (Salary Indemnity Plan Regulations) be amended to read:

> The medical adjudication of claims shall be conducted by an independent external agency selected by the Federation, providing that the physicians, psychiatrists and psychologists that the external agency selects for members are acceptable to the member and his/her physician.

Research

Timetable questions?

Do alternative secondary school timetables produce better student performance?

Advocates for a quarter or semester system sometimes claim student results improve because of the introduction of the new timetable.

"Not so," says Kamloops science teacher, Gordon Gore.

Gore looked at the results of 1994-95 provincial exams, comparing exam scores with different types of timetables. The results, he says, show that the traditional full-year timetable produces the best student performance.

While many question provincial exams as an adequate measure of results, this is the measure often quoted—incorrectly Gore contends—by proponents of timetable changes.

A copy of Gore's report is available on request from the BCTF Research Department.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

For President

I have put my name forward as a candidate for president for a third year because of the need to complete many of the things begun this past two years. We are beginning the public part of our Public Education Campaign and we are at a crucial stage of provincial bargaining.

This is a time for strong leadership and for leadership that is committed to working with and on behalf of members. In my visits to locals and schools, teachers are focussed on the many changes in their classrooms and generally support the direction of the BCTF and applaud our efforts to enhance the view of teachers and teaching. They are pleased that we are aggressively putting forward the positive role that we play. This campaign to defend and support public education must be an on-going one.

We must negotiate a provincial collective agreement and then we need to assess how our organization needs to change. Amalgamation will also affect changes. In the final analysis our organization must be structured to meet the needs of members. We can rely on our long proud history of service to members and of democratic processes to guide us.

Teachers expect their elected representatives to be strong, clear, and enthusiastic advocates for teachers and public education.

I commit my time and energy to fulfill that objective.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF President (2 yr.); BCTF First vice-president (1); BCTF Second vice-president (3); Member-at-large, Executive Committee (1); Staff rep trainer (1); Finance cttee. (2); Pensions cttee. (6); PD associate (2); Status of women workshop facilitator (6); PSA executive (4); Labour affairs advisory cttee. (1); Labour education Cttee. (2) AGM delegate (13); CTF/AGM delegate (3). *Local:* Pres., Vice-president, Treasurer, Secretary, Chair: Public relations cttee., and staff rep assembly; Member, WLC cttee., bargaining, French language program cttee., LSA pres. *Teaching:* Secondary teacher 15 yrs. (business education, social studies). *Education:* BA and PDP, (SFU); Preparatory work for MBA (SFU).

For First Vice-President

I believe that our strength lies in our unity of purpose. Building that unity is the responsibility of leadership.

External forces are exerting many demands and enormous pressures on members and the Federation. Strong leadership is essential. We must conclude a good collective agreement. We must keep pressure on the government, regardless of the party in power, to place a high priority on providing stability in education.

As teachers, we initiate and welcome change that is well thought out—but too much change too fast hurts us all. As well, we must contend with the uncertainty of amalgamation and the looming threat of more funding cuts to come. In the face of all this, we must initiate organizational and structural changes which enhance delivery of services to members and maintain strong locals.

I have over the past eight years served on the BCTF Executive, been a local president, and a vice-president of CTF. I will work with continued enthusiasm and determination to meet our challenges, and to speak passionately for you, for our proud profession, and for public education. I offer my record of experience and commitment, demonstrated ability to work effectively as part of a team, and proven leadership.

I seek your support for first vice-president.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF 2nd Vice-president (2 yr.); Executive Ctte. (8); Committees: Prof. relations advisors' (2); Teacher personnel (6); Labour liaison (2); Political action task force (1); LAR (1); AGM delegate (16); Facilitator, PQT, Speaking for teachers and political action workshops; Charter challenge plaintiff; CTF vice-president (1), CTF director (5); CTF committees: National Issues Co-ordinating Cttee., Education development, Economic services and AGM resolutions (1); Nominations (2); AGM (5). *Local:* Delta: President (3); Vice-president (3); Committees: Violence-free schools; Community Action Cttes.; Political action (1); Bargaining (6); RA chairperson (3); Sign-up/certification co-ordinator; Langley & Kitimat locals exec. & other cttee. positions. *Teaching:* 24 yrs. secondary, learning disabilities and LA; 2 yrs. SFU faculty associate. *Education:* BA, Diploma of Education (Aust); MA (Educ) SFU.

Teachers and students face additional challenges to the ones we encountered a year ago. Our responses must be grounded in the primary purpose of our Federation. We are successful when we remember what we are and who we serve.

We must remain focussed on working together to achieve and implement a provincial collective agreement. Concessions and clawbacks are unacceptable.

We need to protect all members employment rights. Working in partnership with others, we must be strong advocates for public education. This is a long-term commitment. Teachers and our Federation must speak on behalf of programs that meet the needs of our students.

Education change must be based on sound principles and requires respect for the professional knowledge of teachers. We seek implementation that is manageable and is financially supported. I will speak out for sound education policies and will challenge those that are not.

Our Federation requires an inclusive organization that hears and responds to members. In the face of external demands our task is to ensure the voice of all members is heard by continuing to support training of staff reps and PD reps. Particular attention is required for those new to the profession.

I will continue to work on behalf of all members and ask for your support to serve as your first vice-president.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF First Vice-president (2 yr.); Member-at-large (5); Prov. curriculum adv. ctte.; Prov. finance & facilities adv. ctte.; Education leave cttee. (4); CTF AGM delegate (4); AGM delegate (16); LAR (2); Staff rep training facilitator (4); Children's rights cttee. (2); Hilroy selection cttee. (3); PSA Council & Executive (5); Counsellors' PSA exec. (9). *Local:* Nanaimo pres. (3); Bargaining agreements (7); Political action/PR (7); Curriculum (2); Neg. team (3); District employee assist. (3); Counsellors' LSA exec. (7); Industrial health and safety (3); Education cttee. rep (5). *Teaching:* 19 yrs. English, social studies, law, counselling, family life, and adolescent development. *Education:* B.Ed (sec.) UVic; M.Ed. (counselling psychology) UBC.

For Second Vice-President

A Richard Nixon memoir was entitled "Six Crises." Teachers and the BCTF should be so lucky to face so few over a career in public service!

The challenges currently facing our profession include achieving a successful collective agreement under a new bargaining regime, maintaining a relevant array of services to members, defending public education, making structural changes required by amalgamation, and promoting teacher leadership in education change.

I support a reasonable balance between the Federation and its locals. A strong provincial body is essential in dealing with a highly centralized bargaining regime and Ministry of Education. Strong locals are necessary to maximize member involvement and services to members. I look forward to taking part in necessary steps to restructure our Federation.

I also place emphasis on the Federation's role as an advocate for public schools. Our voice must combine a defence of what is best about public schools with a commitment to continually strive to improve.

My leadership philosophy is that of a leader of the Revolution of 1848, who said "There go the masses and I must follow them for I am their leader."

In addition to my time, I offer a deep commitment to public education and a deep affection for teachers.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive Committee (2 yr.); BCTF Administration staff (4); CTF delegate (1); Task Force on Teaching Conditions and Professional Practice, Task Force on Bargaining and Related Structures; Staff rep trainer. *Local:* Local president (4); Executive (5); AGM delegate (6); Bargaining team (4); Bargaining chair (1); LR (1). *Teaching:* 21 yrs. secondary social studies in West Vancouver. *Education:* BA (History) and teaching training (UBC).

For Member-at-Large

Attitude

I bring a strong, positive attitude to any task I undertake and I will bring this energy to my work with the BCTF Executive. I will work hard to address the challenges faced by B.C. teachers.

Beliefs

I believe that teachers, as self-motivated professionals, care deeply about children and will support initiatives that allow them to deliver excellent educational programs. I also believe it is time for us to have a fair collective agreement which will allow us to do just that. We need to achieve a collective agreement we can proudly defend.

Commitment

We must ensure that the BCTF continues to be a strong voice for professionalism. Our work with PSAs, professional development and social programs exemplifies this. I will continue my work in these areas. I support a BCTF structure that is effective and that maintains our strength through direct connections with teachers and open debate. I am committed to structures that serve us well and that recognize the contributions of our locals. Any changes that are implemented must be done in a reasonable and logical manner.

I am committed to strong advocacy for the public education system. Public education is the infrastructure for our future.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* PSAC (7 yr.) PSACE (5), Chairperson (2), Deputy chair (2); Special Ed PSA: President (2), SEA Newsletter editor (3), Conference director; LPAC (1); AGM delegate (8); Bargaining council; Expanded Bargaining Division; Summer conference (4); plus numerous other committees and service as a workshop facilitator. *Local:* Greater Victoria ('89-present): President (2), Vice-president (2), Member-at-large (1), ProD Ctte. (3), Bargaining Ctte. (2), Negotiations team (1), numerous district committees such as Curriculum implementation, Wellness, Finance and Legal, Special Ed., etc. Abbotsford ('75-'89): Primary Kindergarten LSA, SEA LSA. *Education:* B.Ed. SFU, Diploma Education of the Deaf UBC.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

For Member-at-Large

With the challenges of provincial bargaining, amalgamation, education change, the lack of funding, coupled with the continued attacks on public education, teachers need to be supported by **strong locals** and a Federation united in its purpose and vision.

Building partnerships with parents, the business community, student teachers, and the public continue to play an important role in my job as a local president. These partnerships must be developed at the local as well as the provincial level.

One of my goals is to enhance the vital communication link between the membership and the executive. Member involvement, access to information, and above all, participation in decision-making are the keys to a united front. We must speak with one voice against the challenges which are facing us.

My experiences as a union activist gives me every confidence that I can serve my colleagues effectively while bringing the perspective of the smaller and more isolated locals. I believe in teamwork and have proven myself to be a team player. I am committed to speaking for teachers and students.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Local presidents' advisory cttee. (2 yr.) Teachers on call advisory cttee. (2); AGM delegate (3); Summer conference delegate (3). *Local:* President, Peace River N. Teachers' Assn. (4); Strike co-ordinator for the longest strike in B.C. ('91); Vice-president (1); Negotiating team (3); Committees: District curriculum development, District music, district language arts, district report card, district parent advisory council, Education director of the Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce. *Teaching:* 26 yrs., Primary. *Education:* B. General Studies (SFU).

After I recently announced my candidacy, I was asked why I had decided to run when I had refused many times before. Why now? What changed my mind?

I can not give up on the BCTF.

In my years of teaching, I have been a passionate advocate for the BCTF. But lately, I have allowed myself to become a victim—victimized by a government of friends who have legislated me back to work, imposed a collective agreement, removed my right to determine my own bargaining agent, and threatened to eliminate the program which feeds the students in my inner-city school.

I will not give up on successfully concluding an agreement which protects and enhances the rights and working conditions of teachers and improves the learning conditions of students. The passing of an action plan to get a good collective agreement gives me hope that we can achieve unity of purpose in our Federation.

It's time to put the heart back into the BCTF. We must follow the path which we believe is right. Setting principles aside for the sake of unity is not acceptable.

