

Teacher

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Journeys of justice



At time of publication the future of the Law Courts Education Society is uncertain because the Ministry of the Attorney General is considering the elimination of society core funding as of March 31, 1997. On October 24, 1996, the BCTF Executive Committee decided to write to the Attorney General with copies to the Minister of Education urging immediate reconsideration of the decision to eliminate the funding. You are encouraged to write to the Attorney General, Room 232, Parliament Building, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4.

Explorations in justice-making for B.C.'s schools

by Peter Owens

What do law camps, mock trials, fairytales, and First Nations' oral stories have in common? They are all part of an innovative approach to law-related education for B.C.'s students.

B.C. is in the forefront of law-related education among the commonwealth countries and the world. Interest in this programming has come from England, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States.

The goal is to ensure that all British Columbians have access to knowledge and opportunities to understand how their justice system works.

The approach is to build bridges between our justice system and B.C.'s diverse communities. A bridge goes both ways, and programs to educate the public must be accompanied by programs to educate justice-system personnel on the needs of

Students learn about the justice system as they play different roles in mock trials organized by the Law Courts Education Society.

B.C.'s diverse communities.

The Law Courts Education Society has been bridge building for seven years. The society was created in response to government action on the Access to Justice Report of 1988. That report made one of its priorities the delivery of education programs for schools and the public, to increase public access to our justice system.

Today, the society has a core of seven full-time and four part-time staff working out of the Prince George, Kamloops, Surrey, Kelowna, and Vancouver courthouses to provide programs for most communities in the province.

An experiential approach to learning is at the heart of the society's work. All programs have a common core:

- developing the educational resources needed to educate students, clients, and community members about the operation of the justice system

- providing opportunities for students and the public to courtwatch by visiting the courts and seeing them in action.
- organizing educational sessions with judges, lawyers, court clerks, and sheriffs so that people understand the human dimension of our justice system.

*A day in the courts
is always a lesson
in real life and the
personal
consequences of
antisocial behaviour
or human conflict.*

- arranging mock trials and other simulations so that participants learn about justice-system procedures and experience first-hand how our system works.

Working with schools

Every school day from mid-September until late June, a dozen school classes visit courthouses throughout B.C. Law 12, Socials 11, and intermediate students come to the courts to watch trials, meet with judges, and conduct mock trials.

Last year, the society organized educational visits to the courts for close to 2,000 groups, more than 45,000 British Columbians. Groups visit for a morning or a full day. They receive an orientation on the court system as well as background information on the court list of current trials. They then visit several criminal and civil trials to hear lawyers argue a case for or against an accused person or plaintiff.

A murder or personal-injury case may take several weeks, so a one-day visit is but a glimpse into the complexity of the trial. Other cases, such as those in provincial court (theft

See JUSTICE page 4

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It's the day after Premier Clark's television address and I have to say I am relieved. He is sticking to his commitment to protect health care and education. I hope it will provide us with the stability we've been seeking so we can get on with the job of teaching.

It's a positive comment on government priorities that educational services to children will not be affected by their drive to balance the budget, but I'm not so sure their focus on balancing the budget is the right one. I know the media have been obsessed with the idea of a balanced budget and a lot of British Columbians support doing whatever is necessary to eliminate the deficit.

Our province has been experiencing significant growth year after year and our economy has been strong and able to absorb and support that growth. We continue to have the best credit rating of all the provinces, and the lowest per capita debt. I'm concerned about the schools that aren't being built. We need to pressure the government to continue with its attempts to balance the budget but not at the expense of the services and support systems we need to provide all British Columbians with a satisfactory quality of life. I worry about layoffs in any sector of the economy having a negative effect on the economy by deflating consumer spending and creating even more unemployment. And I worry about the children who live in poverty, their quality of life experiences and the futures they will have. A child is a child only once and we need to work toward eliminating child poverty in this country.

I want to add my voice to those who say job creation and adequate services for all British Columbians should be our priorities. That is the best way to eliminate the deficit over time.

I hope you give these issues some thought as you think about the upcoming holiday season. And whatever else, I do hope you get some rest and relaxation during the winter break.

Alice

For several years, I've operated Correspondence Canada in my spare time. I now have in my files hundreds of addresses of Canadian and foreign teachers and thousands of Canadian and foreign students, in both English and French, that I would enjoy sharing with my fellow teachers across Canada so that they, in turn, can initiate pen-pal exchanges in their schools during 1996-97, and for many years to follow. I ask only that interested teachers send me a letter outlining their preferences and enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for my reply. Correspondence Canada, 2695 McWillis Street, Montreal, Quebec H4R 1M5.

*Tracy Hogg
Scholarship Fund*

An opportunity to honour a great teacher! The Langley community response to the loss of Denny Ross to cancer after 32 years as an educator is amazing. How is it possible for a teacher, coach, community worker, principal, and trustee to command such universal admiration and respect from all walks of life, from all cultures?

Throughout his years of teaching, Ross championed the poor, the underprivileged, and minorities, who often felt powerless as the Fraser Valley hummed with economic activity. As a member of the community Aboriginal Awareness Committee, Ross was a passionate advocate of native issues and culture.

The scholarship fund is just a small way in which we can honour and remember our great teachers, our community leaders. Tax deduction receipts will be sent for amounts of \$50 or more. Cheques can be made out to: The Denny Ross Scholarship Fund, Mountain Secondary School, 7755 - 202A Street, Langley, BC V2Y 1W4.

*Terry Eastman
Langley*

Business Education

Doug Gillett, teacher at Okanagan Mission Secondary School received the 1996 Sheila Cameron Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to business education in the province.

Doug Gillett has had a tremendous effect on his school, on his district, and at the provincial level. He was instrumental in creating Career Skills, integrating business education, career and personal planning, and information technology at Grades 9 and 10. He has served on many committees within the BCTF, the B.C. Business Education Association (BCBEA), and the Ministry of Education.

Doug Gillett's energy and enthusiasm, combined with his

leadership skills and commitment to students, make him an effective teacher.

*Diane Gibney
Vice-president, BCBEA*

*Tracy Hogg
Scholarship Fund*

Kudos to Peter Scurr and the Art Department at South Delta Secondary School ("Art, adolescents, and awareness," *Teacher*, September 1996). Education is not simply a classroom exercise. It should be relevant in the broader context of the outside world.

Art projects that increase awareness of social issues exemplify the positive direction of the education process as we enter the 21st century.

Keep up the good work.
*Terry Lanning
Vancouver*

*Tracy Hogg
Scholarship Fund*

The Movement Disorder Clinic at the University of B.C. has a special interest in Parkinson's disease. We are attempting to ascertain the number of patients suffering from this disorder in certain occupational groups. We would like to hear from any teachers or ex-teachers who suffer from Parkinson's disease. Fax (604) 822-7866 or write to: D. Calne, Purdy Pavilion, Room M36, 2221 Wesbrook Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 2B5.

*Donald Calne, DM, FRCP
University of B.C.*

Affiliation

I would like BCTF members to consider the following comments before they vote to affiliate with the B.C. Federation of Labour.

The cost to join the BC Fed is \$7.68 per year or 2¢-3¢ per day. If you multiply this by the number of members, the figure comes to \$253,000. What is the BC Fed going to do with this money? To quote BCTF Question and Answer Sheet #6 "the major areas of expenditure are for staffing, meeting activities, membership communication, and public relations." Isn't this the same reason we pay our union dues to our locals and the BCTF?

Elsie McMurphy, in a speech to Kelowna teachers, stated that we are the third largest union in B.C. Why do we need the added voices of the B.C. Federation of Labour? It was suggested that if we align ourselves with labour, the workers who have students in our schools will have a better understanding of educational issues. Why do we have such poor turnouts on open-house nights and parent/teacher conferences? Perhaps B.C. Federation of Labour members should take the time and responsibility to visit their child's school and teachers!

Where has the B.C. Federation of Labour been while our clerical staff members have experienced severe cutbacks to their working hours? CUPE is affiliated with the BC Fed! I have not seen any sup-

port from this strong labour organization for their CUPE brothers and sisters.

Finally, we as teachers will still be faced with threats of being legislated as an "essential service" by the current government and most certainly by the Liberals waiting on the side lines. That move will save the taxpayers millions of dollars when they increase class size and roll back teachers' wages. As an essential service, we will be powerless to control our own affairs. The B.C. Federation of Labour will also be just as powerless to help us! Are we prepared to go out on strike to support the B.C. Federation of Labour and its affiliates?

I urge all BCTF members to explore all the information put forth by the BCTF and vote no to affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour.

*Sam Saprunoff
Kelowna*

*Tracy Hogg
Scholarship Fund*

At our AGM in 1992, I was the only member of the BCTF Executive Committee to vote against affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress and the B.C. Federation of Labour. I've changed my mind.

In 1992, I was worried that affiliation might encourage and deepen a tendency to bureaucratize the BCTF. I was frightened that the further structures and decision-making got from locals, the more distant our members would be from their union. I knew that the political culture and traditions of our Federation were very different from those of our friends in the Labour Movement.

I'm still concerned about these potential challenges. They haven't been solved, and they won't be solved in a hurry. Still, I'm convinced that joining the B.C. Federation of Labour is a good idea for us as teachers and that ultimately the decision will benefit our students. Here's why.

Our biggest challenge as an organization is to resist the march to privatization, centralization, and standardization in public education. We need to be part of a strong movement in B.C. and Canada that supports and defends adequate and stable funding for public schools. We must oppose those who would reduce education simply to skills acquisition—vocational and business training. We can't do it alone.

Moreover, B.C. teachers' vision of society includes a strong, universal health-care system, a generous and humane social-services network, a protected and sustainable environment, and a national infrastructure in broadcasting, transportation, and communications. That vision is under attack, and we can't defend it by ourselves.

Our union goals—a fair collective agreement, public support for the jobs we do, an understanding of the need for profes-

sional rights and autonomy—will not be achieved until we make progress on the broader goals.

I'll continue to work hard to defend the power and autonomy of our local associations in the BCTF. I'll keep insisting on grassroots membership participation and control of our union. But at the same time, I'm going to argue as strongly as I can for affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour.

We need allies. We won't build those alliances with mere good intentions. We need to take concrete steps, make real compromises, and build bridges.

Affiliation is not a panacea, but it's one important step forward. Please think carefully about this issue—and please vote for BCTF affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour.

*David Chudnovsky
Surrey*

*Tracy Hogg
Scholarship Fund*

Stephen Leacock once wrote an item called "Great Things, Sir, Statistics." Oh how true were his observations.

You have taken Stats Canada figures on corporate taxation that do indeed make it look as if "corporate welfare bums" are not only not paying their share of taxes but are raking back.

But let's take a closer look at the make-up of some of these corporate Scoogeos.

I own a tiny amount of stock in four companies. In 1995, MacMillan Bloedel paid \$430 million in income taxes. Greyhound paid \$3.5 million in income taxes. Imperial Oil paid \$409 million in income taxes, plus \$1.1 billion in Federal excise tax. Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce paid \$635 million in income taxes.

When I receive my T5 I see that while I have received a \$21 dividend on my tiny investment, I must actually pay tax on \$27. Who is paying that tax? Average Josephine. Add up all the small owners and the tax they pay on the dividends, and combine it with the up-front taxes paid directly by the corporations, and you find that these companies are paying a very great deal of tax indeed.

As the proprietors of a small business, my husband and I are required to pay our taxes quarterly—based on last year's income. If last year was a good one and this year stinks, we must pay, in advance, taxes on money we are not going to earn. And if we tell Revenue Canada that our revenues are significantly reduced, and send in less than they feel we should, they add a penalty for each quarter. Oh sure, they give it back, with a minuscule amount of interest some time in May or June of next year. But in the meantime we have to subsidize the tax payments on our pensions.

*Irene Carradice
Sardis*

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Yours for the asking

1997 Calendars and Posters

1997 World Calendar

This multicultural and multilingual instruction aid in six languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Japanese, and Arabic) includes the national, civic, and religious holidays of 120 nations. Use in classes on diversity, multiculturalism, global awareness, foreign language, ESL.

1997 Ethnic Cultures of America Calendar

This publication illustrates and identifies 106 different ethnic groups and shows them celebrating their ethnicity through cultural and religious holidays. Use in classroom discussion of cultural diversity.

Costs \$12.50 U.S. plus \$3 postage and handling (\$15.50). Discounts are available for bulk orders.

1997 Cultural and Festival Days of the World Poster

This 22" x 35" poster lists special days by month, by date, by name of holiday, and by the country of the world in which it is being celebrated. Use for global awareness and multiculturalism.

Cost of \$10.95 U.S., includes postage and teacher's guide. Discounts are available for bulk orders.

Send orders to Educational Extension Systems, PO Box 472, Waynesboro, PA 17268 U.S.A. or phone 1-800-447-8561.