I believe that I am a strong advocate for teachers who, if elected, will represent the Federation with passion and integrity.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* VESTA rep to Bargaining Cttee. & Council; AGM delegate (17 yr.); LR (10); Staff rep trainer (4); Bargaining Adv. Cttee. (3); G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award Trustee (4); CTF AGM delegate (1); RA Agenda cttee. (2); Task force on the Membership of Principals in the RCTF (1); Federation Appeals Brd. (3); Newsletter Editorial Brd. (2); Political Action Cttee. (3). *Local:* Grievance Cttee. (3); VESTA News Edit. Brd. (8); Bargaining Cttee. (7); Chair, Bargaining & collective agreement implementation cttee. (2); Negotiating team member (1); Member-at-large (1); VESTA rep on many Vancouver School Board cttees. & grievance joint cttees.; Langley: Co-ordinator of sign-up to union (1); President (2); Executive (10); Steering Cttee. & exec. of Sp. Ed. (4); LTA neg. team; member of all standing cttees. & many ad hoc cttes.; *Teaching:* 21 yrs. classroom teacher, teacher-librarian, and LA at elementary level. *Education:* B.Ed. (UBC).

The BCTF belongs to teachers. The relationship between teachers and their students is central. The BCTF must do everything possible to support this relationship. This is what motivates my activism.

Child poverty, federal cuts to unemployment insurance and health care, regressive provincial welfare policies impact on the teacher-student relationship. A vital role of the BCTF is the defense of social programs and showing the interconnectedness of social concerns to life in the classroom. It is incumbent on the leadership to make these connections and to focus membership attention on them.

Surrey teachers have a history of negotiating good contracts and defending them aggressively, but a good contract isn't enough. If everything is reduced to whether it's grievable or not, we lose out on the human perspective that defines teaching.

We must be prepared to take political action when our collective agreements might not offer solutions. For example, Surrey teachers' public opposition to charter schools and cuts to ESL.

Teachers are good at responding to issues in a variety of ways—we do this in our classrooms, daily. As a member of the BCTF Executive, I would use these same skills in responding to provincial issues.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (12 yr.); Alternate LR (3); LPAC (1); Judicial Council (1). *Local:* Staff rep (8); Working & Learning Conditions Cttee. (2); Political Action/Public Relations Cttee. (4) 2 yr. as chair; STA staff rep assembly co-chair (3); 2nd Vice-president (2); 1st Vice-president (1); President (3); Grievance Cttee. (6); STA Advocate at grievances and arbitrations. *Education:* B.Ed. in Special Education (UBC) 1981; Certificate in Early Childhood Education, Capilano College, 1975.

This has been an exciting year to be on the BCTF Executive. Negotiations, support for public education and amalgamation have been major issues facing teachers locally and provincially.

If I am re-elected, I will continue to support the structures and processes that enable the negotiating team to bargain flexibly on our behalf. Our goal must be a fair provincial agreement that retains the integrity of all current local agreements.

In addition, I believe the campaign to support public education is vital for successful bargaining and essential to the preservation of a school system that recognizes and meets the needs of all students in British Columbia.

Finally, I believe that amalgamation in one form or another is inevitable. After listening to local presidents, I support a position that provides for maximum local input and decision making during a difficult transition period.

This year my return to active teaching and my experience as a member-at-large have strengthened my perception that teachers want a BCTF executive that listens and responds. As a listener and a responder, I seek your support in electing me to a second term as Member-at-Large.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive (1 yr.); Chair, BCTF Bargaining Committee; Member of bargaining council; AGM delegate (7); Alternate LR (4). *Local:* Past-President VSTA (1); President VSTA (3);Vice-president VSTA (1); Member-at-large (3); Negotiating team (1). *Teaching:* 21 yrs. including 4 yrs. elementary, 1 yr. primary; 2 yrs. elementary special education, 1 yr. teacher on call, 5 yrs. secondary special education, 1 yr. district resource, 5 yrs. secondary counsellor. *Education:* BA (U of Alberta); B.Ed. (U of Toronto); Special Education specialist (U of Toronto); M.Ed. (UBC).

After 4.5 years on the BCTF Executive Committee, I should be accustomed to the many changes wrought by assorted provincial governments. We must represent the needs of teachers in curriculum change and possible school district amalgamation, face shrinking education funds as federal transfer payments decline, and meet the imperative of achieving a good collective agreement.

We must support our negotiating team as they tackle the first provincial talks. Our target has to be the employer group, which persists in thinking that we're bargaining from a blank slate. In fact, we have 75 existing collective agreements to defend and enhance. We need frequent and high-quality communications with members, to build the support necessary to achieve an acceptable deal.

An ongoing priority is to keep teachers' views in the forefront regarding the many changes to curriculum, reporting, and graduation requirements. The work of our PSAs and of members on ministry committees is invaluable.

The BCTF operating budget and internal structures should be examined to recognize our changing bargaining situation and possible district amalgamations. The Amalgamation Task Force report should be thoroughly discussed in the field before any decisions are taken.

I would appreciate the opportunity to continue working on your behalf.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* BCTF Executive (4.5 yr.); CTF delegate (2); LR (3); Summer Conference participant (6); WIN candidate, BCTF Bargaining Conference; Capilano College Labour Studies Program Advisory Cttee. (4); *Local:* President North Van. (3); Local Executive Cttee. (10); Local Negotiating team (10); Working & Learning Conditions, Mainstreaming/integration, District screening, Grievance, Bargaining, Science Curriculum, R.A. Steering Cttees. *Teaching:* Elementary classroom teacher (16 yr.); Secondary Learning Assistance (3 yr.). *Education:* B.Ed., UBC.

As a representative from a small northern local, I see a need for a balanced approach to all issues.

We are currently negotiating our first provincial contract. I am very strongly opposed to any form of contract stripping and will continue to voice my opposition. As a member of the BCTF Bargaining Division staff, I was with many of you when our first collective agreements were negotiated. The time has come for us to stand together to preserve these hard-won gains.

With my extensive bargaining experience, I will be your strong advocate at the executive table.

School District #80 (Kitimat) will disappear if Charbonneau's amalgamation plan is implemented. Does this mean that the Kitimat District Teachers' Association must also disappear? I say definitely not! External structural changes need not necessitate internal changes. We must work together, to remove By-law 3.4 and to ensure that the autonomy and fair representation of all teachers is maintained through a continuation of our established local unions.

My BCTF experience, my active participation in decision-making processes at the local and provincial levels and my sincere commitment to a team approach provide a firm basis upon which I can examine all issues. I ask for your support.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Member of the BCTF Bargaining Division (4.5 yr.); Northcoast Agreements Bargaining Co-ordinator (8); Member, BCTF Provincial Agreements/Bargaining Cttee. (8); Chair, BCTF Provincial Bargaining Cttee. (4); AGM attendance (20); Participant & workshop presenter at Summer Conferences (10); Bargaining Council rep for local #80 (Kitimat); alternate Bargaining Cttee. member (Zone 19), LR or alternate LR (5). *Local:* President (2); Chair/member local Bargaining Cttee. (20); Staff rep (8); Local grievance cttee. (10); Chair, Personal Committee (6); Local Advocacy Cttee. (2). *Teaching:* 22.5 yrs. elementary and secondary in Kitimat. *Education:* B.Sc. (UBC) 1968, Teacher training UBC 1969.

Memo:

Memo to: Mike Daniels, Staff Rep,
Maple Ridge Secondary School

From: Janet Amsden, Vice-president, Bargaining Chair
Maple Ridge Teachers' Association

Date: February 8, 1996
Subject: Observations on Provincial Bargaining

Mike, when I told you I was going to observe provincial bargaining today, you said, "Find out when we'll get a new contract."

I put your question to Brian Porter, BCTF negotiating team member and his response was, "So far we've signed off two clauses in six months. With 120 clauses to go, at this rate we'll have a new contract in 30 years if we bargain full-time, through the summer."

Mike, I know you wanted to hear that the big issues like class size and salary were in full discussion. Not so, in fact, today I watched Ken Halliday, the BCPSEA negotiator skillfully avoid discussing the language on discipline and dismissal, a non-cost item. He did, however, promise a written response to the BCTF proposal next week. Then they cancelled the next two days of meetings. The next scheduled meeting is a week from today despite the fact that their team is on full-time release.

In short, although Brian Porter's 30-year estimate for a new contract was made in jest, the joke might actually be on us.

We need to talk about how to pick up the pace.

Bargaining then and now

by Bronwyn Taylor

I firmly believe if you can't carry it yourself, you've packed too much. This goes for a summer trip to Europe or a weekend meeting of the BCTF. That is why I was cleaning out my briefcase the night before I left for the Winter RA. Down in its depths I found some old AGM campaign buttons and buttons with bargaining slogans, one of which said, "Let's Bargain, Not Beg." In thinking about the difference between bargaining now and bargaining prior to Bills 19 and 20, I decided those four words capture the differences.

Contracts were a few pages long because we could negotiate only salaries, allowances, and benefits.

In the good old days, bargaining was much shorter. Notice to re-open the agreement was sent to the other party. If there was no agreement within one month, a conciliator was appointed to assist the parties. If there was still no agreement after that, the conciliator reported, and the dispute went to binding arbitration. Within another four to six weeks, the arbitration award was made.

Believe it or not, before 1987, teachers were not even considered employees, as defined by the Labour Code. We could not bargain the full terms and conditions of our work or legally undertake job action to press our boards to reach an agreement. Contracts were a few pages long because we could negotiate only salaries, allowances, and benefits. If negotiations failed, outstanding monetary items were then referred to binding arbitration. There was no such thing as job security through definite personnel practices, seniority, rights to recall, or a grievance procedure. The school board and the principal had enormous power over our working lives.

Some boards were willing to negotiate working and learning conditions contracts, but in the case of a dispute, these contracts had no force in law. Other boards simply said, "No" or "It's illegal," when local associations tried to establish class-size limits, establish preparation time, or restrict amounts of supervision. There was little incentive or motivation for boards to agree to any working conditions, because when all the rhetoric had been exhausted, only salaries and benefits could be referred to arbitration.

We had no control of the professional aspects of our working lives.

When teachers tried to guarantee that "leaves of absence at the discretion of the secretary-treasurer" would not be denied, or to secure early-retirement bonuses in the contract, boards usually responded by saying they had policy to cover that, so we needn't worry about having it in contract. Teachers responded by trying to restrict boards' ability to alter policy statements. Sometimes it worked; usually it did not. We were engaged in, not collective bargaining, but collective begging.

The new full-scope way is much longer and harder, but it is better for teachers and therefore, ultimately, better for students.

That was then. This is now. Today the BCTF and local teacher unions have full legal status under the Labour Relations Act, so things are much different. With the same rights as other employee groups, teachers have the right to strike in order to secure a collective agreement. Has it made a difference? Yes!

Through collective bargaining, we have solidified our rights and responsibilities, and our role in schools. We have secured not only our salaries and benefits, but also working and learning conditions. We have established our right to professional autonomy in our classrooms. Our unions have the duty to represent and protect us rather than leave it up to the Code of Ethics or the goodwill of an administrator. Instead of back-room deals and vulnerable teachers, we have collective agreements binding on both parties. Teachers now have the contractual right to be part of the decision making in schools and in the district. We have negotiated parameters on the provisions of the School Act such as the length of the school day and year, and the voluntary nature of extra-curricular activities. "Favours" once granted at the "whim of the board" are negotiated as contractual rights. Boards can no longer turn to arbitration to avoid resolving contentious issues themselves. The possibility or probability of strike or lockout motivates both parties to find mutually agreeable solutions to such issues.

Having bargained under both regimes, I can tell you the old limited way was shorter and easier. The new full-scope way is much longer and harder, but it is better for teachers and therefore, ultimately, better for students. We cannot lose sight of that fact as we negotiate our first provincial agreement.

Bronwyn Taylor teaches at Sangster Elementary School, Victoria.

by Don Briard

Some of us remember classes of 40 students. Some of us remember receiving students with special needs without warning, without support, and without limit.