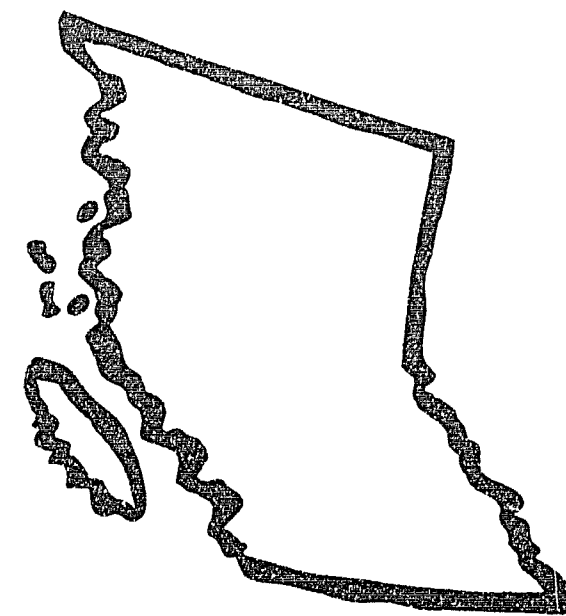
Journey toward enlightenment

This integrated medieval times unit for language arts, social studies and humanities teachers employs ministry principles of learning: active participation of the learner, learning in a variety of ways and at different rates, and individual and group process. The unit also has criteria-based assessment, performance-based assignments, use of multiple intelligences, peer and self-evaluation, goal-setting and reflection, various processing strategies, integrated curriculum, and learning station format. There are over 100 individual and group activities with unit organization, teacher directions, and duplicating masters.

Only \$15.95 plus shipping and handling (\$3/copy). To order, phone or fax (604) 376-1171. Student Centered Publications, 1738 North River Drive, Kamloops, BC V2B 7N7.

Oops

In the October issue of "Yours for the asking" we made an error in the toll free number for the Canadian Space Resource Centre. The correct number is 1-800-511-3700.



Une question de langues

La politique langagière annoncée par le Ministre Sihota au beau début de l'année scolaire a provoqué des réactions diverses.

Beaucoup de collègues impliqués dans l'enseignement du français résistent au fait que le français ne garde aucun statut spécial dans cette politique, en tant que langue seconde.

Les enseignants de la langue française ne sont pas contre l'enseignement de plusieurs langues. L'enseignement des langues est d'une importance capitale. Ici on se bat pour savoir quelle deuxième langue sera enseignée.

Néanmoins, le fait de placer des langues dans l'univers curriculaire n'assure pas leur apprentissage. La FEBC se bat depuis des années pour que le Ministère respecte un principe très simple: si l'on veut implanter un nouveau programme, que ce soit de langues, de sciences, de quoi que ce soit, il faut mettre du temps et des ressources à la disposition des enseignants.e.s.

Très peu est en place pour assurer le succès de l'implantation curriculaire: ni les textes, ni le plan d'entraînement pour les enseignants.e.s., ni le matériel de support pédagogique existent dans nombreux conseils scolaires.

Un dernier point à considérer est que l'enseignement du français au Canada n'est pas une question démographique. Le français n'est pas devenu une langue officielle par un accident migratoire. Mettre l'enseignement du français langue seconde comme un choix que les

conseils scolaires peuvent offrir "par défaut" place la Colombie-Britannique dans une situation douteuse au moment où le pays se penche, une fois de plus, sur la question constitutionnelle.

One among many

The minister of education started the school year by announcing the new Languages Education Policy. This document raises the issue of French becoming one option among many.

The announcement is quite attractive, especially to multicultural communities in the province. Nevertheless, it does little to improve the acquisition of languages in the province. Money and resources are lacking.

Teachers are enthusiastic about taking on new challenges and many gave up vacation time to attend refresher courses and institutes but they are very conscious that more in-service is desperately needed.

We cannot leave the topic, however, without addressing the status of French in one of Canada's two official languages. As Victor Godin, m, Commissioner for Official Languages, stated last year at the fall conference of the Language Co-ordinating Association, French is not an official language as a result of some demographic accident. Bilingualism is part of the fabric of our nation.

As language educators we value the learning of many languages. We should be discussing what languages to teach in addition to, and not instead of English and French.

—Guillermo Bustos

Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

1 A Game and Puzzle Book for Grade 6 and 7 Social Studies. 46 p. Includes a variety of games and puzzles, which can be incorporated into existing social studies units. LA #9275—\$6.20

2 Forces, Motion and Simple Machines: A Unit for Grades 5-7. 22 p. This Vancouver School Board activity-based unit includes 12 lesson plans. Many science process skills and a variety of teaching strategies are contained in the lessons. LA #9517—\$8.25

3 The Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands. 157 p. A Vancouver School Board publication. A multisensory unit in which students study the heritage and tradition of the Haida people. Reproducible student research booklets and job cards are included. Grade 4. LA #9221—\$22

4 The Trial of J.V. Stalin: Exercises in Critical Thinking. 92 p. The intent of this resource package is to disseminate and synthesize some critical existing knowledge concerning the ramifications of Stalin's so-called achievements. This package includes recent information about Stalin's crimes, some pedagogical suggestions for using the factual raw materials, 10 activity modules that may require from one to four class periods and 20 student reference sheets. For Grades 11 & 12. LA #2059—\$9

5 Study Notes: Grade 9, Patterns of Civilization. 66 p. Social studies study notes for nine chapters for use by teachers, students, parents, and IAC, SLJ, and ESL students. #2086—\$6.25

6 Study Notes: Grade 11, Canada in a Changing World, Geography. 47 p. Social studies study notes for eight chapters for use by teachers, students, parents, and IAC, SLJ, and ESL students. LA #2091—\$5

7 Rocks: An Integrated Thematic Approach for Later Primary. 47 p. This discovery unit includes activities that involve learning with people—other students, teachers, the librarian, and people in the community. It is compiled to be used with multi-aged interest groups, within a whole class setting and as a learning centre throughout the year. LA #8541—\$8.50

8 Little Bear's Vision Quest. 36 p. This full-colour illustrated story book, which teaches respect for others, is a modern First Nations legend. The book deals with name-calling and includes discussion questions for parents and teachers to use with children. For Primary and lower Intermediate. Recommended by the Ministry of Education. LA #3104—\$16.95

9 Research Skills: Activity Cards for Grade 3. 67 p. This unit is designed to introduce primary students to some of the basic research skills. Includes 45 activity cards arranged according to topics, two record sheets, an answer sheet, and a quiz. LA #8223—\$4.50

10 Teaching Cursive Writing. 16 p. A manual for teachers. Covers such topics as grouping of related letters, order of difficulty of teacher letters and devices for developing and improving skills. LA #8070—\$3.15

For a complete listing of over 850 BCTF Lesson Aids, consult the catalogue in your school library or the BCTF web site, which includes a searchable database and six complete lesson aids available online. BCTF web site—<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bctf>

To order any of the above lesson aids, enclose a cheque or authorized purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2. GST and postage/handling are included in the prices. Orders are sent by return mail.

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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: lists@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 Siobhan Cooney at scooney@bctf.bc.ca

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Newsmagazine of the B.C. Teachers' Federation
100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2
871-2283, toll free 1-800-663-9163, Fax 871-2289
E-mail: newsmag@bctf.bc.ca
Web site: <http://www.bctf.bc.ca/bctf>

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Volume 9
September '96
October '96
November '96
December '96
January '97
February '97
March '97
April '97
May/June '97

Deadlines:
August 16
September 13
October 18
November 13
December 13
January 31
February 28
March 27
April 25
May 25

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CalM Canadian Association of Learning Media
PRINTED IN CANADA BY MITCHELL PRESS LIMITED
ESTABLISHED 14

ISSN 0841-9574

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JUSTICE from page 1

under \$1,000, break and enter) are relatively short. The students may hear opening arguments, witness direct and cross examination, and hear closing arguments in the space of two hours. The drama is real. The seriousness of the matter before the courts is not lost on the students. A day in the courts is always a lesson in real life and the personal consequences of antisocial behaviour or human conflict.

Many groups also have an opportunity to meet with a judge or with other justice-system personnel. Last year, 500 judges gave up their lunch time to speak to students and answer their questions. Another 600 sheriffs, court clerks, defence lawyers, and

(Clockwise from right) Primary students testifying at a mock trial of the wolf. A student giving evidence as a police officer at a mock trial. The Raven testifying in Regina vs Raven, a mock trial based on a First Nations legend. The defence team listens as a witness responds to questions from the prosecution. A Supreme Court Justice addressing secondary school students. Students in northern B.C. participating in a Law Camp.



prosecutors shared their working experiences with students. For others, a day at the courts means the chance to dress up in court robes and conduct a mock trial. Last year, 400 mock trials of Grade 6, Grade 7, and Law 12 students occurred in courtrooms throughout British Columbia.

Many of these are short mock trials from the society's "Legal Safari" curriculum and involve an accused who stole a teacher's car, or is a fairytale character such as the wolf from Little Red Riding Hood or Jack of the Beanstalk fame. These mock trials take place at lunch time, with the courts in recess.

Other mock trials are lengthy affairs, spread over one or several evenings. The trials often cover drug or murder scenarios, but some deal with complex issues such as the battered wife's syndrome or temporary mental disorder. These complex cases challenge students to develop good questioning techniques, strong public-speaking skills, and analytical reasoning.

Early primary classes don't come to the courts; however, several scripted fairytale mock trials exist for these students, and the society is always willing to provide fairytale costumes for the occasion.

The Law Courts Education Society also provides curricula and courtwatching for French immersion and English-as-second-language students: it organizes job shadowing in the system for hundreds of Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) students annually; it conducts careers sessions; and it sells a range of curricula materials to schools.

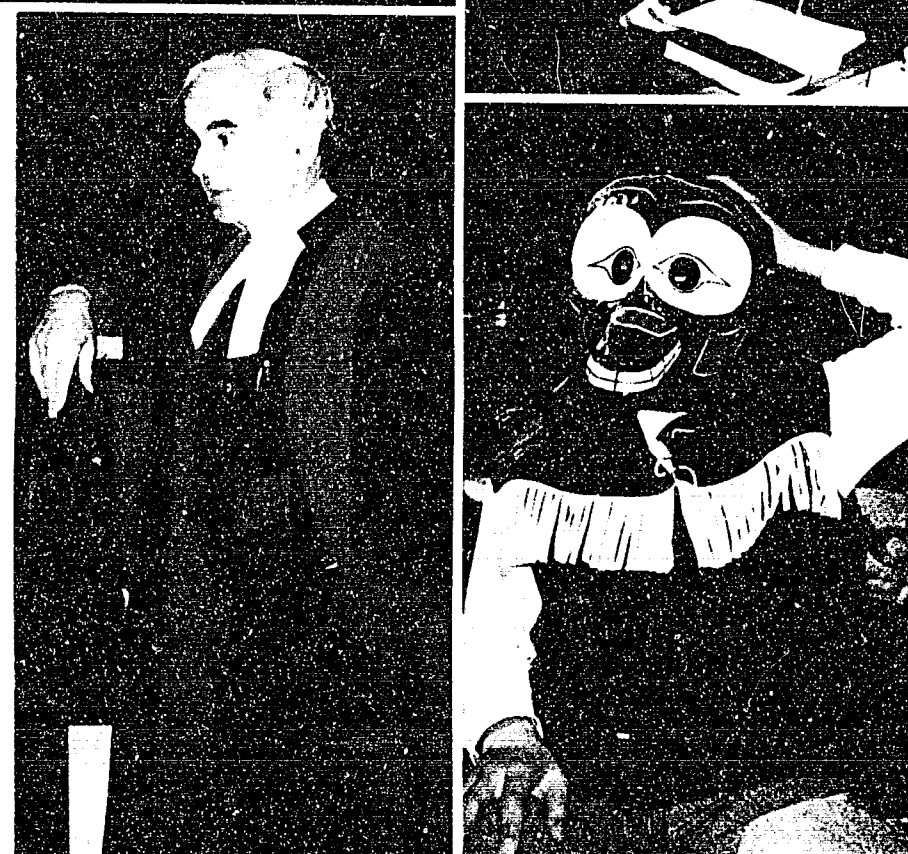
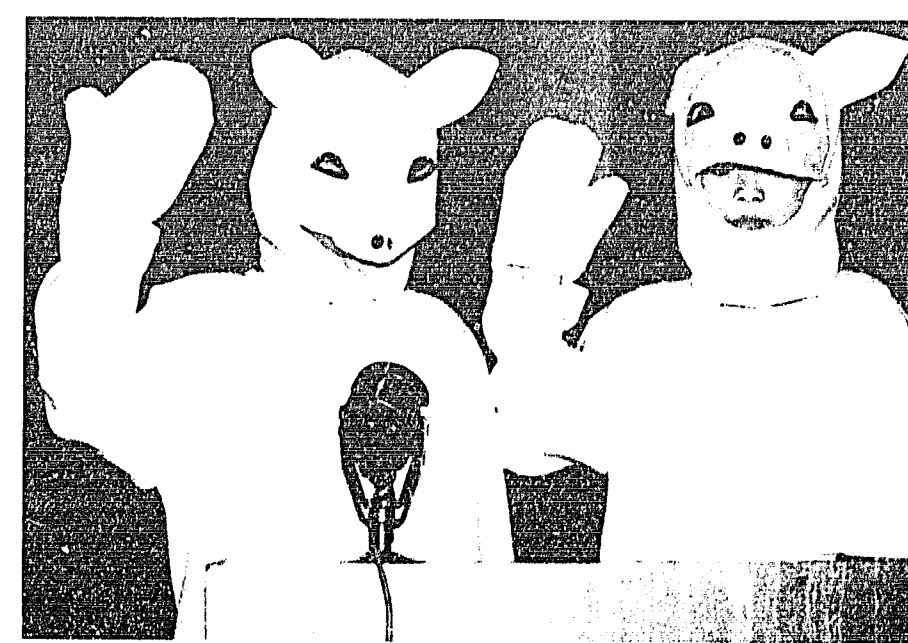
Going to remote communities

The society's northern co-ordinator spends many months on the road, travelling 20,000 km annually. She visits remote schools and organizes programs for youth who live in tiny villages or reserves throughout the north. Some of the programs—called law camps or court links—bring youth to local towns for three-day sessions on the justice system, from arrest to trial to corrections. Youth meet with police, visit the police station, learn about arrest procedures, go to court, watch trials, conduct a mock trial, meet local leaders or elders, and then visit the corrections facility. The programs are eye-openers for youth. Misconceptions are cleared away, and the consequences of the choices that youth have are made clear.