Some of us remember long days on the picket lines fighting to improve or protect the learning environment.

Remember those times, because the B.C. Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) wants to bring them back. The people across the table think class-size limits and detailed mainstreaming language inhibit managerial "flexibility." Teachers do not have to worry, however; the BCPSEA believes in equity of workload. If you believe your workload is inequitable, your friendly neighbourhood administrative officer will be happy to fix it for you. And I believe in the Tooth Fairy.

Workload is at the heart of bargaining. Tabled BCTF language calls for improvements to workload areas. The class-size proposal would improve the situation in every district. ESL funding indexed to enrolment ensures that resources will meet increasing demands. Entitlement and caseload formulae guarantee the availability of non-enrolling teacher services. Improved mainstreaming processes make the system more responsive to the needs of classroom teachers working directly with students with special needs.

Some of us remember the battles over those provisions; some of us were fortunate enough to enter the profession after those battles had been won.

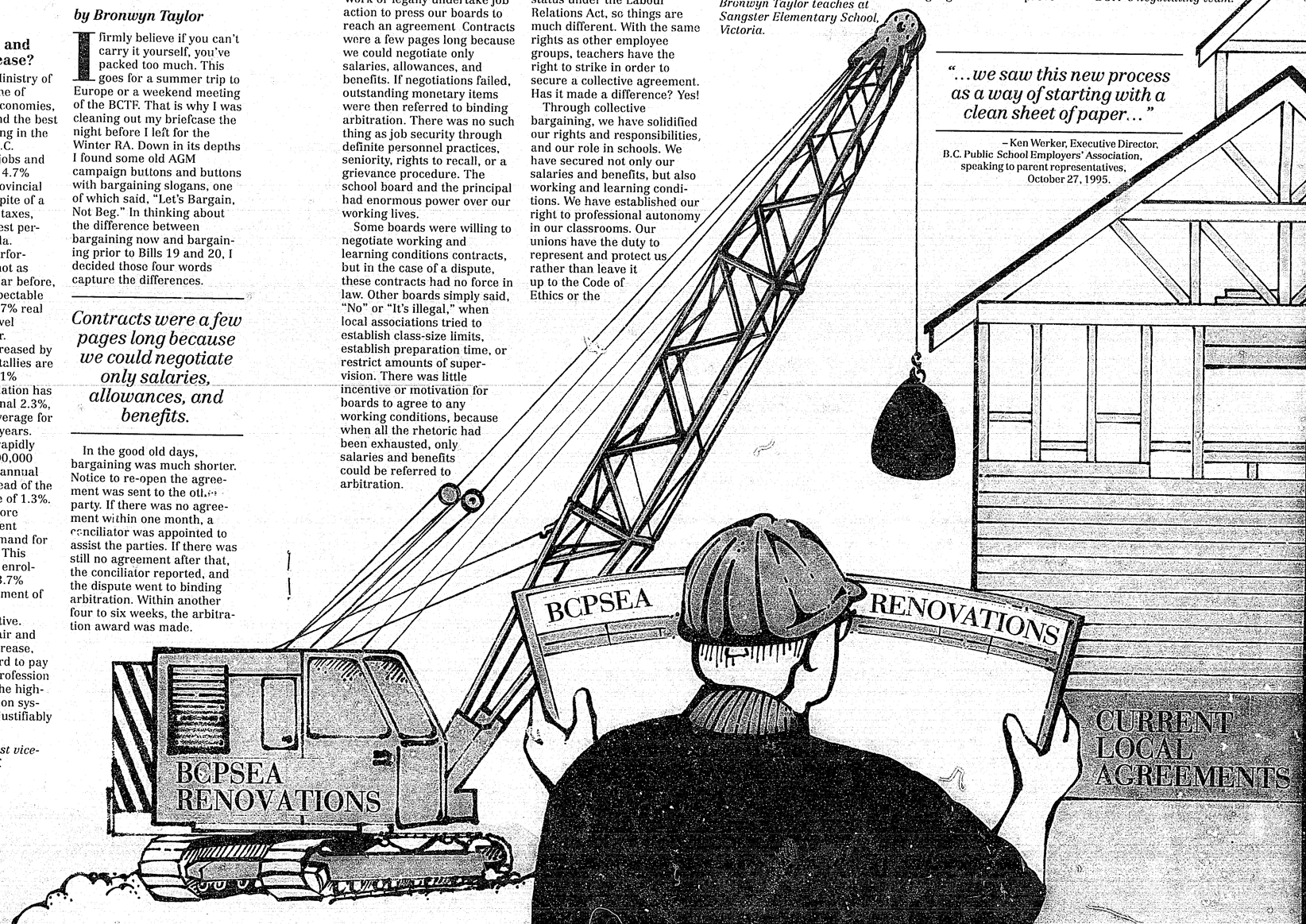
All of us know how important these provisions are to our classrooms today.

All of us may have to fight again to preserve those provisions.

Don Briard, a Vancouver teacher, is a member of the BCTF's negotiating team.

"...we saw this new process as a way of starting with a clean sheet of paper..."

–Ken Werker, Executive Director, B.C. Public School Employers' Association, speaking to parent representatives, October 27, 1995.



by Peter McCue

British Columbia teachers deserve a raise? Yes, and it's necessary if the teaching profession is to keep attracting the best candidates. At a recent provincial Bargaining Committee meeting, Mavis Lowry of the Bargaining and Member Services Division and Anny Schaefer of Research and Technology presented the salary case that shows teachers are working harder for less. Two-thirds of B.C. teachers have gone without a salary increase since June 1994; three in 10 have been without a contract since June 1995. Inflation has significantly eroded teachers' purchasing power.

...demands on teachers have intensified, and the job has become much more complex.

Why do teachers deserve a raise?

Over the last few years, in particular, demands on teachers have intensified, and the job has become much more complex. Here are some of the facts:

- Enrolment increased by almost 69,000 full-time-equivalent students between 1990 and 1995. That's like adding to the system a new school district with the combined enrolments of Vancouver and Maple Ridge. As a result:
- Class sizes are larger, especially elementary.
- The number of students per educator (SER) rose from 16.12 in 1990 to 16.73 in 1995. Since 1990, student population has grown by 13.7%, yet the number of educators has increased by only 9.6%. To return to the SER of 1990–91 would require the hiring of 1,279 teachers.

One in 10 students has special needs.

There are more students in the system, and more of those students have special learning needs, as the following figures illustrate:

- One in 10 students has special needs. In 1990, the ministry recognized 44,433 students with special needs; by 1994, the figure rose to 63,533—a 43% increase.
- The number of students for whom English is a second language (ESL) rose by 82% in the same four years—from 34,000 to 62,000.
- One in five B.C. children (21.8%) lived in poverty in 1993 (13.6% in 1989). That is 174,000 children—enough to fill the city of Burnaby.

Teachers are also subject to demands from other quarters:

An increasingly complex society presents more issues that affect teachers' working lives such as HIV/AIDS, violencer, gangs, racism, and substance abuse.

- More and more new programs are being introduced.
- New reporting requirements and individual education plans (IEPs) are labour-intensive.
- Use of new technologies in the classroom has been mandated, but training time is minimal or non-existent.
- Support areas are being cut, e.g., librarians, learning assistance, counsellors.
- Both parents and students have increased expectations.

"We must pay our teachers more if we are to attract and keep competent people in the system."

Competitive salaries will keep competent, experienced teachers in the profession and recruit the best new talent. Minimal raises that don't even keep up with inflation threaten that most vital public service: the education of the next generation of Canadians. Lowry pointed out what we can learn from the U.S. experience.

- Illinois State Superintendent Ted Sanders (1986): "We must pay our teachers more if we are to attract and keep competent people in the system. Once you get behind, there is not the money to catch up."
- Western Kentucky University President Kern Alexander (1986): "Because public schools are seen as failures in the U.S., governments don't want to fund them. A vicious downward spiral then is put in motion which it is almost impossible to pull out of. One tragic aspect of this is that teachers' salary levels have declined. The end result may be that the U.S. will move to a private school model and public schools will not survive."

...a Delta teacher at top of Category 5 has suffered a cumulative loss of almost $8,500 since 1992.

- William F. Hughes, Jr., of the Pennsylvania State Education Association (1986): "In our state 29% of teachers have a second job due to low teacher salary levels. In Minnesota it is 51%. And we are in the better paid states."

Who's earning what?

The average B.C. teacher is 42 years old and has five years of university education and 12.4 years experience teaching in the B.C. system (1994 ministry data). Six out of 10 are female. He/she is responsible for an average class size of 23.1 elementary or 24.4 secondary students. As a full-time classroom teacher, he/she earned an average $51,638 in 1994–95. People who predict the weather earned $54,300, police officers made $55,900, and boat operators made $56,100.

Average wages for all employees in British Columbia are higher than the rest of the country, and are rising faster. In October 1995, average weekly earnings in B.C. were $600; that is 3.2% higher than a year earlier. This compares to the Canadian average of $574, which was 1% higher than the year-earlier figure.

That home truth also extends to B.C. educational administrators, who make 160% to 177% of the average teacher salary, contrasted with a Canada-wide average of 120% to 135%.

The minimal inflation of recent years has eaten away at teachers' salaries. A sample calculation estimates that a Delta teacher at top of Category 5 has suffered a cumulative loss of almost $8,500 since 1992.

What about ability to pay?

Through the block-funding system, the provincial government is the primary funder of our education system. The Ministry of Finance's most recent quarterly report indicates that revenue for the first six months of this fiscal year has been $89 million higher than budgeted, while the deficit has rung in $46 million lower than budgeted. At the same time, Ministry of Education spending to date this year is $39 million less than the budgeted amount.

School districts must account for the funds allocated by the ministry via audited financial statements. Of the 62 statements available so far for the 1994–95 fiscal year, 84% of the school districts had operating surpluses. Of more concern: 53% of the districts had underspent their instructional budgets.

What factors determine a fair and reasonable increase?

According to the Ministry of Finance, "B.C. has one of Canada's strongest economies, a shrinking deficit and the best provincial credit rating in the country." In 1994, B.C. created 67,000 new jobs and led the country, with 4.7% economic growth. Provincial revenue is rising in spite of a three-year freeze on taxes, and B.C. has the lowest per-person debt in Canada.

While economic performance in 1995 was not as spectacular as the year before, B.C. still put in a respectable performance, with 2.7% real growth—the same level expected for this year. Corporate profits increased by 58.5% in 1994; final tallies are expected to show a 21% increase in 1995. Inflation has levelled off to a nominal 2.3%, near the Canadian average for the first time in four years.

B.C. population is rapidly approaching the 4,000,000 mark; growing at an annual rate of 2.5%, well ahead of the overall Canadian rate of 1.3%. More people mean more revenue for government coffers, and more demand for educational services. This year's regular-school enrolment of 570,872 is 13.7% higher than the enrolment of five years ago.

All factors are positive. Teachers deserve a fair and reasonable salary increase, the province can afford to pay it, and the teaching profession needs it to preserve the high-quality public education system of which we are justifiably proud.

Peter McCue is the first vice-president of the BCTF.

Don Reader, with the chair and vice-chair of Rundu Regional Office of NANTU, displaying equipment supplied in 1995.

Namibia needs equipment

by Don Reader

How would you like to try to run a regional teachers' union office with sparse furniture and no equipment? Yet, you are elected to uphold the rights of teachers and assure good working conditions for thousands of members. The BCTF is working in Namibia, in southwestern Africa, to improve teaching conditions in their public education system. The project is co-funded with OXFAM-Canada and the Namibian National Teachers' Union.