Working with First Nations youth and immigrant and visible-minority communities: international awards

Several society programs have won international awards of excellence. One such program is called "First Nations Journeys of Justice." This holistic curriculum for students in Kindergarten to Grade 7 uses aboriginal oral stories as the foundation for learning about concepts of justice. Fifty professional-development workshops on the curriculum and the techniques of storytelling are being organized by the society for teachers from band schools and for teachers from public schools with large First Nations populations.

The society won a second international award for examining the assumptions and misconceptions of newcomers about the justice system. The work has led to the development of educa-



Quotable...

Co-ordinator at law camp: "Summary conviction offences include theft under \$1,000, joyriding, and some assaults."

Student: "Somersaults! What's wrong with somersaults?"

"We have always found the sessions to be informative, relevant, and useful (in educational terms) for our kids. The Law Courts Society has always presented our legal system to the kids in the most meaningful way."

— James Jones, Nora/Ann Tech Secondary School

"I use an actual courtroom as well as the robes and other props added to the realism of the trial and provided us with an enjoyable and very worthwhile experience."

— Karen, Coquitlam Secondary School

"This group has single-handedly raised the awareness of our legal system by the general public immensely. This, in turn, has resulted in an immeasurable gain in public understanding and confidence in one of the fundamental foundations of our democratic system."

— Mitchell Hong, Prince George crown counsel

Building bridges to the system and communities with special needs

Creating sustainable bridges means more than educating the public on how to access our justice system. It also means working within the system so that it is more accessible to British Columbians. The society is providing court staff with diversity-awareness training on the needs of visible minority and First Nations communities. It also organizes community-liaison evenings for B.C. judges with visible minority communities.

More recently, the society has concentrated on developing legal pictorial materials for British Columbians who are mentally challenged and an ASL video for the deaf.

Conclusion

Clarence Darrow once said that "Laws should be like clothes. They should be made to fit the people they serve." Surely, this is also true for our justice system. An accessible justice system is essential for public confidence and comfort. For this reason, it is important that all school students and the public learn about our justice system and visit the courts to experience how they work.

Peter Owens is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division and editor of Teacher newsmagazine.

For more information about the Law Courts Education Society or to make a group booking, call the society's head office, located at the Vancouver Law Courts Building at (604) 660-9870.

A MEMORIAL



Tom Chalmers

In July 1996, the BCTF lost one of its most respected and dedicated members. Thomas Miller Chalmers, better known as Tom, passed away. Tom devoted his life to public education as a teacher, an administrator, and a Federation activist. His commitment to the Federation began when he started teaching in Kelowna in 1931 and joined the Federation, which was a voluntary organization. At the time of his death, Tom had

been a Federation member continuously for 65 years.

Tom had a distinguished career as a teacher in Kelowna and Burnaby and then as a vice-principal and principal until his retirement as principal of Burnaby South Secondary School in 1974. For those of us who knew Tom, many aspects of his personality and character stand out. Foremost was his commitment to fairness and justice. During his term on the Executive Committee of the Federation, he was a member of the Ethics Committee that formulated the first Code of Ethics. He was a strong supporter of the efforts of the BCTF to gain for teachers the right to hold public office, which at the time of his presidency in 1948-49 was denied to teachers. For many years, he served as a representative on boards of references to review and safeguard the rights of teachers who were being disciplined by their board.

Tom believed passionately in public education. He believed that the school system could meet the needs of every child. John Church, long-time

former BCTF staff member, said, "Tom was the firm believer in the collective wisdom of the group; the consistent sceptic of the individual action. The supporter of the association, of the Federation; not of the unilateral way."

In his president's message in the September-October 1948 issue of the *B.C. Teacher*, Tom wrote the following: "Unless the rank and file of the teaching body has some control over the selection of these people (members of curriculum revision committees) and the opinions they give, it is nonsense to suppose that the teachers have any opportunity to exert the influence of their experience along this important line. Teachers do not wish to dictate educational policy. They do feel, however, that they have much that is worthwhile to contribute. They feel that a great deal of changing and re-changing could be obviated if the people who actually do the job and know how to do it, could focus their opinions on the matter."

1948, the year in which Tom was elected as BCTF president, was the first year of

automatic Federation membership for beginning teachers. Tom spoke of this. "Another milestone has been put behind us. The Federation has increased its stature and effectiveness thereby."

In 1966, the Federation recognized Tom's contributions as a member of the Executive Committee, as president of the Federation, as a leader in curriculum development, and as the first president of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-principals' Association by granting him honorary life membership in the Federation. Two years later, he was given the Ferguson Memorial Award, the Federation's highest honour. In presenting the award, the past-president of the Federation, J. Harley Robertson, said, "Tom Chalmers has always had a vision of teachers attaining truly professional status through active participation in curriculum development. His staunch support of teachers in their classrooms and elsewhere gives him the admiration of all who come in contact with him. He is a truly professional teacher who has

given many years of outstanding service to the teachers of this province and to bettering our educational system."

In thanking the Federation for the Ferguson award, Tom wrote: "While I am proud to have my name on the 1968 certificate, I humbly accept it as a token of recognition to all the others who have given so generously of their talents, time, and energy that the welfare of young people should go forward."

In 1991, Tom served on the Federation's 75th anniversary committee. During his retirement years, Tom not only maintained his interest in the Federation but also found time to devote to his other loves: his family, his garden, his reading, and his curling.

The Federation has lost one of its outstanding leaders. Only a few weeks before he passed away, Tom took the time to write a letter to the editor of the *Teacher* which appeared in the September 1996 issue. Such was the lifetime commitment of a remarkable man.

— Jim MacFarlan

A balanced treatment

standers actually objected to the existence of the demonstrators.

He also mentions the "devastating health problems affecting the gay community," and asks, "How can we... endorse this lifestyle as a healthy, well-balanced alternative?"

Part of my answer to this question comes from a reflection I wrote in February 1995:

Two months ago, I sat in a gay bar and chatted comfortably with gay men. I shopped in stores with books for lesbians and gay men. I recognized many titles I knew and enjoyed, even in the children's section. I ate in restaurants where gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples hugged, held hands, and kissed. My life will never be the same.

Two months ago, I helped pack up a gay man's home, and moved some of his precious items halfway across the continent into my home. I read through letters saved over years apart, and remembered precious moments shared. My life will never be the same.

The gay man was my brother. The belongings I packed and moved were simple souvenirs of a beloved life, cut short by AIDS. We set his ashes free in a spring wind, on his forty-second birthday.

When he "came out" 13 years ago, I thought "How could he do this to me?" He had destroyed my images of who he was. Now, thinking c

the struggle I went through coming to love him for who he is, not who I wanted him to be, I think, "How could I have done that to him?" At home with my wife and son, I know my life will never be the same.

Until my brother died, I never realized that I, too, was living a gay lifestyle. I shopped for groceries, had a job, paid taxes, did laundry, read books, and tried to learn to live in this world with the people around me. The lesbian and gay lifestyle includes friends, families, homes, jobs, hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows—that's my lifestyle.

The lesbian and gay lifestyle includes sex, too. So does mine. I am not proud of this, but for a portion of my life, just like some lesbian and gay people (and some heterosexual people), I put a great deal of effort into finding easy sex. What I found and caused, sadly, was more pain than joy. Then, just as many gay and lesbian people have done, I found a special partner, one who could accept my flaws (many) and my strengths. We built a home, and continue to work to be in a growing, caring relationship. Just like some of our gay and lesbian friends.

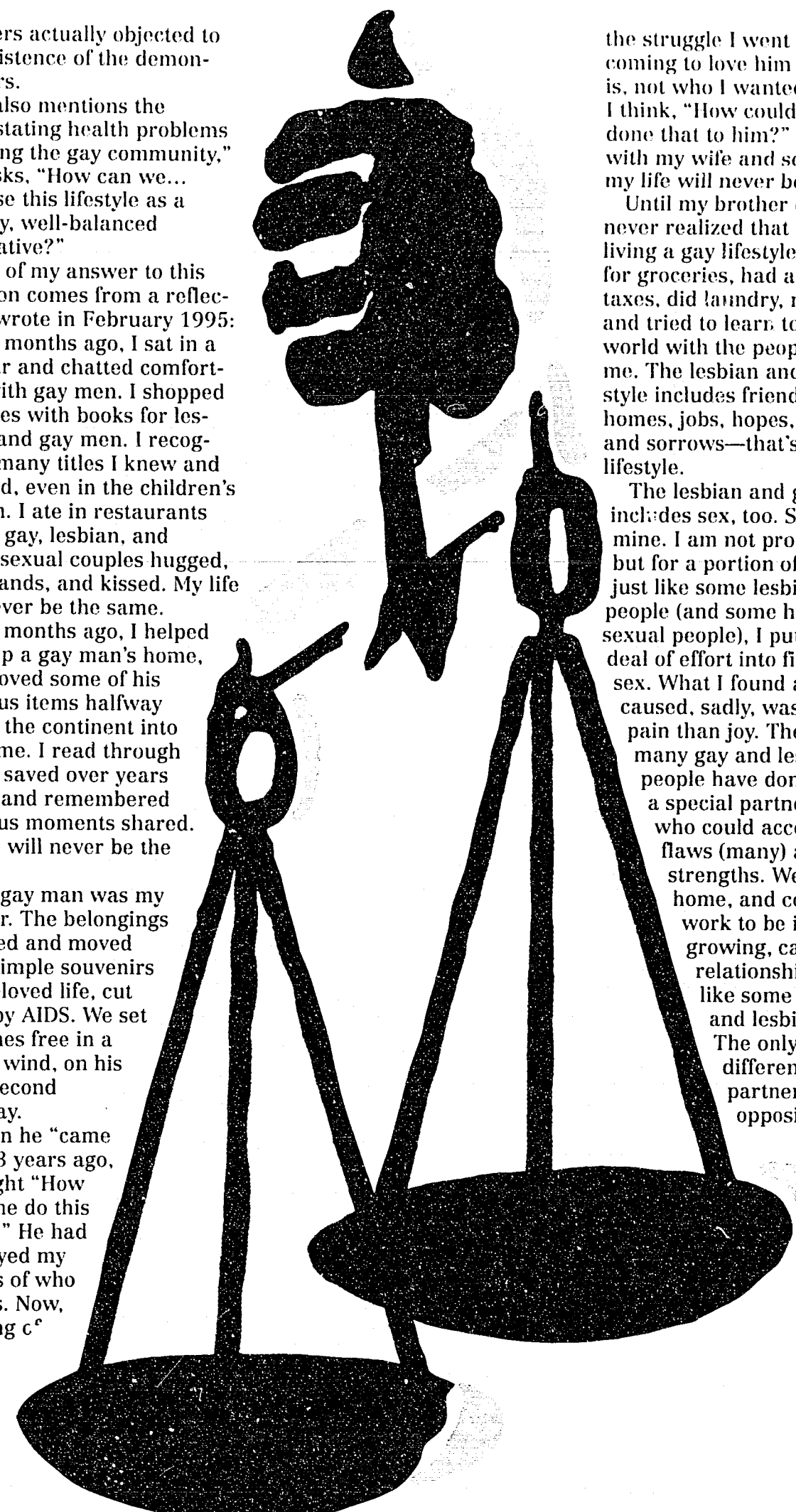
The only difference: my partner is of the opposite sex.

Lifestyle is not the issue. The issue is willingness to meet one another as persons rather than labels. Unfortunately for our lesbian and gay friends, relatives, and strangers, that willingness is not present in many in our society. Too many would see them as different, inferior, to be set apart, beaten, dispossessed.

I have alluded to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Because of the Charter, McNally may make public statements of his opinions regarding the efforts of gays and lesbians to develop a world where they can live with the same freedoms he has. He may even object to his union dues "going to support the political agenda of the gay-rights movement under the auspices of the BCTF." What does he have to lose? Nothing. The Charter guarantees the same freedom to gays and lesbians. Yet, should a lesbian or gay person wish to make statements regarding the desire to be accorded the same rights and responsibilities as "straights," he/she is taking a huge risk. "Gay bashing," vandalism, sudden disappearance of friendship may be the result.

Bigotry presents real dangers to each and every non-heterosexual person in our society. This is precisely why opinions like McNally's must continue to be voiced, so those of us who wish an equitable society will not be lulled into a false sense of security. It is to be hoped that people with such views can be helped to grow to a larger sense of what it means to be human.

Ron Smuin teaches at Uplands Elementary School, Penticton.



Grievetalk

This column is devoted to teacher-on-call (TOC) issues in the wake of two disturbing arbitration decisions. It is becoming increasingly clear that in the next round of bargaining, we must ensure that all TOCs have the same rights and protections as other teachers.

The first award denies a dismissal grievance. The events leading to the grievance were that the employer removed a TOC's name from the TOC list after an incident with a student. The school board removed his name from the TOC list without due process such as written notice of investigation, an investigation, or a school board hearing in which the teacher could answer charges.

The union argued that removal from the TOC list was a dismissal and could not be done without just and reasonable cause, as stipulated by the collective agreement, the School Act, and the Labour Relations Code. Arbitrator Bryan Williams ruled that because of past practice and the limited rights of TOCs as expressed in the particular language of the Powell River collective agreement, the removal of the TOC's name from the list was not disciplinary, but instead was nonculpable—grievable only if the employer's conduct is capricious, arbitrary, or discriminatory.

Williams had this to say: "Indeed, the Grievor himself, with the support of his Union, have (sic) for some years tried to effect a change in the collective agreement to provide the very protection he now seeks. Until and unless he and the Association are successful in persuading the trustees to change the collective agreement, they cannot expect the arbitral process to solve the problem."

This decision is under appeal. It remains the union's position that just and reasonable cause is a statutory requirement and cannot be negated by either a collective agreement or past practice. In addition, removal from the TOC list is clearly disciplinary and punitive and, as such, must be subject to the just-and-reasonable-cause standard. It is disquieting that anyone would believe that terminating one's employment is not disciplinary.

The second case is a posting-and-filling grievance. A TOC applied for an English/drama position, but the position was given to an outside applicant. The TOC was not even short-listed, in spite of having seven years' experience in the district, a B.Ed in drama and English, and an M.Ed in drama. The collective agreement provisions stated: "If at the end of the posting period no qualified, internal applicant has applied, vacancies may be advertised outside of the District." The union argued that the grievor was an internal candidate, was eminently qualified, and should have received the position. Arbitrator Judi Korbin dismissed the grievance, finding that TOCs have no seniority rights under the posting-and-filling provisions. She further ruled that because they have no seniority rights, they are also

not covered by the term *necessary qualifications* in the seniority section and may therefore be subjected to a more restrictive set of qualifications than other internal candidates. On the positive side, Arbitrator Korbin did find that TOCs are internal candidates, with priority hiring rights over outside applicants. However, she dismissed this grievance, concluding that although the grievor was entitled to be considered prior to outside posting, there was no prejudice to the grievor when the employer relaxed its standards in the external portion of its hiring process. This case confirms that, as in the case above, stronger, clearer language is required to protect TOCs and to enhance their tenure.

These two cases must be understood in relation to their particular histories, the facts, and the language of the particular collective agreements. They should not be taken as a general limitation on the rights of all TOCs in all districts. Locals should continue to press for fair and equitable treatment for all TOCs.

While these two cases had largely negative results, a number of decisions regarding TOC rights have been positive. A recent case related to a TOC who was in a social studies/math assignment, applied for a social studies/math position and was denied the position on the basis of qualifications. While the grievor did not have university-level math courses, he was teaching math, and the department indicated he was doing a good job. The administrator did not look into his teaching experience because it was a TOC appointment." Arbitrator Catherine Bruce had this to say: "While I agree that the fact a teacher has obtained a TOC assignment in math, even one for 20 days' duration, does not necessarily make him qualified to teach the course, the Employer does make some attempt to match TOCs to the available positions to ensure the necessary qualifications are there. Further, if a TOC is not functioning appropriately in a course the Employer has the right to remove him from the assignment. Thus it cannot be said that a lengthy TOC assignment says nothing about the teacher's qualifications or abilities. I find, therefore, that the Employer's refusal to consider any TOC experience when filling vacancies is both arbitrary and unreasonable." She ordered the employer to pay the grievor all wages and benefits, including seniority credits, from the date of the position to its end.

Another class-size victory for students and teachers

On another good-news front, a recent arbitration award in Vancouver has established that the effective date of class-size limits for secondary is the first day of school. That decision should result in staffing schools properly and not shuffling students and teachers all over the place for the first month or two. This award, by Arbitrator Taylor, upholds the arguments made by the Vancouver Teachers' Federation and the BCTF.

Lynne Sinclair is grievance co-ordinator, in the BCTF's Bargaining and Member Services Division.

Plain truth about TOCs

by Terry Lanning

More than 6,500 people teach on an on-call basis in B.C. The majority possess a professional certificate to teach in B.C.

According to a 1993 BCTF survey of teachers on call, more than 70% of TOCs are female, and a typical TOC in B.C. earns less than \$10,000 per year from employment as a TOC.

The BCTF Executive Committee has recommended that collective-agreement language refer to *certified substitute teachers as teachers on call*.

In referring to persons who are certified to teach on an on-call basis, 63 collective agreements use the term *teacher on call*, 11 collective agreements use the term *substitute teacher*, and one collective agreement uses the term *employee on call*.

Furthermore, only 27 collective agreements refer to persons

who teach on an on-call basis as *teachers*. Forty-eight collective agreements do not refer to these persons as teachers.

Only 31 collective agreements give a specific definition for persons teaching on an on-call basis, while 44 collective agreements give no definition.

Teachers on call are an essential and integral part of the education system, but there remains the need for a clear expression of professional recognition for TOCs in collective-agreement language.

Although the majority of TOCs are seeking full-time teaching positions, according to the same BCTF survey, close to 40% of TOCs seeking contract positions would prefer to remain as teachers on call if wages, benefits, and working conditions were better. This is important to recognize.

A student spends five or more school days per year

with on-call teachers, and it is vital that a dedicated work force be available to provide on-call teaching services to students. Without TOCs, the education system would be in jeopardy.

With this in mind, there is obviously the need to train teachers to work on an on-call basis. According to a B.C. College of Teachers' survey, in 1988, less than 50% of persons entering the teaching profession reported on-call teaching as their first paid employment as a teacher; by 1992, the number had jumped to 70%, and is continuing to rise.

More important, however, is the need to provide adequate salary, employment benefits, and professional recognition for TOCs. The future of our children and the education system is at stake.

Terry Lanning is an employee on call in the Vancouver School District.

A time without recourse



Students at the Prince George Adult Learning Centre.

by Lesley McVey

What incredibly adaptable creatures we human beings are. When I was a child, cell phones, fax machines, and VCRs did not exist, but I use all of those things now. The world is in a state of change, and we are changing with it. But it makes sense to look back, from time to time, to see what progress we have made.

There were no benefits, medical, dental, or pensions.

This was brought home to me when I discovered that my fellow teachers of adult basic education who had joined our Prince George Adult Learning Centre in the last six years could not imagine a time without the protection of a contract, without a teachers' association bargaining for working conditions, and without guaranteed levels of remuneration. Even more surprising was that I was forgetting what our situation

were teaching all levels from Grade 1 to graduation, and the number of staff employed was steadily growing, when we finally decided that we needed to have consistency in our pay and conditions of work. We saw union representation as a way to ensure equality with other teachers in the district. Most of us were B.C. qualified

It took over a year of tough negotiations, to be treated as a normal teacher in the district.

teachers, teaching the B.C. graduation curriculum, for a B.C. school district; yet we had been excluded from the local bargaining unit. We brought the matter to the attention of the Prince George and District Teachers' Association, which immediately entered into negotiations with the school board. It took over a year of tough negotiations before we were allowed to be treated on a par with the other teachers in the district.

We had been making less money than our unionized colleagues, but we were most concerned about the uncertainties, insecurities, and inequities of our jobs. Unless a contract applies to all employees equally, there can never be job security or the assurance of due process.

The number of teachers at Prince George's Adult Learning Centre has doubled now, as has the number of students, and our community benefits from the knowledge that, regardless of the part of the education system a student is in, the staff will be properly qualified and experienced personnel. We've come a long way in a short time, and it is good to be reminded of it!

Lesley McVey teaches at the Prince George Adult Learning Centre.



Here's to your health

by Jim World

So, how's your immune system? The state of our immune system and more generally, the state of our health, is a topic of increasing concern as the demands of our work are reflected in our health and wellness. Research tells us that teaching is somewhere near the top of stress-producing professions. We also know stress is not conducive to good health. Is teaching then incompatible with good health? Maybe, but I think the characteristics and circumstances of my job are not so overwhelming that I can't make some good decisions about my health. Our profession demands a measure of good self-care to acquire and maintain a state of good health.

For me, good health is a matter of five selfs, four needs, three habits, two people, and one attitude. There is a close relationship and interdependence among these elements. We must pay attention and allocate resources to each of them.

The five selfs

1. The physical self

Traditional definitions of health and wellness are usually based on our assessment of our physical self. A systems approach and the medical model are applied to ascertain a diagnosis and prescribe a treatment for the presenting symptoms. The emphasis is on treatment with some attention being given to prevention. Unwisely, we usually wait for our bodies to tell us we are not

well and we use this as our only measure of our state of health. Focussing on the physical self limits our evaluation of our health and creates a belief that, if I am not ill, then I must be well. A broader definition of health should be how well am I?

2. The social self

Healthy people generally have healthy, long-term relationships. Spouses, partners, parents, siblings, children, extended family members, friends, colleagues, and team mates all provide opportunities for us to involve ourselves in healthy social situations. Relationships that involve elements of abuse or that result in feelings of loss or loneliness often have an emotional component that is detrimental to our health. Our social self needs to be nurtured and nourished, and positive, supportive relationships can do that for us.

3. The emotional self

In addition to stress, unresolved anger, grief, depression, fear, and worry often generate physical symptoms. Acknowledging the role of our emotions in our overall state of health and a regular assessment of that emotional health is important.

4. The intellectual self

It's important for us to go out and run an intellectual marathon once in a while. We need to use our minds for creative, thought-provoking activities that stretch and exercise our cognitive abilities. Challenges in reading and writing help keep our minds alive and well and develop an environment

where we can display our creative talents.

5. The spiritual self

I am still not entirely sure where the spiritual self fits into an integrated sense of personal health but I do think it is important. I'm reading a book called *The Uncommon Touch*, by Tom Harper and it has helped me to begin to understand the power of belief and how the application of that belief might have a therapeutic influence on our physical health.

The four needs

A review of the work of Rogers and Maslow suggests that to be fully functioning, it is important that we get our needs met. Not in some hedonistic, uncontrolled manner but in a more disciplined, humanistic way. Glasser's definition of needs gives us a useful structure to illustrate this.

Love and belongingness.

Humans need to feel connected. It is important to experience unconditional positive regard from others and equally important to have the opportunity to express that same regard to others.

Personal power. Our need to feel competent, to feel we can master skills and learn techniques allows us to be productive. In our society, our work often dictates the degree to which these needs get met. Learning to ski, to play the guitar, or to parent should have equal importance to the skills we validate at work. Acquiring skills that keep us healthy is worth investing time and resources.

Fun. I think it was Nietzsche who said "In every real [wo]lman a child is hidden that wants to play." Healthy people regularly express their need to have fun. Ask yourself, When was the last time I had fun? If it's more than a day or two, make it a priority.

Freedom. We need to have some say in making the decisions that affect our lives, and to know that most issues are within our control.

The three habits

You can afford to have a few bad habits if you develop good habits in nutrition, sleep, and exercise.

Nutrition. There are volumes of information and research about the benefits of good eating habits. Some of it prompts us to periodically stuff ourselves with carrots, broccoli, or oatmeal but really, all it takes is a little common sense and some self discipline.

Sleep. Our sleeping habits change over time but we have to allow time for our selfs to regenerate and to make the best use of our time awake.

Exercise. Perhaps exercise is the single most important element in being healthy. A recent study showed that people who smoke, have high blood pressure, or high cholesterol levels but also exercise regularly have a longer life expectancy than people who don't smoke, have normal levels but don't exercise. Weight bearing and aerobic exercise are the two best things that you can do for yourself.

The two people

The two people who will have the most influence on your state of health are you and your health-care professional. I have a fairly broad definition of the term health-care professional and include, in addition to my physician, a nurse, physiotherapist, dentist, pharmacist, massage therapist, naturopath, chiropractor, touch-for-health practitioner, and any number of other alternative health professionals in my community. The important thing is to consult with these people both when you are well and when you are not well. Good health is a matter of prevention, not just intervention. In addition, if you are uncomfortable with or unsure of the initial diagnosis or treatment, trust your intuition and get a second opinion.

The attitude

It is our responsibility to educate ourselves so we know how to acquire and maintain our own good health. A positive attitude of self-management can deal with the avoidance, neglect, and denial that sometimes gets in the way of our good sense. Adopting a health-care attitude that acknowledges the elements of good health and our responsibility for them should take us successfully through 35 of our professional years, and at least as many years of retirement.

So, there it is—5-4-3-2-1. Acknowledge them, attend to them and enjoy the benefits of your endeavours.

Jim World is a counsellor at Columneetza Senior Secondary School, Williams Lake.

Exploring habitats

Two teachers, Emily Clark Dingle, an elementary teacher from Woodstock, New Brunswick and Greg Smith, a social studies teacher from Oliver, B.C., represented Canada at a two-and-a-half week institute at National Geographic headquarters in Washington, DC in July 1996. The theme, *Exploring a World of Habitats*, emphasized biodiversity and biogeography,

looking at how location and climate determine the biodiversity of habitats around the world.

As part of media training, Dingle and Smith put together a CBC Newsworld interview on Canada Live during prime-time Olympic coverage. They were live across Canada on July 25, 1996, promoting the importance of teaching global and Canadian geography.

"As part of our responsibility

here in Canada, we are promoting Geography Awareness Week, November 18-22, 1996, and its theme Exploring a World of Habitats: Seeing a World of Difference. We are the *geoboosters* for geography education in Canada, and we will pass on information and teacher-friendly resources and materials. Watch for the Great Canadian Geography Challenge materials coming to your schools this fall." A student

from Grade 5 to Grade 10 could be a provincial finalist, winning an all-expenses-paid trip to Ottawa in May 1997.