Last year, the second year of the NANTU/OXFAM/BCTF Train-the-Trainers Project, B.C. teachers contributed over $10,000 to buy equipment for the regional offices of NANTU. Don Reader, Susan Tickson, and Jan Walsh oversaw the purchase and delivery of some of the equipment directly to the regional offices in July 1995 after facilitating the training-the-trainers project in Windhoek, Namibia. The money purchased five telephone-fax machines and one photocopier. Again this year, the third and final year of this phase of the project, we would like to purchase equipment for the other three regional offices that still lack communications equipment. Our Namibian colleagues are a fine and dedicated group of professionals, but they desperately need basic communication technologies for building and strengthening their union.

We ask that locals and individual teachers consider a donation. Money is being collected through the BCTF's International Solidarity Program (Larry Kuehn/Leona Dolan). All money so designated will go directly to the purchase of equipment for NANTU and its regional offices in Namibia.

Don Reader is a Vancouver teacher and a BCTF staff rep trainer.

It's time to defend public services

by Murray Dobbin

For years Canadians have been subjected to a steady barrage of attacks on their public services—by right-wing politicians, newspaper columnists, business spokespersons, and conservative think-tanks. According to these sources, public services are inefficient, are unaccountable, are overpriced, are dominated by vested interests, offer no choices, aren't working. And if all this fails to convince, then the argument is that with our huge deficits, we can't afford them.

Listening to many of the critics, you would think that they do want social programs but believe that we just can't afford them anymore.

Before universal public education and medicare, thousands of children received little or no education, and many people went without basic medical care. That's where we are headed again if we do not continue to counter the myths about public services.

Myth #1
Our social programs are too generous

This is one of the biggest myths—but it is an easy sell if we compare ourselves just to the U.S.A., the developed country with one of the lowest levels of expenditures on social programs. If we compare ourselves with European nations, we find that we are far behind.

Canada's UI program... ranked 14th out of 18 in terms of its "generosity."

- Figures from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reveal that in a study of 17 industrialized countries, Canada placed 14th in the percentage of GDP it spends on social programs.
- Canada's UI program, even before the recently announced cuts, ranked 14th out of 18 in terms of its "generosity."

Myth #2
To deal with the deficit, we must cut social programs

Our deficit *is* serious. It undermines our efforts to build a fair and equitable society. But to blame the deficit on social-program spending or to say that cutting such spending is the only solution is wrong. The source of the debt is clear from a number of studies: dramatically falling revenue from the corporate sector and Canada's wealthy, plus excessive interest rates.

In 1990, 63,000 corporations with profits totaling $13 billion still paid no taxes.

- Several studies, including one by the Mulroney government under Eric Neilson, revealed that the federal government was losing $25 billion a year through "tax expenditures"—in other words, special tax breaks and exemptions for high-income earners and the largest corporations.

But in 1990, 63,000 corporations with profits totaling $13 billion still paid no taxes.

- A Statscan study in 1991 revealed that 50% of the debt accumulated since 1975 was due to the fall in revenue described above, 44% was due to interest charges, and just 6% was attributable to net increases in program spending. Just one-third of that 6%—2% of the total—was due to social spending.

Myth #3
The old ways of dealing with deficits don't work any more

There are some very straightforward approaches the government could take to bring down the deficit, none of them radical, all of them standard policy in the '70s.

- Governments could make a commitment to full employment. A study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives showed that bringing down the rate of unemployment by 1% adds $5.6 billion in tax revenue and reduces social spending by $1.24 billion.
- The government could abandon its high-interest-rate policy. Lowering real interest rates to historic levels (about 2.5% above inflation) would stimulate the economy and encourage productive investment.
- As income taxes are still the fairest taxes, this is the way governments should go. Even marginal increases in income taxes raise enormous sums of money. By adding 2, 3, and 4 points to the current rates of 17, 26, and 29% we would raise an additional $13 billion.

...bringing down the rate of unemployment by 1% adds $5.6 billion in tax revenue and reduces social spending by $1.24 billion.

Cutting the tax breaks to corporations, increasing the income tax rate, and implementing a minimum corporate tax would bring between $11 and $14 billion.

Myth #4
The private sector is more efficient and more accountable than the public sector

This argument reveals one of the hidden reasons for attacks on the public sector: Big business wants to open up social programs for profitable investment. The notion that private business is more efficient and accountable is simply not borne out by the facts. First, business is accountable only to shareholders, who demand a profit. That profit usually comes from cutting the quality of service. Also consider:

- Corporations in Canada and the United States are notorious for the excessive salaries they pay CEOs. In Japan CEOs earn approximately 15 times the pay of the average employee. In Canada, the figure averages 45 times, and the Royal Bank president ($2.6 million in '93) earned 88 times.

Two-thirds of new investment in Canada in the 1980s went into mergers and buyouts. It was completely unproductive.

- The record of privatized services shows that they are less reliable and more expensive than the public services they replaced. Alberta's Ralph Klein privatized liquor stores, and prices immediately went up as selection went down.
- Left to regulate itself, big business shows that it is driven by greed and the drive to become larger at any cost. Two-thirds of new investment in Canada in the 1980s went into mergers and buyouts. It was completely unproductive.
- When corporations like Bell Canada announce that they are going to lay off 10,000 employees, at the same time as they are announcing record profits, there is scarcely a word of criticism. Yet there is something profoundly immoral in the casual way in which the private sector throws into turmoil the lives of its employees, whose work earned their profits.

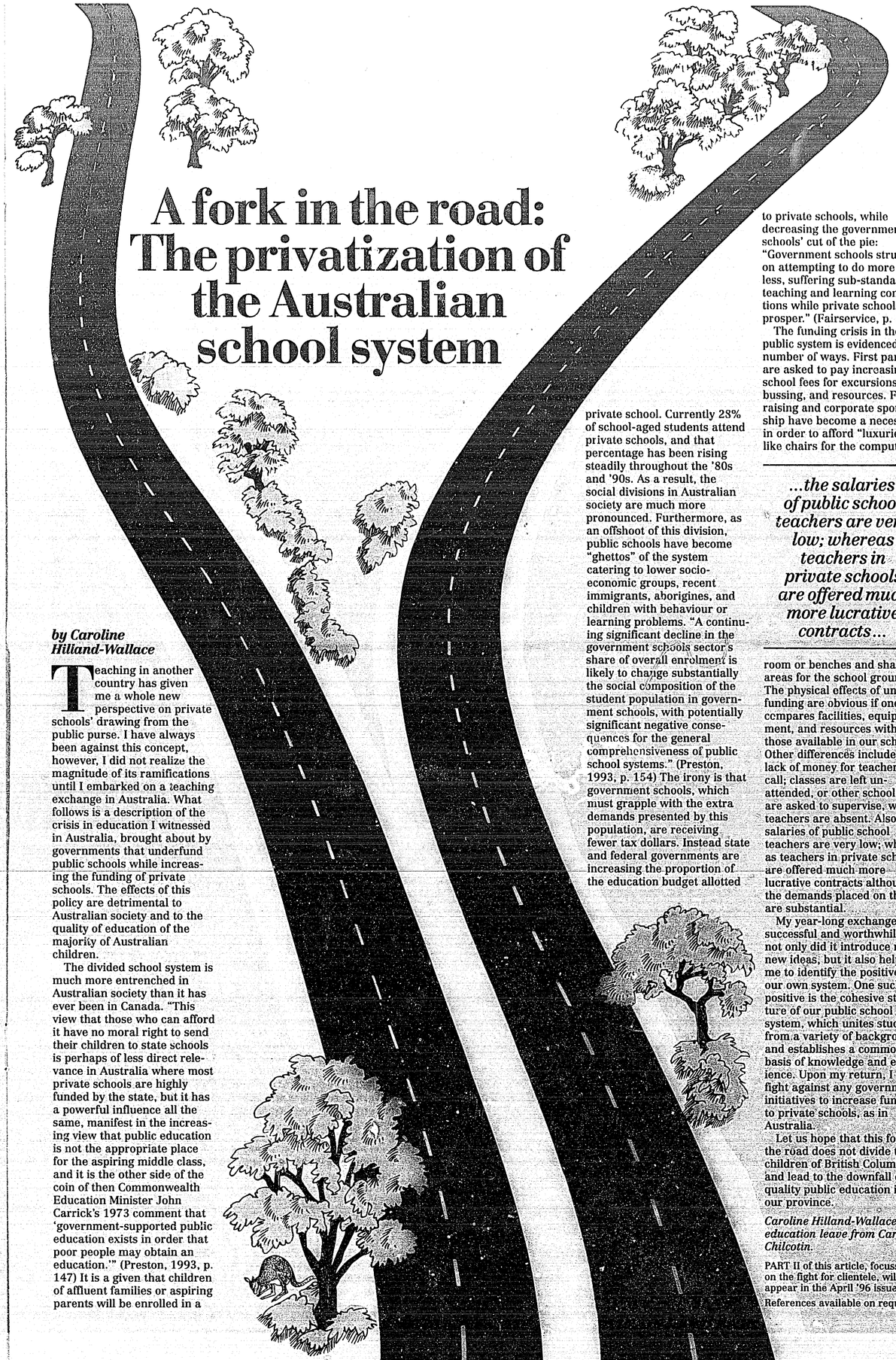
In defence of public services

Public services, from education, medicare, and social assistance to parks and environmental protection, are things that Canadians decided to do together, as a community.

The result will be more like the American health-care model, which provides world-class treatment for the wealthy, expensive insurance for the middle class, and charity for the rest.

The attack on public services—indeed the attack on government in general—is not disinterested, objective criticism. It is a deliberate attempt by those who stand to make enormous gains from the dismantling of social programs and the privatization of services to undermine public confidence. These attacks will, if successful, reduce us from being active citizens to being mere consumers. The result will be more like the American healthcare model, which provides world-class treatment for the wealthy, expensive insurance for the middle class, and charity for the rest.

Murray Dobbin is the BCTF's communication officer.



A fork in the road: The privatization of the Australian school system

by Caroline Hilland-Wallace

Teaching in another country has given me a whole new perspective on private schools' drawing from the public purse. I have always been against this concept, however, I did not realize the magnitude of its ramifications until I embarked on a teaching exchange in Australia. What follows is a description of the crisis in education I witnessed in Australia, brought about by governments that underfund public schools while increasing the funding of private schools. The effects of this policy are detrimental to Australian society and to the quality of education of the majority of Australian children.

The divided school system is much more entrenched in Australian society than it has ever been in Canada. "This view that those who can afford it have no moral right to send their children to state schools is perhaps of less direct relevance in Australia where most private schools are highly funded by the state, but it has a powerful influence all the same, manifest in the increasing view that public education is not the appropriate place for the aspiring middle class, and it is the other side of the coin of then Commonwealth Education Minister John Carrick's 1973 comment that 'government-supported public education exists in order that poor people may obtain an education.'" (Preston, 1993, p. 147) It is a given that children of affluent families or aspiring parents will be enrolled in a private school. Currently 28% of school-aged students attend private schools, and that percentage has been rising steadily throughout the '80s and '90s. As a result, the social divisions in Australian society are much more pronounced. Furthermore, as an offshoot of this division, public schools have become "ghettos" of the system catering to lower socio-economic groups, recent immigrants, aborigines, and children with behaviour or learning problems. "A continuing significant decline in the government schools sector's share of overall enrolment is likely to change substantially the social composition of the student population in government schools, with potentially significant negative consequences for the general comprehensiveness of public school systems." (Preston, 1993, p. 154) The irony is that government schools, which must grapple with the extra demands presented by this population, are receiving fewer tax dollars. Instead state and federal governments are increasing the proportion of the education budget allotted to private schools, while decreasing the government schools' cut of the pie: "Government schools struggle on attempting to do more with less, suffering sub-standard teaching and learning conditions while private schools prosper." (Fairservice, p. 3)

The funding crisis in the public system is evidenced in a number of ways. First parents are asked to pay increasing school fees for excursions, bussing, and resources. Fund-raising and corporate sponsorship have become a necessity in order to afford "luxuries" like chairs for the computer room or benches and shade areas for the school grounds. The physical effects of underfunding are obvious if one compares facilities, equipment, and resources with those available in our schools. Other differences include a lack of money for teachers on call; classes are left unattended, or other school staff are asked to supervise, when teachers are absent. Also the salaries of public school teachers are very low; whereas teachers in private schools are offered much more lucrative contracts although the demands placed on them are substantial.