Dingle and Smith are connected via e-mail to 200 teachers throughout North America. Call these *geoboosters* for more information about the challenge, the CCGE, Geography Awareness Week, or any other social studies, environmental, and geography materials.

Emily Clark Dingle, Broadway Elementary School, Woodstock, NB, E0J 2B0, (506) 325-4433, F: (506) 325-4509, e-mail emilyd@nbnet.nb.ca, or Greg Smith, Curriculum Branch, Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, PO Box 9152, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9H1, (250) 356-9380, F: (250) 356-2316, e-mail gsmith@mail.educ.gov.bc.ca

Awareness, action, hope

Building a spirit of hope

by Pat Clarke

In 1991, there were 1.2 million poor children in Canada. Children from poor families are more than twice as likely to drop out of school as other children.

In just 10 years, the poverty rate among all young families (under 25 years) nearly doubled to 40%.

These are just a few of the facts that have made poverty and its social consequences, especially for children, the focus of growing concern on the part of teachers. We are seeing right before our eyes, in our classrooms and school yards, the real costs of poverty, the lost opportunities, the despair and the social dysfunction that results when too many people, especially youth, begin to lose hope.

This growing and increasingly disturbing reality, the all-too-present face of poverty and its presence in our schools, was the motivation for an antipoverty working conference, held at the BCTF October 16 and 17, 1996.

...a political preoccupation with debt, deficits, and reducing taxes as the principal features of a conservative political agenda that is rarely questioned in the media.

The conference was planned by the BCTF and a group of community organizations working on poverty issues. The main objective was to develop plans for ongoing actions by teachers, school districts, and government to address the needs of children living in poor families. Also, the conference was to provide a forum and focus for media communications about children living in poor families and the initiatives to eradicate poverty.

The conference was attended by a broadly representative group of teachers and community activists from around the province. A common concern for, and understanding of, the effects of poverty on children was a bond that encouraged the teachers, community workers, and representatives from the provincial

...single mothers living on social assistance... described a so-called "support" system, which is increasingly less responsive and more distrustful.

government to share experiences and ideas on how we can better serve children living in poverty in the short term and work together to eradicate poverty.

The complexities of the poverty crisis were identified early and frequently. Michael Goldberg, executive director of the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C., pointed to a political preoccupation with debt, deficits, and reducing taxes as the principal features of a conservative political agenda that is rarely questioned in the media. He asked why so little is said about our social choices such as the choice of having a deficit or a growing social underclass, which can negatively affect a community's well-being. He asked the conference to encourage our communities to think about our obligations as well as our rights, to discuss what we really value, and to get in touch with our own positive visions of the future.

If the conference needed any motivation for action, it came from Charlene Lacombe and Safron Kanzeon, single mothers living on social assistance. They described the grinding reality of meeting the every day needs of young

families with assistance cheques that shrink while costs go up. They described a so-called "support" system, which is increasingly less responsive and more distrustful.

Maureen MacDonald, a Vancouver teacher who was instrumental in the development of the North East Sector Project in Vancouver's poorest neighbourhoods, gave the conference an inspiring description of a school-and-community-linked project that has grown and developed and is now recognized as a model support program for schools working with children living in poverty.

Similarly, Bill Preston, a community school worker in Nanaimo, described how his school has developed a community-based project that links with established community groups and inter-agency teams to serve children in need and give them chances they would never have otherwise.

Michael Goldberg's call to action, the testimonials of Charlene Lacombe and Safron Kanzeon, and the demonstrations of success by Maureen MacDonald and Bill Preston inspired the conference to develop a series of recommendations for action including more extensive work by the BCTF to raise awareness of poverty issues among teachers and the development of more teaching materials focussing on poverty. Direct actions like the elimination of school fees and a revision of B.C. Benefits legislation to adequate levels were also recommended.

Perhaps the most significant outcome, however, was the building of a coalition of teachers and community activists intent on finding ways to immediately address the needs of children living in poverty and to end that unacceptable social condition once and for all.

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

The real global village

An intriguing view of the world has been prepared by the Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group.

- If we could shrink Earth's population to a village of 100 people, with the relative size of human groups remaining the same, there

would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 people from the Americas (North and South), and 8 Africans.

- 70 would be non-white; 30 white. 70 would be non-Christian; 30 Christian.

- 50% of the world's wealth would be in the hands of 6 people.

- 70 people would be unable to read.
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition.
- 80 would live in sub-standard housing.
- Only 1 would have a college degree.

Source: CCFA Monitor, Sept. 1996.

Poverty and learning—going beyond good intentions

by Kathleen MacKinnon

A review of the first Professional Issue Seminar with speaker Dr. Benjamin Levin, Dean of Continuing Education, University of Manitoba



Benjamin Levin

"Poverty is an important negative influence on educational attainment in Canada and a key barrier to educational improvement." (Ben Levin, October 10, 1996)

Logical. Teachers, who see the consequences every day know this must be true and are now asking why so few formal policies are planned or in place to address this educational need.

"Schools with more poor students need more resources. And governments and school boards must continue to support anti-poverty programs such as the school lunch program," said Levin.

The audience, consisting of teachers and student teachers from the Professional Development Program at SFU, among others, reflected on the anecdotes and suggestions that followed.

"We walk a fine line with our students," he said, "always conscious of building their self-esteem. Yet we know: self-esteem can come only from success. We must build skills in thinking and doing in our students. That will build their self-esteem."

Dr. Levin cited research that suggests that we unwittingly set our expectations low for students from poor families, that we may place too much emphasis on behaviour control, and that we tend to

underemphasize the learner's development of meaning.

He suggested integrating the needed basic skills with more advanced skills and increasing the tried-and-true practices of heterogeneous groupings and building on prior knowledge.

The union, at the provincial and local level, can assist in the overall work to alleviate the effects of poverty on students and their families, he suggested, through raising awareness with our members, the community, and the media.

Ben Levin's talk will air on the Global Justice Program.

Kathleen MacKinnon is an assistant director in the BCTF's Organization Support Division.

Seniors' rate of poverty drops

Elderly Canadians have dropped from the poor rolls in impressive numbers through government transfers, known to us as the universal Canada Pension Plan. The Economic Council of Canada describes Canada's income redistribution efforts as "modest," implying room for many more transfers that could alleviate the effects of poverty for others.

Working and poor

The largest group of the poor is families with one parent or both parents working whose income is simply insufficient.

Children in poor families

Although we speak of "child poverty," the poverty of children is almost always a product of the adults who look after them. We might better use the term *children living in poor families* to put the appropriate emphasis on the family unit rather than on the child alone.

Marriage breakdown

Most female single parents (who constitute 90% of all single parents living with children) are poor, and the breakdown of marriage is a major cause of their poverty.

CPP update

by Monica Townson

Federal and provincial finance ministers failed to reach agreement on changes to the Canada Pension Plan when they met in early October 1996. We must remain vigilant. Major changes to the CPP are still being discussed behind closed doors. We may, however, have a window of opportunity to insist on a real and meaningful public debate about the future of one of our most important social programs before legislation to make fundamental changes to the plan is tabled.

Is the CPP in crisis? That's what we've been led to believe. But the hysteria about the CPP over the past few months is based on myth not reality. The CPP is not broke. Nor is it running out of money. It's a pay-as-you-go plan. Contribution rates, already set 25 years into the future, were planned to increase gradually over that period to take account of the aging of the population. The CPP will be there when the baby boomers retire and when their children retire too—if we want it to be.

The debate raging is not about whether or not the CPP contribution rate will have to go up next year but about whether people 35 years from now will be prepared to pay the rates that have been projected. The "crisis" you've heard so much about is the possibility that combined employer/employee CPP contribution rates might reach 14% of contributory earnings in 2030. To put that in context, the U.S. combined employer/employee contribution rate for social security in 1996 is 15.3% of contributory earnings. The average for OECD countries in 1991 was 16.3%.

Canadian workers contribute only on earnings up to \$35,400. In contrast, for their social-security benefits—equivalent to our OAS and CPP combined—U.S. workers contribute on earnings up to \$62,700 U.S. At current exchange rates, that's equivalent to \$86,000 Canadian. But Canadian pundits were outraged when B.C. suggested that one way to bring in more revenue and keep CPP contribution rates down would be to



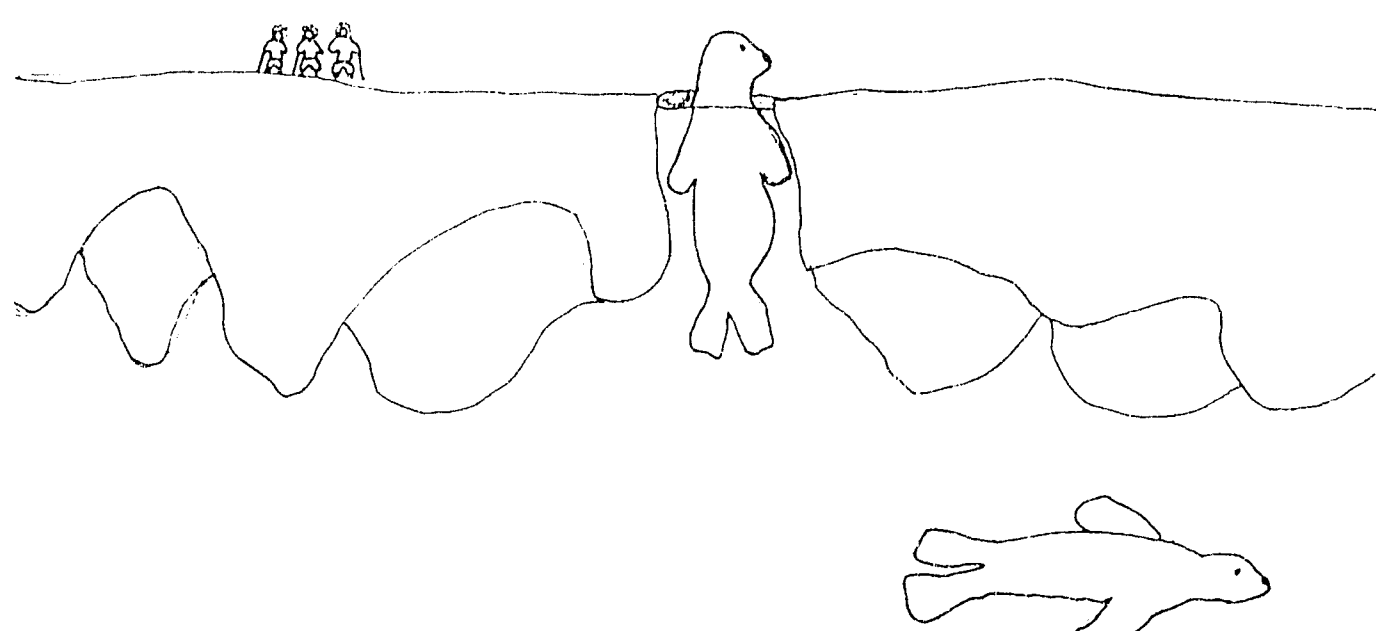
Monica Townson

have workers contribute on higher levels of earnings.

Where do we go from here? All provinces, including B.C., have agreed that instead of increasing contribution rates gradually over the next 35 or 40 years, they will jack them up to more than double the current rates within the next six to eight years. That will enable about \$120 billion of contributions, collected from Canadian workers and their employers, to be directed to private capital markets. Theoretically, the earnings on the fund will supplement revenue from contributions, so that contribution rates will never have to go up again.

Along with generating this huge and privatized investment fund, changes will cut benefits. Women and persons with disabilities will take the hit. There's no reason for such fundamental changes to the CPP to be made at this time. If the finance ministers don't reach an agreement, CPP legislation sets out a formula to be used to extend the contribution rate by five more years. If the fallback formula kicks in, we would then be able to take time to consider how the CPP can be strengthened so it can continue to play a vital role in providing retirement income for Canadians as the population ages.

Monica Townson is an independent economic consultant specializing in the field of social policy.



Drawing—A second language for post-naïves

by Bob Steele

The Drawing Network is committed to studying the way children draw to articulate their perceptions, thoughts, and feelings: in other words, the use of drawing as *language*. Our purpose is to promote meaningful daily drawing throughout the curriculum.

Literacy is the primary goal of language education, but it requires learning difficult codes for speaking, printing, and writing. Because it is coded, literacy carries with it a language gap at the critical period in the child's development. Drawing is without code, and children use it spontaneously in their early years. Drawing will not flourish, however, without careful nurturing at home and at school.

Do children need an auxiliary language? Their drawings tell us that they have subtle and complex thoughts and feelings that they are unable to express in words alone. We also know that drawing helps children achieve literacy. Combining words and drawings as a new language will be an important educational reform.

Drawing is more or less spontaneous until the age of self-consciousness, when the "I can't draw" syndrome becomes apparent. This loss of language potential suggested The Intermediate Drawing Project, which has a double purpose: (1) to help classroom teachers overcome the "I can't draw syndrome" in their students and (2) to explore the possibilities of drawing as an auxiliary language in four areas of the curriculum: social studies, science, language arts, and art.

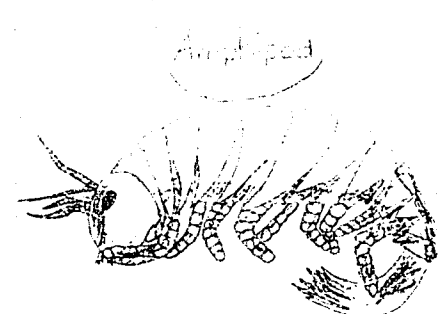
Our study uses *line drawing* exclusively. Line fulfills the language values we expect from drawing while requiring little time and few materials. Only in art programs do we suggest that children develop drawings with tone, texture, and colour.

Five illustrated pamphlets (68 pages in total) have been prepared for teachers wishing to take part in the study: (1) one explaining the project in detail, (2) a drawing method for intermediate and early secondary students, (3) using drawings as language in social studies and science, (4) using drawing as language in language arts, (5) using drawing as language in art programs.

The Drawing Network depends on donations to cover costs of printing and mailing, so we hope you will donate at least \$10. (Please make cheques out to University of British Columbia.) Ordering the pamphlets will be taken as a commitment to participate in one or more of the four areas and a willingness to report to the Drawing Network. The project reports will be combined as a pamphlet and sent to all participants, or it will be published as a book if a publisher can be found.

If you want more information before deciding to participate, I would be pleased to answer questions.

Bob Steele is an associate professor (Emeritus), Dept. of Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, UBC.



A drawing from observation by a Grade 6 girl in a biology unit focussing on marine life.

Back to school

by Judi Warrington

School has been in session only a short while. I could hardly wait to get started, and I am the teacher. My Grade 3 teacher brought the world to me. She had travelled many places, and she gave me some advice as an aspiring teacher: Travel, and be interested and interesting. I wonder what Miss Findsand is doing now. I'd like her to know that I tried. I wanted to share my summer vacation with my class.

I just returned from a second trip to the Amazon jungle with my husband. We travelled with a diverse group of 16 international adventurers from Finland, Germany, Australia, Japan, Norway, Taiwan, the United States, and Canada—scientists, medical people, artists, naturalists, and fish hobbyists—I was the token teacher. We traveled under the auspices of Project Amazonas, a benevolent organization. We enjoyed a busman's holiday: pleasure and cultural study. Some of us brought home tropical fish for our home aquariums. Some visited villages, donating medicines, school supplies, and clothing. How the villages look forward to our school supplies!

The plane goes to Iquitos only once a week from Miami. We travelled on a boat about the size of a tug and on a pamacari, a long rowboat-type craft with a thatched roof and a motor.

We stayed in a scientific research station on a raft anchored at the edge of the Amazon. Some travellers took their mosquito nets and slept in tents in the jungle.

I spent as much time as I could in the schools. Visiting schools is a hobby of mine, and I have done so on five continents. I visited the villages with a midwife, and we spent time with the mayor, medical person, and teacher at each place. I even got to teach. What? The formation of

the letters of the alphabet, some arithmetic, and painting with water colours. I don't speak Spanish, but I do speak *child*.

Some of my students weren't villagers. I enjoy biology and opened a pet store. When I handed a villager a T-shirt so that I could photograph her anaconda, she gave it to me to keep. I managed to learn enough Spanish to say I would release it when our group had photographed the assembled animals. The word got around and soon I had monkeys, caimans, tarantula, turtles, frogs, insects—you name it. My students became my fellow travellers. Yes, I learned things too. It certainly is the way to learn. The group had a variety of skills and was willing to share.

The Amazon school I visited is a thatched-roof carport kind of structure, with log benches and 40 to 60 classmates aged five through 18, all in an open-air room. They even have a school bell, a piece of rusty, salvaged plumbing pipe from the city, a 100 km away, suspended by a vine and hit by another piece of metal to beckon the children. One school has only five textbooks for their class to share. The math and social studies texts were printed in 1942 and 1953 respectively. Pages were tattered and bindings and covers were in shreds.

I traded those items for some wonderful drawings the students made.

Parents of Richmond School in Victoria, where I currently teach, donated almost-new notebooks, pencils, pencil sharpeners, and clothing for adults and children. I also took fishing line, batteries, bubble mixture, toys, and balloons. I traded those items for some wonderful drawings the students made. My last year's classes furnished me with pictures that they drew of Canadian things, houses, animals, and toys. The children were intrigued. The pictures of cars, wheels, chimneys, mountains, coats, and roller blades were foreign to them.

It is a non-cash culture. Trading is how business is done. This allows both sides to have dignity and self respect. My acceptance of the student drawings and giving of school supplies in return says plenty. The foreigner values education and their efforts. Quickly I became Senora Professora and on a first-name basis with the chief and medical person. School is important, and anyone and anything related to it are precious.

It reminds me of the attitude of my students at Wilkinson Road Jail years ago. Education means *opportunity*. Students in other parts of the world see it that way, too—almost a reverence.

Judi Warrington teaches at Richmond Elementary School, Victoria.



Children of the Amazon traded these drawings of their homes with Judi Warrington.

Unemployment insurance now employment insurance

by Karen Harper

Significant changes have occurred to the system dealing with unemployment, including a change of name euphemistically. Employment Insurance. All teachers will be affected by the changes, some far more than others.

What are the changes?

Effective January 1, 1997, an hourly rather than a weekly system will be in place. This raises a number of issues for teachers. First, with how many hours is a full-time teacher to be credited for a week's work? This issue has not yet been decided. There is no minimum to work as there was, so all work will count toward EI. The current weekly requirement will be converted into an hourly requirement by multiplying the current weekly requirement by 35 hours. Thus, it will take 700 hours of insurable employment to qualify for special benefits (e.g., maternity). The hourly system means that part-time teachers and teachers on call will have to work more calendar weeks to achieve sufficient hours to qualify for the same duration of benefits that they would have previously obtained.

For part-time teachers and teachers on call, the following changes may be particularly devastating: the average salary calculation will be depressed for those who have only the minimum hours required for a claim, and benefits will be further reduced for individuals who collected EI during the prior five-year period (post July 1, 1996 time only is counted) by 1% for every 20 weeks of claim, to a floor of 50%, the so-called intensity rule. It is possible to mitigate the effects

income at \$39,000 and will be clawed back between 50 and 100% depending on the number of weeks of claim over the five years. Temporary teachers and special benefits claimants will be affected.

The maximum insurable earnings have been reduced from \$42,380 to \$39,000, and that maximum rate is frozen until the year 2000. Therefore, the maximum weekly benefit has been reduced. Teachers earning more than \$42,380 per annum will notice their EI withholding increase in January 1997, as the withholding will be on all dollars earned, rather than on a weekly maximum, until the \$39,000 threshold is reached. At that point, all withholding will cease, although insurable employment continues to accrue as long as the person is employed for the balance of the year. Those laid off will have paid maximum premiums, but will not have received maximum weeks or hours. They will have paid more for less. The premium rate has been slightly reduced.

In summary, all employees will have to work longer to qualify for lower benefits and shorter claims unless they are considered to be the working poor. The up side is that part-time workers are now clearly eligible on all their earnings. Part-time teachers or teachers on call should carefully examine the effects of these changes on their circumstances.

Karen Harper is an assistant director in the BCTF's Income Security Department.

ONE-MAN BAND from p. 16

being phased in by the Ministry of Education, with "full implementation" (ministry's phrase) slated for a year or two after introduction, given this list, it's small wonder that some elementary teachers are fleeing to secondary schools. Others, unable to keep up with the pace of change, are reverting to survival mode.

Less than a year ago, then Education Minister Art Charbonneau heatedly denied *Sun* columnist Stephen Hume's charge that his ministry was using a "yo-yo" approach to program and policy changes; yet the recent cancellation by Education Minister Moe Sihota of the individual education plan (IEPs) for all ESL students clearly falls into this category. Despite the latter cancellation, the pace of change continues without a break.

On September 8, 1996, Education Minister Moe Sihota said: "Everywhere I've gone, people have been telling me we have to have some stability, we have to slow down the pace of change," while in the same breath he added two more programs: a new program to reduce the dropout rate plus a review of the career-and-personal-planning curriculum.

Ask any elementary school principal about the time and energy the average elementary

Teachers remembered

We have been notified by the Superannuation Commission that these teachers died during the past year. They are listed here under the last known school district they taught in.

ABOITSFORD	Margaret Green	TRAIL	LAST DISTRICT NOT KNOWN
Katharina Peters	Rose Norman	Audrey B. Millar	Amy L. Adams
John Warner	Thomas Roberts	Hazel Westhaver	Margaret Affleck
ARMSTRONG	Dennis J. Ross	VANCOUVER	Gordon C. Allen
Helen Nisbet	Barrie Southam	Harold E. Ball	Marion A. Bicknell
BURNLEY VALLEY	Isabella Beveridge	Ashley J. Bodaly	Ethel M. Boothby
Anna Wiens	Mary Bean-Brown	Arthur A. Buck	Bernard G. Brown
BURNABY	Thomas Ducharme	Lila Campbell	William A.N. Butler
John Blaine	Geraldine Langton	Donald Capon	Glady M. Clandinin
James E. Clark	Thomas P. Marsh	Jessie Cuddington	Florence E. Clark
James M. Clark	Gerald L. Potter	Clementina Cruickshank	Donald Cusky
Ruth Eldridge	Audrey Sands	George R. Douglas	Ernest Cupit
Dennis Franklin	NANAIMO	Leona J. Dundee	Maurice J. Daly
Edith D. Harrison	Flora M. Couture	Bessie S. Dickinson	George A. Dew
Dorothy Hobin	Evelyn M. Hanson	Emma S. Dubokovic	Audrey B. Flaig
Dolly R. Kearns	Dorothy L. Martin	Mildred R. Hajek	Mary G. Fotherby
Norman D. MacDonald	Nelson	Margaret Halliday	David W. Foubister
Jack R. Pitman	Elsie A. Gurrie	Isabelle I. Foulds	Charles Fraser
Matilda Standish	Elizabeth A. Halvorsen	Arthur M. Howard	Meena M. Gautama
Marion Williamson	New Westminster	Mary E. Lade	Alfred H. Glenesk
CARIBOO-COLUMBIA	Van P. Copeland	Jean L.C. Laing	George A. Gordon
Anne Stevenson	Isaac Dyck	Emily Mayhew	Donald C. Green
Central Okanagan	Clyde M. Smith	Kenneth McCartney	Sophie Heycock
Glen W. Brown	Glen W. Young	E. Isabel McIntosh	C. Murray Hockridge
Bernice C. Reid	North Vancouver	John Hanson	Hazel M. Jamieson
Elizabeth Urquhart	Ethel M. Belli-Bivar	Dorothy A. MacKay	Fluorence J. Johnston
CHILLIWACK	Ann Chaland	Norma E. McKenzie	Stella B. Kemp
Freda E. Cartier	Marjorie Geddes	Robert Payne	Michael N. Kowalechuk
Alfred Dyer	John Hanson	G. Lindsay Phillips	Helen M.J. Laidlaw
Rita C. Gorman	Dorothy A. MacKay	Stella A. Pakkala	Marion Lawrence
Dorothy Unsworth	Norma E. McKenzie	Rodolphe Paradis	Clyde Leaman
COQUITLAM	Robert Payne	Tracy Pillsbury	William MacLachlan
Maebel L. Defieux	Grace Elmore	Lettie M. Roberts	Torquil L. MacLeod
Phyllis Graham	James Law	Alexander Robinson	Gwen Manzer
James Law	COQUITAMA	Charles Robson	Nancy May
Mildred Haas	Clara V. Pedersen	James A. Sanders	Maureen McDiarmid
Ella M. Lockhart	Russell D. Thompson	Robin S. Taylor	Gwen E. McDonald
Clara V. Pedersen	COVICHAN	Kathleen L. Walker	Jessie W. McKinney
Russell D. Thompson	Alice L. Gibson	Marjorie White	Vernon H. McMahon
CRANBROOK	Alan Boden	Gladys Woolsey	Jean Mary Morton
William E. Gunson	William E. Gunson	Sheila H. Youngs	M. Jean Nugent
Mary D. Phillips	Mary D. Phillips	Jack Hotell	John Pedin
Robert Pupka	Margaret E. Purvis	Verna T. Wilson	Lloyd Pond
Margaret E. Purvis	DELTA	Edna Urquhart	Gerald Prevost
Enid Barbaree	Enid Barbaree	SAANCHI	Audrey Purvis
Jean E. Barnett	Armin Kutzner	Geoffrey Horridge	Helen E. Purvis
Armin Kutzner	Laurence E. Lakeman	Dorothy J. McLennan	Arthur Reedman
Laurence E. Lakeman	FORT NELSON	Shirley	Mary Ross Reid
Haroldere Bergob	GULF ISLANDS	Kent Hubble	Henry Sayers
David Stacey	SOKE	Roderick McBride	Kenneth E. Spence
KATHLOOPS	Kathleen Briglio	Lois E. McLean	Richard A. Swanton
Emelyn E. Farrand	SOUTH CARBROO	Andrew McMurdo	Donald A. Symon
Harold H. Hiebert	Margaret Todd	Muriel E. Overton	Barry E. Thompson
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Margaret J. Thomas	Maureen E. Toews	Norah Vicars	Everett H. Vollans
Agnes S. Bush	Maureen E. Toews	Hubert D. Wallis	Evelyn S. Warnellus
Beatrice Kellie	Maureen E. Toews	John W. Wood	John Watson
Roberta Coghan	Maureen E. Toews	Herbert E. Webb	Harold L. Weeks
		John W. Wood	Jessie B. Williams
		Scott A. Chambers	Elmer W. White
		Freda Jane Gilbert	Ethel Wood
		Laura Loucks	Ethel M. Young

school teacher in his/her school has devoted in the past few years to attending workshops, in-service courses, and other professional-development activities related to ministry-mandated programs, and most will shake their heads in dismay.