...the salaries of public school teachers are very low; whereas teachers in private schools are offered much more lucrative contracts...

My year-long exchange was successful and worthwhile, for not only did it introduce me to new ideas, but it also helped me to identify the positives in our own system. One such positive is the cohesive structure of our public school system, which unites students from a variety of backgrounds and establishes a common basis of knowledge and experience. Upon my return, I will fight against any government initiatives to increase funding to private schools, as in Australia.

Let us hope that this fork in the road does not divide the children of British Columbia and lead to the downfall of quality public education in our province.

Caroline Hilland-Wallace is on education leave from Cariboo-Chilcotin.

PART II of this article, focussing on the fight for clientele, will appear in the April '96 issue. References available on request.

CUPE and BCTF work together on teacher-assistant issues

cacher assistant did not exist as a school-employee category before the School Act of 1989. Only six years later, school board budgets show that more than 6,000 TAs are working in B.C. schools.

Most of the increase in the number of TAs is directly related to the integration of students with special needs into neighbourhood schools.

The rapid growth in numbers of TAs happened with no provincial planning for training or role definition. Not surprisingly, disputes have developed around the role, training, hours of work, and relationship of TAs with students, teachers, and parents. Even the name to apply to the job is sometimes contentious—*teacher assistant, teaching assistant,* or *special education assistant*.

Most teachers, TAs, and school communities have developed good working relationships despite the lack of models or support.

Not all the experiences have been positive.

Both the BCTF and CUPE recognize that the unions have an interest in making working relationships between members as positive as possible. CUPE represents the non-teaching support employees in most B.C. districts.

The two unions have created a joint committee with three representatives from each organization, to address issues. The committee makes recommendations to the executives of both unions.

The first step in sorting out problems is communication. The provincial organizations have encouraged their locals to hold liaison meetings regularly, and to resolve concerns brought forward by members of either union.

Many of the conflicts arise from a lack of agreement on roles. The joint committee will develop a description of appropriate roles, which will be published as a brochure for wide distribution. An application for funding for a video on the topic has been submitted to the ministry.

CUPE has already developed, with ministry funding, two in-service workshops, one on TA roles and responsibilities and the other on handling behaviour problems. The BCTF has supported CUPE's request for funding to offer the workshops around the province and to develop further workshops.

Anarchy exists in post-secondary training for TAs. Many colleges offer programs on a cost-recovery basis. The nature of the programs, time requirements, and the content vary substantially from one to another. Some school districts offer their own TA training. Some TAs have had no formal training.

Both CUPE and BCTF have urged the ministry to take a lead role in developing appropriate provincial standards for training. The standards should build consistency in college training programs, recognize the experience of current employees, and reflect wide consultation with TAs and teachers on what skills should be included.

The BCTF will invite the unions other than CUPE that represent TAs in a half dozen districts to talk about these issues.

The BCTF representatives on the committee are Jan Eastman, BCTF second vice-president, Helen Middleditch, president of the Special Education Association, and Larry Kuehn, director of Research and Technology. The CUPE representatives are CUPE Vice-President Aleeta Raynor, Anita Moore, and CUPE-B.C. staff member Shane Simpson.

– Larry Kuehn

Encounters with Canada

by Gary Bennett

ever has one week made such an impact on my life. Thank you." was the way that student Andy Richardson of Richmond, B.C. said it. He was describing the week he spent in Ottawa at the Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre. Every week, from mid-September until mid-May, for the last 14 years, the *Encounters with Canada* program brings students from across Canada to Ottawa. They arrive at the centre on Sunday and return home the following Saturday.

Any Canadian or Landed Immigrant student who is attending a school or college recognized by the Ministry of Education of the province and will be aged 15, 16, or 17 when he/she attends may apply.

Participants arrive somewhat shy and anxious and leave with a new exhilarated understanding of what this federation called Canada is all about.

Through a variety of themes, the program facilitates student interaction in the hope of developing a spirit of understanding and brotherhood among Canadians from all backgrounds. The students encounter the spirit of Canada.

Each week the program features one of the following themes: Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, the Canadian Experience, Law, Journalism and Communications, Business and Entrepreneurship, Canada and the World, and Sports and Fitness. Students experience governmental, judicial, and cultural institutions of Canada. They see the Supreme Court, the Senate, and the House of Commons in action. They enjoy an evening at one of the cultural centres in Ottawa.

Encounters with Canada operates under the aegis of the Council for Canadian Unity. The programs are presented to the students by six teacher/monitors who come to Ottawa from school districts all over the country for a two-week stay. There is a nominal cost, and some subsidies are available.

As provincial president of the program, I want to ensure that the teachers in all the secondary schools in the province are aware of this terrific opportunity for the students in their communities.

For more information, contact your school liaison person or if unable, contact your regional co-ordinator, or me for more information:

Vancouver Island:
Audrey Waddy 746-6467
Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, New Westminster:
Harvey Walker 228-0651
Delta, Surrey, Langley:
Alf Clark 526-7187
North Shore, Sunshine Coast, balance of Fraser Valley:
Barry Jones 469-0745
Okanagan:
Candis Eikerman 545-8996
Kootenays:
Gerry Sobie 426-7705
North:
Jeanette Townsend 566-4775
Provincial President:
Gary Bennett Ph: 943-3862, Fax 943-8293.

Gary Bennett teaches at North Delta Senior Secondary School, Delta.

Chess in the mathematics curriculum

by Arnie Nermo and Stephen Miller

Roman Pelts, noted chess teacher, states that "children who start learning chess between the ages of 8 and 10 show great improvement in mathematics." Some literature does imply a direct correlation between chess playing on a regular basis and increased academic achievement in mathematics and physics. Here's what we know about chess in the mathematics curriculum.

Chess has been integrated into the curriculum in all of the countries in Europe. Some schools in New York and Los Angeles have successfully experimented with chess as part of the curriculum.

In Canada, chess is an integral part of a challenge program called "Defi Mathematique." More than 70,000 students in Quebec and 20,000 students in New Brunswick are now using this learning process. Defi mathematique takes a didactic approach to bringing students to understand mathematics, with problem solving used as the primary learning strategy.

This program encourages students to understand a problem before trying to solve it. It attempts to move away from the memorization model for learning mathematics that is prevalent elsewhere in North America. About 10% of classroom time allocated to mathematics is spent studying chess. Chess is introduced in Grade 2 and continued through the primary levels, emphasizing such mental skills as imagining, making hypotheses, and developing strategy and logic. Robert Lyons, author of *Challenging Mathematics 3*, believes that chess increases the student's ability to visualize geometrical and mathematical concepts.

...problem solving ability is a major theme of current educational philosophy in B.C., and chess provides an easily assimilated model for problem solving.

More and more educators, administrators, and parents are recognizing that chess develops skills in children that go beyond the normal curriculum. Not only does it increase their ability to understand mathematics; it also increases the student's ability to concentrate, problem solve, and recognize spatial patterns. Students learn good sportsmanship (how to be good winners and how to be good losers), they learn that doing mental gymnastics is a fun way to spend extra time, and their self-esteem and pride significantly increase.

Many organizations support junior chess in the province. Most notable is the K–12 Chess Association of B.C., a non-profit society established to promoting the benefits and activities of junior chess. Many tournaments are held throughout the school year, with the largest single event being the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) Junior Educational Chess Tournament held each January.

A national tournament, called the Chess 'N Math Challenge, consists of qualifying tournaments in each school, regional tournaments, and a provincial tournament, where the winners from each grade throughout the province represent B.C. at a National Tournament in May. Last year an estimated 20,000 children from across the country played in that tournament.

Perhaps chess will find a home only in the curriculum of special or challenge programs. But problem solving ability is a major theme of current educational philosophy, and chess provides an easily assimilated model for problem solving.

Arnie Nermo, teaches at William Beagle Junior Secondary School, Surrey. For more information, contact Stephen Miller at (604) 432-8602 or Arnie Nermo at (604) 588-6994.

STEPHEN MILLER PHOTO

Max Miller, attends Gilmore Community School in Burnaby, is Grade 3 champion for B.C., under-10 champion for B.C., and placed 3rd in the Nationals last May in the Chess 'N Math Challenge.

by Guillermo Bustos

Collègues, allons voir si les roses.... nous donnent l'élan nécessaire pour aller jusqu'au mois de juin.

Cet article devrait paraître avant l'assemblée générale de la FECB. Comme on le fait depuis trois ans, on invite tous les délégués dont le Français est la langue de travail ou première (FLTP) à un dîner le lundi. Cette réunion nous permet de faire le point sur la situation en régions. Cette réunion est doublement importante car le comité consultatif des Programmes et Services Français songe à établir un réseau provincial FLTP. Si vous connaissez un délégué FLTP encouragez-le à se mettre en contact avec moi.

Qu'est-ce qui se passe parmi nous?

Pendant le mois de janvier, l'Autorité Scolaire Francophone (ASF) s'est constituée. Ils ont choisi Vincent Pigeon, avocat de Vancouver, comme Président du conseil et Marc-André Ouellette, fonctionnaire à Victoria, comme Vice-président. Ils ont engagé Jack Fleming, ancien sous-ministre de l'Éducation, comme consultant pour les aider à trouver un Surintendant et pour établir les premiers contacts avec les 18 commissions scolaires sur le territoire de l'ASF.

De notre côté, la FECB a constitué un groupe de travail: le "Francophone Education Authority Team" (FEAT). Ce groupe s'est réuni avec les enseignants du PCDF du Grand Vancouver, du Bas-Fraser et de Saanich-Victoria. FEAT a aussi engagé les présidents des syndicats locaux, l'exécutif de l'APPIPC et le comité consultatif des Programmes et Services Français dans le processus de consultation. Les recommandations que ce groupe va porter au comité exécutif de la FECB doivent comprendre les positions que l'Autorité est en train de développer et les décisions du premier Surintendant.

Du 11 au 17 février la province a célébré la semaine de l'Immersion. Cette proclamation du Procureur de la Couronne et du Lieutenant-gouverneur a rendu hommage à un des programmes les plus efficaces de l'éducation publique pendant plus d'un quart de siècle.

Le début des programmes de français de base (FSL) à l'élémentaire, pour les commissions scolaires qui n'en avaient pas, s'est révélé un grand succès. À l'école Beach Grove de Delta, la directrice a publié un recueil de commentaire des élèves à la fin du premier semestre: "J'aime ma classe de français parce que c'est le sujet le plus amusant. Le français c'est amusant parce qu'on chante." (Annie); "J'aime ma classe de français parce que j'apprends une autre langue." (Natasha). Nos collègues doivent être fiers de leurs résultats!

Au niveau du Perfectionnement, l'atelier sur "Comment éviter la violence dans les écoles" est en rodage! Il sera prêt pour l'année 96-97. Un autre atelier qui sera disponible est au sujet des "Relations parents-professeurs." Les ateliers sur "Comment gérer le stress" et "Comment faire parler français en classe à nos élèves" ont fini leur rodage et seront incorporés au bottin de services de Perfectionnement. Signalez-les à votre chef de Perfectionnement!

La session française de BCTF Online démarre.

Si vous cherchez des activités de perfectionnement, UVic et UBC ont un Institut d'été pour le français et d'autres langues. Leurs brochures auraient dû arriver au début février. Gilbert Verrier, responsable des bourses au Ministère, a distribué des brochures à toutes les écoles d'Immersion et PCDF. Si vous ne les trouvez pas, demandez à votre coordonateur.

Nos collègues de l'Association des enseignants franco-ontariens a organisé un Institut de formation interculturelle au Burkina Faso, en Afrique, du 20 juillet au 5 août 1996. Si ça vous intéresse demandez un formulaire à André Pinard au secrétariat de l'AEFO au télécopieur (613) 244-2336 avant le 15 mars.

Le comité organisateur du congrès de l'ACPI Victoria '97 a eu sa première réunion le samedi 17 février à Victoria. L'ACPI '96 aura lieu à Winnipeg et si ça vous intéresse, il y a deux façons de vous y rendre à des coûts minimes: des bourses de l'ACPI ou offrir un atelier. Jacqueline enseigne à l'école Cliff-Drive (Delta) 943-2244.

L'ACPI organise aussi un Institut d'été, en collaboration avec l'université de York, au Collège universitaire Glendon, à Toronto, du 7 au 20 juillet. Le thème est "L'enseignement en immersion à l'aube de l'an 2000: collaboration et intégration." La coordinatrice est Louise Lewin et vous pouvez la rejoindre au télécopieur (416) 487-6819.

Guillermo Bustos is co-ordinator of the BCTF's French Programs and Services.

A brief translation...

- French as First or Working Language delegates meet during the AGM.
- The Francophone Education Authority starts.
- Professional Development is increasingly available in French.
- Planning ahead? Consider some of these PD activities.

OUR STORY: A SERIES

1920—Young, female, underpaid, and overworked

by Chris Bocking

The typical rural teacher in the 1920s was young, female, underpaid, and overworked. She was not just expected to teach. She was also to be a role model for the students, the caretaker of the facility, a leader in the community, and the local representative of the Department of Education between the inspector's visits.

Teaching in a rural school was lonely and sometimes dangerous. Mabel Jones, a young female teacher, committed suicide in 1928 on Vancouver Island. She left behind a letter indicating that she could no longer bear the critical comments of the local school board.

For each teacher working in a one-roomed rural school, there were three trustees who had a great deal of influence over her life...

Joshua Hinchliffe, the minister of education, sent a letter to school board secretaries in rural districts after Mabel Jones's tragic death, pointing out that teaching in rural schools could be a hazardous undertaking. He reminded trustees of their responsibility for the young female teachers in their employ and suggested that teachers not be left alone in the classroom outside of school hours.

Rural school boards wielded strict control over the school and over the teacher. Authority of school board trustees sometimes amounted to tyranny. Rural teachers were vastly outnumbered by the trustees overseeing them. For each teacher working in a one-roomed rural school, there were three trustees who had a great deal of influence over her life, both personal and professional. Some teachers were told by their hiring authorities where to stay and which boyfriends were acceptable.

Female teachers' salaries were consistently lower than male teachers' salaries. As late as 1942, rural teachers paid for reference works, including dictionaries and grammar texts, out of their own pockets.

Many teachers were "married away from the school-house" by local suitors. The low salaries, even after many years of teaching, discouraged some who might otherwise have remained in the countryside. Rural districts were unattractive to young people who wanted to socialize with others of their age and station in life. Living in lonely, remote, and uncongenial surroundings, transiency was rampant.

The Department of Education became concerned about the state of the rural schools, so in late 1928, Lottie Bowron was appointed as the Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer. Her job was to help the rural female teachers, particularly the younger ones.

As well as travelling many thousands of miles to meet with them, she often spoke to the inspectors on their behalf and visited their families. In spite of her drive, she visited fewer than half the rural schools in the province, thus leaving most remote teachers to fend for themselves.

It is apparent from the newspapers of the day that Lottie Bowron appreciated the need for tact and diplomacy in her position; the only article relating to her is a short, positive item in the *Victoria Daily Times*. It does not convey the impression that Bowron was radical in her approach to her job, or even mildly controversial. She worked hard on behalf of the teachers until she was dismissed in 1934 by George Weir, the minister of education.

Bowron was upset by her dismissal, and suspected political machinations. That economic restraint was never mentioned as the reason for her termination in the correspondence between her and government officials lends credence to her suspicions.

It is still unclear today why she was removed from her post. Some historians suggest that the new Liberal government of Duff Pattullo could not afford to fund the position during the Depression. Finances were tight in 1934, and when it is difficult to find tax dollars to fund programs, a government's priorities become evident. Lottie Bowron was the only Department of Education official whose job description specifically included services to rural teachers. The teachers could ill afford to lose her.

Whatever the reasons for her dismissal, the result was that there was no longer a Teachers' Welfare Officer to give comfort and support to rural teachers.

Lottie Bowron turned her attention for the next 30 years to Barkerville, where she supported the restoration efforts of the former gold-rush community.

Chris Bocking teaches at Deep Cove Elementary School, Saanich.

RRSP investments: Which should you choose?

It depends...

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- you get nervous and worried when you hear that the "market" has fallen and/or
- you can achieve your retirement income goals without risking any of your savings and/or
- to paraphrase Will Rogers, you are concerned more with the return *of* your money than you are with the return *on* your money and/or
- your favourite investment or savings vehicle has *always* been Canada Savings Bonds or GICs, then

...by all means, invest in a manner that allows you to sleep, and put your savings into a GIC RSP and select a "laddering" strategy to maximize your interest return.

On the other hand...

- If you recognize that the market has outperformed five-year GICs by, on average, 2.5% per year over the last 45 years (not a small difference, since $100 at 8% (the 45-year average five-year GIC rate) grew to $3,050 while the same $100 at 10.5% (the 45-year average TSE 300 return) grew to $8,625—more than 2.5 times as much) and/or
- you recognize and understand that stock markets move in cycles and *never* move constantly up or down ("corrections" have always occurred and will always occur, but this volatility is the price to be paid for what in the intermediate to longer term has resulted in better than five-year GIC returns) and/or
- you *need* to achieve better returns (than GICs) on your retirement savings because you believe that government pensions (OAS, GIS, CPP) cannot or will not provide more than a subsistence income for your retirement years, then

...invest in a mutual-fund RSP, selecting your fund(s) after an analysis of their performance and volatility, as well as their administration and sales costs.

Source: Reprinted with permission from Jim Rogers, chartered financial planner and chair of The James E. Rogers Group Ltd. in Vancouver. Rogers specializes in retirement income/investment planning for individuals.

BCTF Assistance Society needs members

ould you be willing to spend two hours a month making decisions that will help fellow teachers in dire circumstances? Our society needs more members and you may see this as a small, but important, way in which you can contribute to the BCTF.

The Assistance Society, one of the least known groups within the Federation, carries on its work in a quiet, unassuming way: administering funds for the benefit of teachers, former teachers, and their dependents who apply for financial help because of a personal or family emergency, such as sudden illness, fire, or accident.

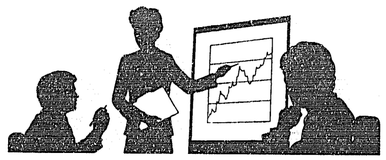
The society is another example of teachers helping teachers. If you would like to apply to be a member of this committee, call Angela Kysela at the BCTF's Income Security Department.

GroupRRSPreport

The BCTF group RRSP, currently available in 10 districts, turned in the following performance as of December 31, 1995.

PH & N Fund	%	One Year Rank	%	Five Year Rank
Money Market	6.7	17/104*	6.5	13/67
Canadian Bonds	20.4	26/127	12.7	8/84
Balanced Pension Trust	17.1	37/168	12.6	12/101
Pool Pension Trust (Can. Equity)	14.6	67/207	10.9	59/135

* Rank means performance for the one-year period was 17 out of 104 money market funds. The best would be 1/104.



Pension seminars

Date	Location
March 9	Surrey, Surrey Continuing Ed. Centre
March 30	Kamloops, Coast Canadian Inn
April 13	Williams Lake, Overlander Motor Inn
April 20	Fort St. John, Pioneer Inn
April 27	Prince George, Holiday Inn
May 4	Victoria, Holiday Inn

Time: 09:00 – 15:30, no registration required. Things to bring (optional): pension statement, calculator, pen, spouse/friend.

Resources

Special education documents available

Awareness of Chronic Health Conditions—What the Teacher Needs to Know (1995) Catalogue #RB0057

Gifted Students—A Resource Guide to Support Classroom Teachers (1995) Catalogue #RB0050

Hard of Hearing and Deaf Students—A Resource Guide to Support Classroom Teachers (1994) Catalogue #RB0033

Students with Visual Impairments—A Resource Guide to Support Classroom Teachers (1995) Catalogue #RB0047

Schools and districts may order on a CA2 form from: Learning Resources Branch, 878 Viewfield Road, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4, Fax (604) 387-1527. All other orders should be placed with Crown Publications, 521 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1E7, Ph: (604) 386-4636, Fax: (604) 386-0221.

Pensions on the Web

http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bctf

The following detailed articles are available on the BCTF On-line home page. Surfs up at **http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bctf/** and select the "Job Issues" icon.

1. Pension-Plan Membership
2. Pension Eligibility
3. What Is Service?
4. Child-Rearing Dropout Credit
5. Reinstatement of Refunds
6. Purchase of Leaves of Absence
7. Interest Rates
8. Tax Deducting the Cost of Refund Reinstatement or Purchase of Leaves
9. Transfer Agreements
10. Contribution Rates
11. 35-year Cap on Pensionable Service
12. Pension Plan Funding Assets and Liabilities—Investments
13. How Is Average Salary Calculated?
14. What Is a Spouse?
15. Marriage Breakdown
16. What If I Leave Teaching? (refunds, etc.)
17. What Happens to My Pension If I Die?
18. Phased Early Retirement Plan (PERP)
19. Pension Indexing—Cost-of-Living
20. Pension Calculator
21. CPP Offset—What Is It?
22. Early Retirement Pension Reduction

–Ken Smith

How you can assist returning teachers

by Diane Bartholomew

s presented in the September '95 *Teacher*, the "volunteering teacher" is part of rehabilitation. After volunteering, the next phase in the rehabilitation is a full or graduated return to one's assignment. When returning full-time to an original assignment is not possible, the next phase in rehabilitation is a modified return to teaching. The union, school board, school administrators, and the rehabilitation consultant assist in the transition to this modified assignment. Modifications may include a graduated return, environmental changes, or a new assignment until the teacher is capable of returning to the original assignment. Whether recovering from a physical or from an emotional disability, the teacher returning to work describes a wide range of emotions: anticipatory anxiety, self-doubt, and sensitivity to the perceptions of colleagues, administrators, and parents. Teachers returning from medical leave often comment that their colleagues seem uncomfortable or unsure as to how to receive them.

As a colleague, how can you assist in a teacher's return?