Many school-based administrators feel that the three essential ingredients of curriculum implementation—adequate time, appropriate training, and suitable resources—have been lost in the cumulative process of curriculum change in B.C. Equally worrisome is the forced acceleration of subject specialization (Remember the one-man band) for a growing number of B.C.'s elementary school teachers.

In many of our elementary schools, it is no longer feasible to remain a traditional generalist teacher responsible for teaching most subjects. Two years ago, Ontario's Royal Commission on Education noted, "Elementary-grade teachers in particular can no longer be reasonably expected to cover all areas of the curriculum by themselves, and even those who are most knowledgeable and adaptable cannot be expert in all subjects."

Today, many of our elementary teachers must possess special qualifications or training in one or more of the

following areas: computer literacy, music, art, special education, physical education, and as of September 1997, second-language teaching skills. Add to this the preparation and teaching of "regular" subjects: language arts, science, math, social studies, personal planning (even if shared with colleagues), and the elementary teacher's job is excessively demanding.

The amount of preparation and planning for generalist teachers has always been considerable, involving as it does the use of teachers' guides and aids, curriculum supports, and, on occasion, a search for supplementary resources, such as audio-visual materials. Many elementary teachers revise and adapt the curriculum, producing their own teacher-made materials: posters, charts, and flash cards.

Combine preparation of this caliber with skilled delivery, and you get quality instruction. Secondary schools, by comparison, because of their size, subject specialization, and department-head structures, can draw on wider staffing resources to meet local circumstances. (This is not to be interpreted as diminishing the contribution of secondary teachers to public schooling.)

If we are to avoid the increasing fragmentation of

elementary teaching assignments, we must seriously consider a combination of re-directing existing resources and hiring one or two (depending on size) additional teachers as subject specialists at this level.

Allowing the situation in elementary schools to remain unaltered will negatively affect the quality of instruction and place an inequitable burden on elementary teachers.

The explanation given by Education Minister Moe Sihota for the small slippage in Grades 4, 7, and 10 national math and science results ("B.C. Students Still Tops in Canada," *The Sun*, September 3, 1996) as solely stemming from the need for curriculum revision needs to be questioned. The overloading of elementary Grade 4 and 7 science teachers, who, in the words of B.C. Science Teachers' Association President Steve Caldwell, "teach everything," is a factor that must be considered.

Elementary school teachers in the past have demonstrated tremendous flexibility and resiliency in meeting the diverse and changing needs of their students.

Let's not push our luck by adding to the workload.

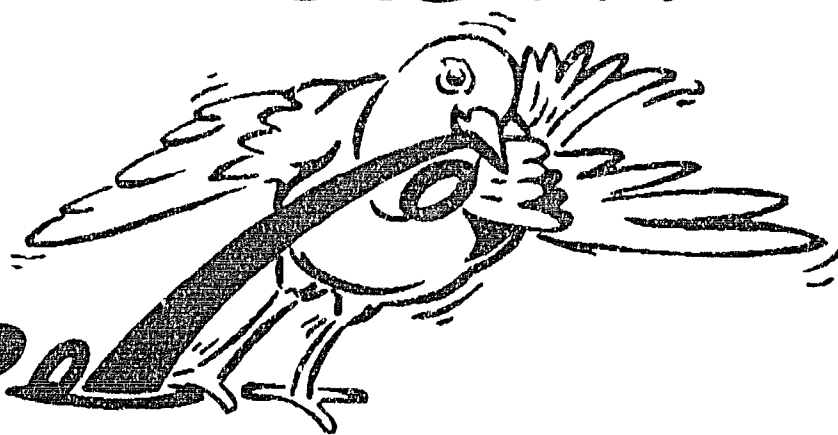
Noel Herron is a retired teacher and administrator from the Vancouver School District.

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Bob and Betty, both retired teachers, have a few tales of their own to share with others. What is in it for you? Just the thrill of seeing your precious item in print, a full acknowledgement of your name and the right to use excerpts for your own purposes. Forward all material to Dr. R.E. (Bob) Miller, 1005 Citadel Terrace NW, Calgary, AB T3G 3X3 before December 10, 1996 SASE appreciated.

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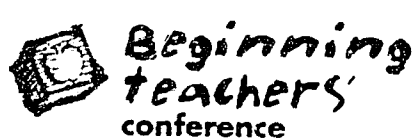
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skye

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my tears

but my waves on the
ocean

eye see you

- davemoss

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breaking the soft silence.
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dripping off my skin.

I seem to remember
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mastering my future.

And the fragile fish
show off their silent strokes
and I still perch
deeply.

- Kerry Randall

Quesnel writers in bloom



Dan Lukiv with his student writers.

by Dan Lukiv

Do you enjoy teaching creative writing? Many of us do. But isn't it frustrating that the poems and stories our students "sand and polish" seldom get an audience beyond author and teacher?

Six years ago, I cut down my frustration in this regard. I assembled a forum for my students—a literary journal my secondary alternate students in Quesnel call *The Challenger*.

Volunteers photocopy about 100 copies per issue (we run three issues a year), which we distribute mostly to secondary alternate students throughout our district.

Co-editors read submissions and vote on whether or not they merit publication (illustrations by our students may also be published if our co-editors find their quality acceptable). Once we've gathered enough material, a volunteer word processes the journal. Next, proofreaders go over the typed original several times, uprooting typos and overlooked spelling errors. The aim, of course, is quality. Everybody involved knows he or she must employ noteworthy effort.

Some of our young writers have found other publishers: *To the Wall* and *Against the Wall*, Quesnel-based literary anthologies, *The Cariboo Observer*, a local newspaper, and The National Library of Poetry have used some of our students' work.

Naturally, I want our *Challenger*-writers to find big audiences. So I hope some of their poetry and prose, one day, will fill pages in Canada's finest literary journals such as *Fiddlehead*, *Malahat Review*, and *Grain*.

Dan Lukiv teaches at Quesnel Secondary School, Quesnel.

Here are some poems and one of the editorial notes *Challenger* has published to give you a taste of some of the flavours of our journal.

Challenger editorial note

Campbell's Beef Vegetable from the can—that's poetry. Add no water. As John Drury says in *Creating Poetry*, "[a poem] is charged, intensified, concentrated." Once you "add water," you've got prose.

Poetry is my first concern in this issue. Poems that *Challenger* has published, and new ones, lie awake inside. Be careful they don't jump off the page and into your blood.

I hope they make your "toenails twinkle" (Dyland Thomas's thrust: If they don't make your "toenails twinkle," they aren't poems.) Emily Dickinson defined poetry differently: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." I know that is poetry.

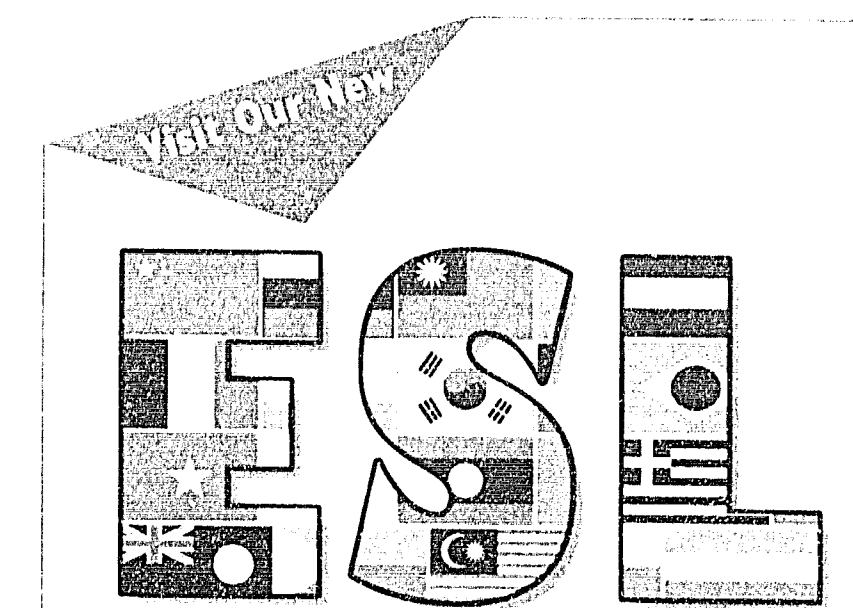
Who needs drugs? If a "poem" stops you shaving, it really is a poem figured A.E. Housman. Robert Graves thought a poem should make "the hairs of one's chin...bristle." Emily, I believe, didn't shave, so she had her own ideas. I wonder if she knew Beethoven's friend called Furry Lisa.

I hope you enjoy this issue. William Wordsworth defined poetry as the "overflow of powerful feelings."

I hope you overflow.

"The Challenger is commended for distinguished accomplishment in clarity and interest... I am most impressed by the variety of topics you address as well as the quality of the articles and poems submitted."

- Debra Cullinane, former co-ordinator of Student Support Services



ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND LANGUAGE HOME PAGE

Research

BCTF Research launches Internet resource lists for ESL teachers

The ESL Inventory is a BCTF Research project funded by a grant from the Social Equity Branch of the Ministry of Education. It aims to list ESL and related resources in a series of data bases that can be accessed on the Internet. Three data bases have been started, which list:

1. ESL Learning Resources
2. Cultural and Antiracist information
3. Parent Communication information

Here are some examples of how the system works:

- A teacher turns up at the start of a school year and finds there are three Iranian students in her class. Unfamiliar with Iranian cultural norms, she decides to look for information about Iranian culture in the Cultural and Antiracist data base. She finds *Cross-Cultural Caring: A Handbook for Health Professionals*, published by UBC, describing cultures of eight of the ethnic groups in B.C. While aimed at health workers, it's very useful for educators. It includes a chapter on Iran. A second find is *Iran: A Cultural Profile*, published by the Catholic Immigration Centre.

- A Grade 6 teacher needs a math text with photographs and images to use with ESL students. He searches in the

ESL Learning Resources Data Base and finds four resources, one of which is *Interactions 6*, published by Ginn Canada, a 246-page book with photographs, graphics, and cartoons to accompany printed material.

• A district wants to prepare a leaflet communicating with parents of different cultures about the district's education services. Searching in the Parent Communication Data Base, the district ESL principal finds School District 61's, 11-page free *Guide to Schools*, printed in four languages and available from the ESL Resource Centre in Victoria.

These are but a few examples from the 900 or so entries in the data bases. The project is at an early stage—there are still many resources we haven't yet found, but given future funding we hope to expand the data bases. To find the inventory on the Internet, point your browser at <http://www.bctf.bc.ca/ESL>.

We are grateful to these B.C. teachers who have worked on the project to date: Marilyn Whitehead (Nanaimo), Toby Akum (Victoria), Tony Bevacqua (Langley), Stephen Coderre (Vancouver), Jon Dingle (Coquitlam), Diane Eyre (Delta), Shemina Hirji (Surrey), Hafeez Mian (Surrey), Barbara Sutherland (Vancouver), Corinne Wong (Vancouver), Pauline Samoszynski (Sooke), Gerry Morrisseau (Victoria), Barbara Henderson (Saanich), and Rita Grill (Saanich).

- Charlie Naylor



Education Minister Moe Sihota presents BCTF President Alice McQuade with the proclamation declaring October 5 to be World Teachers' Day in B.C. He said, "These are some of the most energetic, creative, hard-working people I've ever met, and their job is an important, challenging, constantly changing one that they do very well."

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

DECEMBER

7-11 Vancouver. Reaching Beyond the Rim. National Staff Development Council Annual Conference at the Pan Pacific and Waterfront Hotels. Contact NSDC, PO Box 240, Oxford, OH 45056, (513) 523-6029.

JANUARY

17-18 Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel. It's About Time, a look at the potentials and perils of alternative timetables in secondary schools. Sponsored by Continuing Professional Education, UBC. Contact Susan Duncan, (604) 822-2013, or e-mail suduncan@unix.ubc.ca

23-24 Edmonton. A Solution-Focused Approach to Working with Individuals, Couples, and Families. Presenter: Nancy McConkey, MSW, director, Solution Talk Inc. Contact (403) 225-2733, F: (403) 949-3321, 1400-10655 Southport Road SW, Calgary, AB T2W 4Y1.

31 Vancouver. Evening lecture, The Ideal in Relationships, by Dr. Daniel Papero, director of training at the Georgetown Family Center and consultant to education administrators in Washington, D.C., John Jamhor Education Centre, B.C. Cancer Agency, 600 West 10th, S15. Contact North Shore Counselling Centre, 2104 Gordon Avenue, West Vancouver, BC V7V 1V9, (604) 926-5495, F: (604) 926-5498.

FEBRUARY

1 Burnaby. Workshop: Anxiety and Learning, with Dr. Daniel Papero, director of training at the Georgetown Family Center and consultant to education administrators in Washington, D.C., Shadbolt Centre for the Arts, 6450 Deer Lake Avenue, S105 to December 31, S125 thereafter. Contact North Shore Counselling Centre, 2104 Gordon Avenue, West Vancouver, BC V7V 1V9, (604) 926-5495, F: (604) 926-5498.

17 Kamloops. Career Prep/CAPP 97 Conference, Issues in Public Education, University College of the Cariboo. Contact Gerry Olund, Henry Grube Education Centre, 245 Kitchener Crescent, Kamloops, BC V2B 1B9, (604) 376-2266, F: (604) 376-7966.