- Acknowledge his/her return and the difficulty the first few days present.
- During the first few days, check in with the teacher as to how the day went.
- Recognize that it will take a few weeks for the teacher to adjust to the routine of teaching again, especially if the teacher was away from the classroom for a long time.

The teacher has gone through a number of stages in rehabilitation to arrive at this point, and this transition can be very stressful. Do what you can to ease your colleague's return to teaching.

Diane Bartholomew is a rehabilitation consultant with D.B. Hanson and Associates Inc.

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VANCOUVER. 4/5 bdrm. furn. house, $1500/mo., close to UBC. Two resident cats included. Available any time after June 15–Aug. 30/96. Phone (604) 732-5242.

NORTH VANCOUVER. 1 bdrm. condo for rent, July and/or August 96. Lauraine 984-2441.

WANTED: Furnished room & board from approx. mid-June to mid-August in vicinity of UBC. Contact Janet Oakes, Nagoya International School, 2686 Minamihara, Nakashidami, Moriyama-ku, Nagoya 463, Japan. Fax: 81(52)736-3883, Tel: 81(56)852-1029.

CENTRAL RICHMOND. Furn. condo, 2 bdrm., 2 bthrm., w/d, dAv. microwave, pool, h/t, gym, secure pkg. Avail. Sept. 1/96. $925/mo. Call 244-0442.

VICTORIA. July/Aug. 3 bdrm. furn. Oak Bay home near UVic, downtown, beach, N/S, call for details (604) 598-8791, Fax (604) 360-4370.

NELSON. House for rent July/Aug. 5 min. walk to beach, view, creekside, quiet, newly renovated, fully furn., 2 bdrm. Call 352-9324.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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TUTORS REQUIRED. Immediate openings for qualified part-time tutors. Special Ed background or teaching experience in elem. and secondary. A car is required. Mail your résumé to 3980 West 21st Ave., Vancouver, BC V6S 1H6.

STUDENT EXCHANGE. Student group from Winneden (near Stuggart) Germany is seeking an exchange in 1996 with a secondary school in B.C. Contact Canadian Cultural Exchange Society (604) 435-9997 or Fax (604) 435-3049.

PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA Pacific Northwest Regional Festival. "A show of hands" on May 24 to 26, 1996 at the Abercorn Inn, Richmond. Registration includes quality shows, workshops (many geared specifically for educators) displays, book stores, and above all–fun!! Full registration is $115 for PofA members, $160 for non-members. Daily registration is available from $50 to $90. Contact Trish McGeer 922-9302, 1040 Jefferson Ave., West Vancouver, BC V7T 2A5.

STRESS RELIEF. Treat yourself to aromatherapy massage with essential oils. Reduced rates for teachers. Call 584-8114.

NURSE. Austr[illegible]ian RN (mature), 10 yrs. in Canada specializing in care to the elderly. Willing to live in or out. Excellent references. 980-9828.

ANNIVERSARY. Alexander Elementary School in Kitimat, BC is celebrating its 25th anniversary. We'd love to hear from former staff and students. Please drop us a line and share a favourite memory. School address: 1352 Alexander Ave., Kitimat, BC V8C 1Z1, Fax: 632-4203.

ATTENTION SFU GRADS. Call your Mater…Alma Mater, that is! Let us know if you've changed your address, name or job, so we can keep in touch with you. Contact SFU Alumni Relations Office at: Ph: (604) 291-4154, F: (604) 291-4958, E-mail: alumni@sfu.ca. Toll free 1-800-998-GRAD, http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/alumni

CLASSIFIED ADS will be accepted on or before deadline date as space permits. Ad cost is $8 per word plus 7% GST for 1995-96. Ads must be received in writing and prepaid. Send to K. Kolisnek, BCTF.

PD CALENDAR

14–15 Vancouver. From Policy to Practice, Special Education Assn. Crosscurrents Conference on Student Diversity, Westin Bayshore Inn. Contact Pearl Wong, 5860 184th St., Surrey, BC V3S 4N4, H/F: 576-1528.

15–16 Burnaby. Elem. Technology Education, a PITA regional mini-conference, Holiday Inn, Metrotown and South Slope Elem. School. Contact Ray Myrtle, 5787 Blenheim St., Vancouver, BC V6N 1P8, 664-8306 (local 114—24 hrs), F: 264-8055, r.myrtle@etc.bc.ca

16–19 Festival of Forestry Teachers Tour, a free forestry tour to Cranbrook for Lower Mainland teachers. Contact Dwight Yochim, 687-8027, F: 687-3264 or email at dyochim@rpf-bc.org

16–18 West Vancouver. Gestalt Training Inst. PD Workshop, The Order of Love. Location/contact: Gestalt Training Inst., 1747 Gordon Ave., West Vancouver, BC V7V 1V4, P/F: 925-2012.

27 Vancouver. A Forest for All workshop, 16:00–21:00, no fee. Simulation game for Grades 7–12 presented by Canadian Pulp & Paper Assn. Contact Anne Bishop, 661-5385, F: 661-5381, e-mail abishop@canfor.ca

9–10 New Westminster. Enhancing School Safety, offered by the Justice Inst. of B.C. Suited for team registration. Instructors: Mark LaLonde & Terry Waterhouse. Contact M. LaLonde, Career & Community Studies, 528-5608, F: 528-5640.

11–12 New Westminster. Enhancing Elementary School Safety (violence prevention). Instructor: Lisa Pedrini. Contact M. LaLonde, Career and Community Studies, 528-5608, F: 528-5640.

11–13 Vancouver. B.C. Business Educators' Assn. spring conference, Wall Centre Garden Hotel, Vancouver. Contact Anders Person, 664-8535, F: 664-8541.

12–14 North Vancouver. B.C. Teachers for Peace and Global Ed. conference, Global Ed. and IRPs, Strategies for Stress-Free Implementation, North Vancouver Outdoor School. Contact Beata Hittrich, Johnston Heights Sec. School, 15350 99 Ave., Surrey, BC V3R 0R9, 581-5500, F: 583-9286.

15–16 & 18–19 Vancouver. Strategies and Tools for Collaborative Teaching, with Dr. Anita De-Boer, sponsored by VSB, Arbutus Club. $225, 08:30–15:00. Contact Veronica Hooker 263-9730 or Debbie Kelly 731-1131.

18–19 Vancouver. 6th Annual Pathfinder Conference, The Power of You: The New Reality, Coast Plaza at Stanley Park. $265+GST. Contact Kathy Richmond, 200-668 Carnarvon St., New Westminster, BC V3M 5Y6, 521-1664, F: 521-6363, e-mail: kathyr@wimsey.com

20 Victoria. Social Studies and First Nations' Education, a workshop on how to use museums, galleries, and heritage sites as resources, McLaurin Building, UVic Campus. Course CENCX123 Section K01, $50. Contact Diane Anderson 721-7860, F: 721-6603, e-mail danderson@uvcs.uvic.ca

20 Vancouver. 1996 spring conference of the Orton Dyslexia Society, B.C. Branch. Vital Skills for the 21st Century—Dyslexia: Unlocking Potential, Student Union Building, UBC. Contact Howard Eaton, 3737 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6R 2N7, 222-1448.

24–28 Trail. Basic week training in Glasser concepts: reality therapy, control therapy, quality schools management, personal/professional effectiveness. Contact David Rasmus, Beaver Valley Middle School 367-9218.

25–27 Prince George. Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Assn. Conference, Civic Centre. Contact Suzanne Sharp, H: 564-6625, S: 562-9525, or Jeanette Boner, H: 564-0839, S: 962-9271, F: 962-5637.

25–28 Vancouver. Shifting Strands, NCTE Northwest Regional Conference, Hotel Vancouver. Contact Lynn Archer, 590-2255, or John F. McGuinness, 596-5315, F: 594-JMcG.

26–27 Nanaimo. Congrès 96, l'APPIPC en regions—Assn. provincial des professeurs d'immersion et du programme cadre de la Colombie-Britannique. Contactez: Mme Anne Pidgeon téléphone: 754-6845 télécopieur: 754-6871 internet: apidgeon@bbs.sd68.nanaimo.bc.ca

1–5 Ladner. Basic week training in Glasser concepts: reality therapy, control therapy, quality schools management, personal/professional effectiveness. Contact Daphni Clifton 946-8336.

2–4 Richmond. Catalyst Conference, B.C. Science Teachers' Assn., Delta Pacific Resort and Conference Centre, Richmond. Contact Kyle Kirkwood, H: 951-1966, S: 324-2414, F: 324-9476, catalyst@uniserve.com

3–5 West Vancouver. Gestalt Training Inst. PD Workshop, Working with Incest Offenders and Survivors, with Thomas Layne. Location/contact: Gestalt Training Inst., 1747 Gordon Ave., West Vancouver, BC V7V 1V4, P/F: 925-2012.

4 Burnaby. Spring meeting of the B.C. Section of the American Assn. of Physics Teachers, SFU. Contact Brian Jackson, 664-8560 (ext. 1213), F: 664-8561, brjackso@cln.etc.bc.ca

5–7 Victoria. Education and the Law: Reaffirming the Partnership, the 1996 CAPSLE annual conference, Victoria Conference Centre. *May 5 pre-conference, For good behaviour–The regulation of student conduct.* Contact Canadian Assn. for the Practical Study of Law in Ed., 37 Moultrey Cres., Georgetown, ON L7G 4N4, (905) 873-7414, F: (905) 873-0662.

9–10 Richmond. A Teachers' Sharing on First Nation Studies 12. Call Frank Conibear at 382-9226, or fax him at 361-1263.

9–11 Vancouver. Prevention Works! Promoting Family Health, UBC. Contact B.C. Council for the Family, 204-2590 Granville St., Vancouver, BC V6H 3H1, 660-0675, F: 732-4813.

15–18 Vancouver. Int'l Congress of Counselling Professionals sponsored by B.C. School Counsellors' Assn., The Canadian Guidance and Counselling Assn., and The Int'l Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling— careers, gender, culture; youth, social issues, solutions—UBC. Contact Bill Borgen, 822-5261, F: 822-2328, borgen@unixg. ubc.ca

16–18 Surrey. Physical Education Provincial Specialist Assn. conference. Contact Debbie Keel, H: 465-9847, S: 465-5828, F: 465-8632, dkeel@cln.etc.bc.ca

JULY

1–5 Victoria Advanced Placement Inst. for English, French, Math, and European History for new and experienced teachers of AP. Camosun College. Dr. Jim Sexton 370-3352, F: 370-3662, e-mail:sexton@camosun.bc.ca or view our web page:http://morganmedia.com/m2/ap

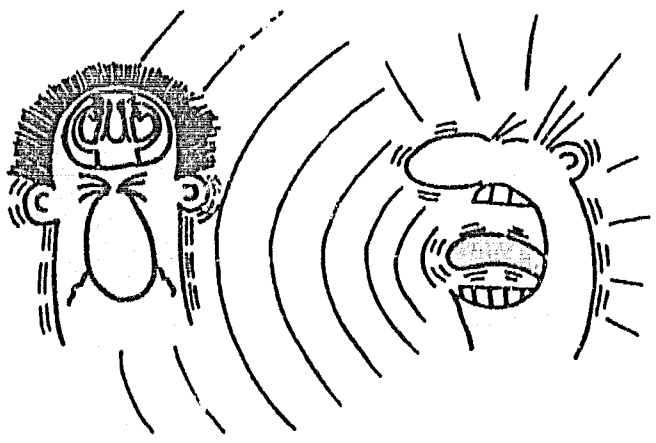
2–3 New Westminster. Enhancing School Safety, offered by the Justice Institute of B.C. *See April 9–10 listing.*

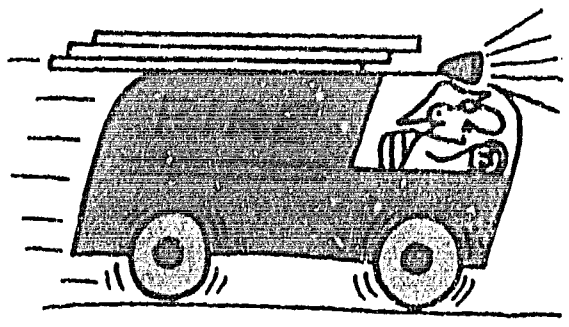
AUGUST

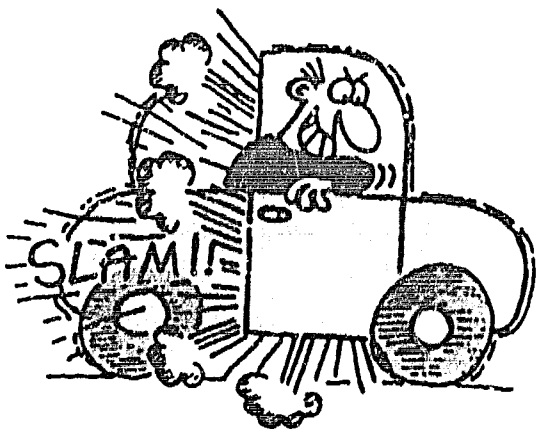
19–20 New Westminster. Enhancing Elem. School Safety. *See April 11–12 listing.*

PD CALENDAR OF EVENTS compiled by Debby Stagg. Additions or changes, write, or fax (adhering to our format) 871-2291, e-mail dstagg@bctf.bc.ca. INTERNET users find full calendar on BCTF's gopher, BCTF ONLINE—select professional development from the menu.

International Noise-Awareness Day: April 24







by Lyn Grants

Do you know that the International Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development has declared noise to be a universal problem and a health menace? Do you know that rising numbers of children, increasingly in elementary school years, are acquiring noise-induced hearing loss? Do you know that the unborn child is affected by the loud noises in the mother's environment? Do you realize that by constantly immersing ourselves in a sea of sound we are diminishing our sense of hearing? Isn't it time we made some noise about noise?

Suzanne Plessis, a Grade 10 student at Prince of Wales Secondary School, in Vancouver, thought so. Suzanne is registered in the school's Trek Program, which as well as engaging students in outdoor activities, requires them to tackle environmental issues. Noise was Suzanne's choice. Concerned about the levels of noise to which her peers subject themselves (and others), she presented information about the effects of repeated and lengthy exposure to high levels of sound. She talked about provincial regulations that require that workers be provided hearing-protection devices when sound in the work-place is at the 85-decibel level. She talked about noise levels at clubs, at rock concerts, and sometimes at school dances frequently exceeding 85 decibels. (Ear plugs, which may be provided, are rarely used.) She talked about stereos and sound systems that are cranked up until the noise is "deafening." The noise may indeed be deafening.

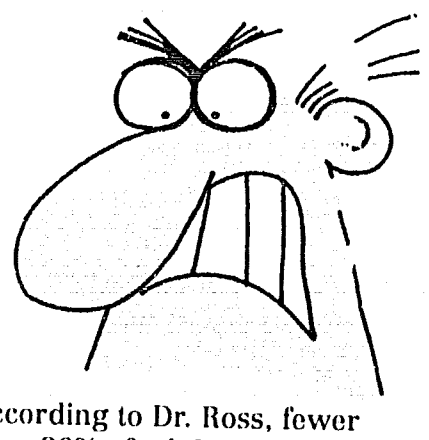
Suzanne talked about the sensation, familiar to many of her classmates after exposure to intense noise, of a ringing in the ears that may go on for hours or days. That ringing or buzzing warns that harm is being done. When people are exposed to excessive noise, their hearing is dulled and measurements show that hearing sensitivity decreases. At first, the effect is temporary, and after some time in a quiet environment, the hearing recovers. But after repeated exposure to loud noise, the loss is permanent. People think they have developed a tolerance to loud noise, when, in fact, they have become deaf. Isn't it time, asked Suzanne, that we made a noise about noise?

Many classmates claimed that it is their right to play their music as loud as they wish. Suzanne's peers listened, but they were not interested.

The answer, in Suzanne's Trek class, was *No*! While her classmates strongly supported environmental issues such as heavy fines for water pollution and a ban on the use of animals for cosmetics testing, they refused to acknowledge that noise is a problem, or that noise could be considered pollution. The evidence that repeated exposure to excessive noise causes irreparable hearing loss was dismissed. The nuisance value of noise, particularly from stereos or radios cranked too loud, or from machinery and tools, cars and motor-bikes was disputed. Many classmates claimed that it is their right to play their music as loud as they wish. Suzanne's peers listened, but they were not interested. Her statistics fell on deaf ears.

Such a lack of interest does not surprise Dr. Mark Ross, director of Research and Training at the New York League of the Hard of Hearing. "Hearing," says Dr. Ross, "is not a sexy topic." Because we learn speech and language (and thereby acquire the fundamentals of reading) so effortlessly through our hearing, we take our hearing for granted. Yet hearing is a vital sense. Our ears constantly scan the environment. Unlike sight, our hearing does not have to be aimed and the inputs are constantly being processed and evaluated by the brain. Our ears never switch off. Even in our sleep we are responding to noise.

As a society, we are much slower to compensate for our loss of hearing (through the use of hearing aids), than we are to our gradual less of sight (through the wearing of glasses). We are loath to acknowledge hearing loss.



According to Dr. Ross, fewer than 20% of adults with hearing-related communication disorders use hearing aids. Wearing glasses is, moreover, an easier compensation than being fitted with a personal amplification device. Why, then, are we so reluctant to acknowledge the psycho social, physical and mental health, communicative, and educational consequences of noise?

This is obviously a question that we adults must put to ourselves before we can expect a recognition from our children that noise is a health menace. We need to think about our levels of noise tolerance, and whether that tolerance (or pained endurance) is injurious to our physical and mental health. We need to examine our noise practice in home, school, and work-place environments.

A minute of silence observed on April 24 may enable us to take stock.

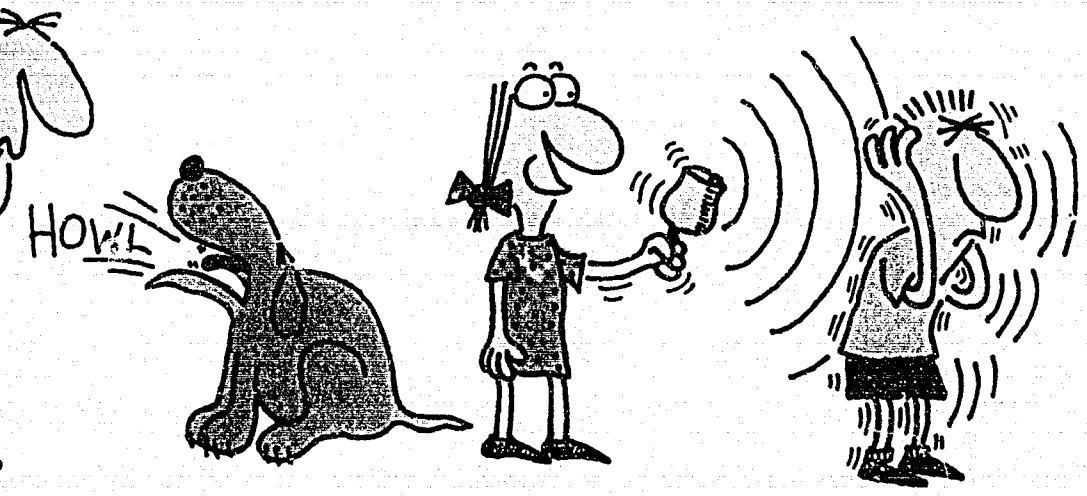
Suzanne Plessis plans to continue her campaign to make her peers more aware of noise as a form of pollution. She is in the vanguard of a new movement. Noise is one form of pollution over which the efforts of an individual can have a direct effect. She is still asking her classmates "Can you hear me?"

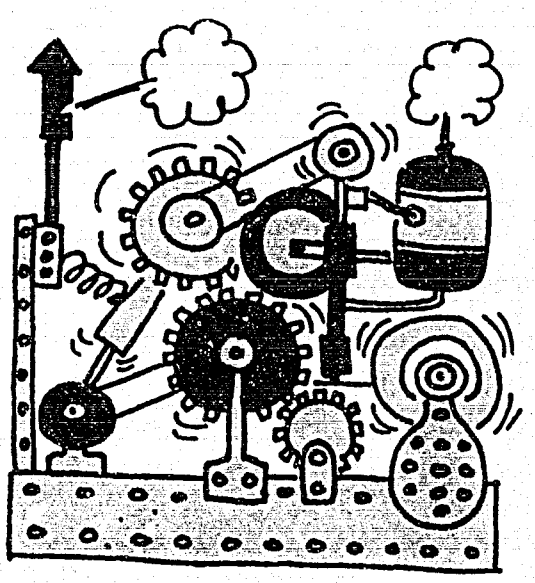
Lyn Grants is a retired North Vancouver teacher.

Noise pollution teaching pack

The National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection in the United Kingdom has produced a Noise Pollution Teaching Pack suitable for students aged 9 to 13. The material is excellently presented, with humorous illustrations and clear text. It is suitable for photocopying to provide class sets. A copy of the teaching pack is available locally through Right to Quiet—Society for Sound Scape Awareness and Protection, one of the two Canadian groups, (the other is from Toronto), promoting the International Noise Awareness Day in Canada.

If you are interested in the Teaching Pack, contact the Society at (604) 222-0207 or (604) 985-5039.





IT'S TIME from page 1

countering the myths about public education and setting the record straight.

These are difficult times for public institutions. Some people would like to see all social programs, including public education, dismantled. Public institutions that have increased the degree of equity in our society are under attack. One has only to look at Alberta and Ontario to see how the deficit has been used as an excuse to increase inequities.

Earl Manners, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, in his address to our Representative Assembly, warned B.C. teachers about the devastation being wrought on public schools and teachers in Ontario as a result of the Harris government's assault on all social programs. Programs designed to provide equal opportunity for citizens in those provinces have been cut. Both provinces have introduced user fees and tax cuts. People who can afford services can get them and the rest must do without.

Teachers are ready for a settlement. The demands in the job—from government, administrators, parents, and students—keep increasing. Be they report cards or IEPs, the demands grow. We need to negotiate the terms and conditions of our employment so that both parties agree on what is required and what it's worth.

Your participation is necessary to make this successful. Get involved and support the campaign in your local. You'll have opportunities to support bargaining in your school, in your local, and in your community. You can help in your local with community relations. The local teacher is the most credible person to speak on educational matters in the community. Talk to parents about the importance of stability and adequate funding for our education system.

Communities, parents, and trustees must indicate to the employer, the B.C. Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), that they want stability in their schools, that it's time for a deal. If all of us speak out in support of public education, with our neigbours, our friends, and our relatives, we can put to rest some of the myths out there. And in doing so, we will help protect the services we know are necessary for the students we see every day. It's time.

Alice McQuade is the BCTF president.

PUBLIC Education
BECAUSE WE THINK THE WORLD OF OUR CHILDREN.