19-21 Saskatoon. Second National Congress on Rural Education. Looking Ahead—Looking Back: A Vision for the Future of Rural Education, covering policy, practice, and research, Centennial Auditorium, \$200. Contact Joe Zolkavich, Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, 28 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1, (306) 966-7634, F: (306) 966-7020.

21-22 Burnaby, B.C. Music Educators' Association Conference, Earth Beat '97, Burnaby South and Michael J Fox Theatre. Contact Heather Gow, 7334 Walton Mountain Road, RR#1, Duncan, BC V9L 1M3.

MARCH

11-15 Orlando. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), 31st Annual Convention and Exposition, Orange County Convention Center. Contact TESOL Conventions Department, 1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-2751, (703) 836-0774, F: (703) 836-7864, e-mail: conv@tesol.edu

APRIL

Date TBA. Vancouver, B.C. Business Education Association Spring Conference. Contact Deb Goral, (604) 664-8550, F: (604) 664-8559.

4-5 North Vancouver. 41st AL 97, Celebrating 30 Years of Instruction and Research in English as an Additional Language, Canadian International College. Contact Marilyn Tow, c/o Canadian International College, 2420 Dollarton Highway, North Vancouver, BC V7H 2Y1, or call 41st AL, (604) 294-8325.

17-20 Minneapolis. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics 75th Annual Meeting. Contact NCTM, 1906 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091.

19 Vancouver. Workshop: Responsible Leadership in a Chronically Anxious Society, with Dr. Edwin Friedman, author, theorist, and teacher of leadership skills, Vancouver Public Library Central Branch, S105 to March 19, S125 thereafter. Contact North Shore Counselling Centre, 2104 Gordon Avenue, West Vancouver, BC V7V 1V9, (604) 926-5495, F: (604) 926-5498.

25-26 Abbotsford. Congrès de l'APPPEC. Responsable: Jacqueline Brunet, téléphone: 859-4891 (télécopieur: 852-8587) ou pour de plus amples renseignements contactez: Martine Joseph, téléphone: 858-2666 (télécopieur: 858-5773) ou par courrier électronique: mjoseph@eln.etc.bc.ca

25-26 Vancouver. BCTEISS (B.C. Consortium for Humanities and Social Sciences) Spring Conference 1997, Landscape, Memory, and Narrative: Teaching the Humanities, Arbutus Club, S45. Contact Yiling Chow, (604) 736-1633, F: (604) 733-5673, e-mail: ychow@vsh.bc.ca

MAY

3 Vancouver. Dyslexia: Meeting the Challenges, Cultural Diversity—Technological Change, The Orton Dyslexia Society, B.C. Branch, 1997 Spring Conference, UBC Student Union Building. Contact the conference co-ordinator at (604) 734-9178.

16-17 Richmond. Catalyst 97, Conference of the B.C. Science Teachers' Association Delta Pacific Resort Hotel. Contact Steve Cardwell W: (604) 596-7101 F: (604) 596-4361, e-mail: seardw@eln.etc.bc.ca

8-10 Vancouver. A conference for everyone with an interest in physical activity for students: In Concert, Banded Together for Sport, Physical Education, hosted by the Physical Education Provincial Specialist Association (PEPSA), Canadian Intramural and Recreation Association (CIRA-BC), and BC School Sports, at UBC. Contact Al Thomas (604) 936-0491, F: (604) 936-0292.

JUNE

14-19 Calgary. World Conference on Educational Media and Hypermedia and World Conference on Educational Telecommunications, University of Calgary. See http://www.aace.org/conf/edmedia.

AUGUST

15-19 Vancouver. North American Association for Environmental Education annual conference, Weaving Connections: Cultures and Environment, UBC. Contact Victoria International Development Association, 1921 Fernwood Road, Victoria, BC V8T 2Y6, (604) 385-2333, F: (604) 388-5258, e-mail: vidnaa@islandnet.net, website: http://www.edu.uleth.ca

It's still hot and sunny in Vancouver and you can't wait to go back for the summer. So, don't miss out on the BCTF Summer Special! Send an e-mail message to bctf@bctf.bc.ca asking the subject to be "Summer Special" and you'll receive a free copy of the BCTF Summer Special.

Christmas around the world



by Sid Bentley

Linda Martin and Ann Soon, of Frost Road Elementary School, in Surrey, B.C., planned their annual multiculturalism day to be about the many Christmas/winter festivals. The BCTF Program Against Racism (PAR) asked me if I would do a series of in-class talks on "The Myths of Christmas from Around the World" for their students. I jumped at the opportunity—it would entail some extra preparation to work with students but the experience would be worth the effort.

A different group of students ranging in age from primary to Grade 7, came to me every 40 minutes during the day. I varied my presentation and content according to the maturity of the audience. Some topics covered:

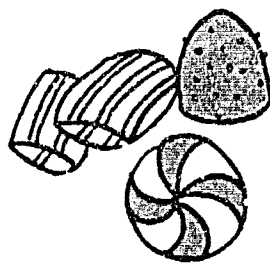
The name and the identity of the gift-giver in various cultures

Dutch—Sinter Klaas, meaning Saint Nikolaus
 German—Weihnachtsmann, meaning Christmas Man
 Danish—Julemanden, meaning Christmas Man
 Swedish—Jultomten, meaning Christmas Man
 French—Père Noël, meaning Father Christmas
 Bulgarian—Grandpa Koleda, meaning Grandfather Christmas
 Russian—Babushka, meaning Grandmother
 Italian—Befana, meaning the Old Witch.

Glaedelig Jul

Christmas greetings in various cultures

Dutch—Erolijk Kerstfeest
 French—Joyeux Noël
 Spanish—Feliz Navidad
 Portuguese—Feliz Natal
 Italian—Buon Natale
 Swedish—God Jul
 Danish—Glaedelig Jul
 Greek—Kala Christagenna
 German—Fröhliche Weihnachten
 Polish—Wesołych Świąt



God Jul

Three favourite lessons

1. *Rudolph* has his beginnings in 1938 when a Mr. May, an employee of American mail-order company Montgomery Ward wrote a poem that was a humorous take-off on Clement Moore's, "The Visit of Saint Nicholas," now more commonly known as, "'Twas the Night Before Christmas." May's poem, about the mail-order business, began, "'Twas the night before Christmas/ When a 'I through the bills/The reindeer were playing/Enjoying the spills/..." The star of his poem was a reindeer named Rudolph (who was originally named Reginald). Over 2,000,000 copies of his poem were distributed free by Montgomery Ward. In 1949, Gene Autry immortalized Rudolph when he recorded "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer," written by composer Johnny Marks.

2. *Befana*, the "Old Witch of Christmas," is still the traditional gift-bringer to Italian children (Italian children in North America are more likely to expect Santa Claus to bring their gifts). Befana has her beginnings in a myth based around the birth of the Christ Child, and the visit of The Three Wise Men.

"Befana was a lonely widow who lived at the time of the birth of Jesus. Her only child had died; she was left with much free time. She kept busy by doing endless housework. She washed her floors every day, although she had no company. Befana became obsessed with doing housework.

On their way to Bethlehem to see the Christ Child, the Three Wise Men stopped at Befana's house. She was so kind to them, they asked her if she wished to come with them to visit the Christ Child. She said no, because she had so much housework to do. The next day, Befana realized what a wonderful opportunity she had missed. So she left her home and set off to catch up with the Three Wise Men, so as to see Baby Jesus. She became hopelessly lost and was doomed to eternally wander the earth in search of the Christ Child. To make up for her mistake in not visiting Him at His birth, every year on

the eve of His birthday, Christmas Eve, she puts a gift in the stocking of every child, just in case one of them is Baby Jesus. Some people also believe Befana puts pieces of coal, or potatoes, into the stockings of children who have misbehaved. (The name *Befana* comes from the root word *Epiphany*, which is the day celebrating the Three Wise Men's presenting their gifts to the Christ Child.) The same type of myth surrounds Babushka, the gift-bearing grandmother of Russian children.

they are invited in. Not only Mary and Joseph enter, but all those following do, and the party begins with guitar music, and, of course, food.

On the ninth night, which is called "Noche Buena," or Good Night (of course this is Christmas Eve), people dress as shepherds and parade around in search of Baby Jesus. They eventually gather at the ninth home, or sometimes a church, where the "Nacimiento" or Creche (a

Feliz Natal



3. "Las Posadas" (or lodgings) is a festival central to many Spanish-American cultures at Christmas time. Mexico and the Central American countries to the south celebrate this festival.

"Las Posadas" begins on December 16, and lasts nine days. This is the traditional way to prepare for Christmas festivities. Las Posadas is the re-enactment of Joseph and Mary's trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem to seek lodgings the night before Jesus was born.

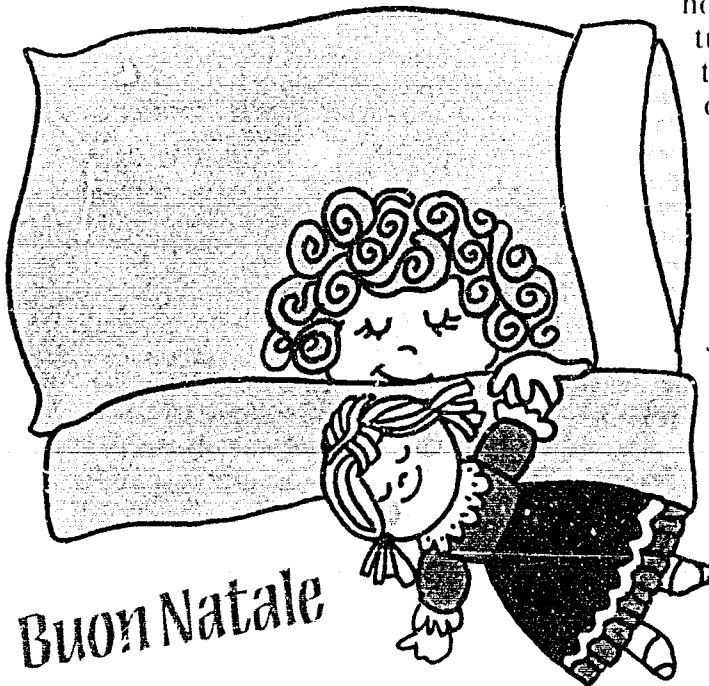
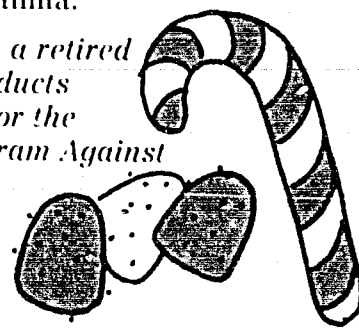
During the first eight nights of the festival, two children, carrying clay figures of Mary and Joseph, lead a candlelit parade from house to house seeking shelter. At every

house, they are turned away and told over and over, "There is no room." Each night, however, a home has been chosen for that evening's Posada. When Joseph and Mary ask at that door, they are told, "There is no room," but

Fröhliche Weihnachten

manger scene) is displayed. Here they often sing "El Rorro," or "Babe in Arms." Later, children will break a "pinata" (which may look like a star, a bird, or a burro), filled with sweets, nuts, and small toys. Their special foods include tortillas and tamales, which are thin, corn-flour pancakes wrapped around fillings of meat, eggs, vegetables, cheese, and spices. A traditional Christmas treat is bunuelos, which are tamales without their usual spicy fillings. Instead, these tamales are rolled but empty, with a sweet brown sauce made of sugar and vanilla.

Syd Bentley, a retired teacher, conducts workshops for the BCTF's Program Against Racism.



Buon Natale

The elementary teacher: a one-man band

by Noel Herron

When I read Education Minister Moe Sihota's recent announcement that mandatory second-language instruction in French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese, or Punjabi will be taught by Grade 5 teachers next year, I was reminded of a busker I once saw at Granville Island—a one-man-band, whose bodily dexterity and skillful arrangement of instruments enabled him to play the harmonica, drums, "clappers," banjo, and violin while doing a little bit of tap dancing.

The busker's task looks simple against the cumulative pace and weight of the curricular onslaught B.C.'s elementary school teachers face as a new school year opens.

Over the past six years, elementary schools—much more so than secondary schools—have been inundated with a host of new programs, curriculum alterations, and policy changes. As new education ministers move in and out of their Victoria offices, revision to programs and policies have proliferated, with some being introduced one year and cancelled the next.

While many changes are worthwhile and welcomed,

their cumulative effect has left elementary school parents, teachers, and principals dazed and bewildered.

Only when one examines the full list of programs and policy changes since the early '90s

...the elementary teacher's job is excessively demanding.

can one appreciate the seismic shift now under way.

Consider the following initiatives since 1990 (with introductory year in brackets):

- New Kindergarten Dual-Entry Program (1990—introduced and subsequently cancelled)
- New Primary Program (1991)
- New Intermediate Program (1992—introduced and subsequently cancelled)
- Mainstreaming of children with special needs into typical classes (1993)
- New Kindergarten to Grade 7 Math program (1995)
- New Kindergarten to Grade 7 Science program (1995)
- New Kindergarten to Grade 7 Personal Planning program (1995)
- New evaluation and reporting to parents procedures including new report cards, new letter grades, and structured written comments (1995)
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) for all ESL students (1995—introduced and subsequently cancelled)
- Total revision of Kindergarten to Grade 7 Language Arts program (1996)
- New Applied Skills, Information Technology Curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 7 (1996)

While implementation for some of the programs listed is

See ONE-MAN BAND p. 11