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Making the connection



by Anne Veilleux

Francophone and immersion teachers in Kelowna have been meeting in action-research groups since September 1996 to examine the teaching of first and second languages. The project was organized by the B.C. Ministry of Education (Field Services Division) with support from the Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, and the Central Okanagan School District. As part of their commitment to exploring the new French language IRPs, teachers examined elements of their current practice, identified practice they would like to change to bring their teaching into line with the new IRPs, and reflected on the impact of those changes on student learning.



Top right: Teacher Paula Ziebart participating in the Action Research project and above, students from Paule Mondor's Grade 4 and 5 class at Belgo Elementary School, utilize the scientific method.

The process began with the identification of an attainable goal, probably the most difficult and crucial part of the project.

As a professional-development model, action research provides a constructivist view of learning: knowledge is viewed not as a transfer of information but as a process in which teachers take an active part in professional inquiry into their current teaching practices. Pedagogical understandings are constructed as teachers engage in collaborative discussions and investigations around issues of concern to them. The focus of the action-research project in Kelowna has been the implementation of communicative teaching strategies for the teaching of French language arts as described in

the integrated resource packages. The process used in the project allowed teachers to concentrate on any one aspect of their professional growth at a time.

The process began with the identification of an attainable goal, probably the most difficult and crucial part of the project. Teachers then gave their inquiry the direction that suited their situation and needs. The goals identified in Kelowna were varied. How to promote communication skills was a recurring theme. What teaching strategies are available on the Internet to offer a more authentic environment to students writing in French? How can I promote greater student autonomy in developing writing skills? What strategies are effective in encouraging students to use their second language in everyday classroom interactions? What activities, experiments, and strategies can be used to teach the scientific method in a way that will better capture students' interest? How can I

develop students' enjoyment of reading in a second language? How can music and song be used to improve students' communication skills and their appreciation of different cultures?

To help participants identify a personally and professionally relevant area of focus, the following questions were carefully reviewed with each teacher during the first or second session (Jeroski 1992):

1. Is the research question important to me? Yes / No
2. Is it something I often think about? Yes / No
3. Does the goal focus on me, my role, my students, my practice, my relationships? Yes / No
4. Will exploring these goals have some immediate practical benefits for me and for my students? Yes / No

5. Is it a reasonable project that can be achieved in the length of time available to me? Yes / No

As facilitator, I assisted teachers in clarifying the focus and goals of their research and in developing an implementation plan to begin answering their initial question. When we first met as a group, I acknowledged that this form of professional development represents a radical departure from the type of in-service education to which we have become accustomed. I explained the nature of the change process and provided research-based information supporting the theoretical underpinning of the change, and promoting reflection. Teachers formulated a response to the integrated resource packages by recognizing that change

See CONNECTION page 4



This is my last president's column; it comes after my last AGM and before my last Representative Assembly, my last Executive meeting, my last visit to a local, and a number of other important last. And because it is my last, I want to share my views on the source of the tremendous strength of our organization.

Even though I have learned a great deal since I started three years ago, there are some truths that I hold with me from the very start. I have always believed that teachers wanted those who spoke for them to be clear, to sound like teachers, to be articulate and passionate, and to be reasonable. I also think teachers want their organization to steer a path away from the extremes of any issue, a moderate path, one that allows for tiny steps toward progress. They also want their organization to be primarily concerned with their welfare, that of their students, and that of public education.

What I have learned about the Federation is the essential role that the Executive plays. Most of those who are active in the Federation represent particular locals, subject areas, kinds of teachers, or social issues. The Executive Committee is the only body that must weigh the interests of all members, sometimes very competitive interests, and then make a decision that is in the best interest of the Federation. That is not always easy.

Some think the president of the BCTF has incredible power. Those of us who have done this job know that our power is limited by the will of the membership. The strength of the president and of the organization has always and will always depend on the commitment, support, and unity of purpose of the membership.

I thank you for that and for so much more. It has been a wonderful three years.

Anita

Teacher disciplined for heterosexual bias or teacher disciplined for homosexual bias. This news would be disturbing to teachers.

The legal and professional implications of Recommendation 73 passed at the recent BCTF AGM haven't been well explored, and I think they should be.

The spirit of Recommendation 73 supports a program to eliminate homophobia and heterosexism in public schools and was brought forward by a number of locals, including Surrey. In talking to AGM delegates, I found overwhelming support for the idea of safe, harassment-free schools for all students and staff. However, the present wording of this recommendation does carry with it the potential to reach beyond simply protecting and respecting our students and staff. I'm concerned about the legal and professional interpretation of the words *heterosexism* and *homophobia* because it is possible to use these words to limit the participation of teachers with certain moral beliefs in public education.

Is having a heterosexual bias, i.e., thinking heterosexuality is better or more moral than homosexuality, something that ought to determine how teachers are judged by the BCTF or the College of Teachers? Let me clarify. I don't support poor treatment of any student or staff on the basis of sexual orientation.

Moral belief on this issue cannot justify harassment. However, I question that personal opinions or convictions on the morality of same-sex partnerships should be used as a basis for limiting the participation of certain religious or cultural groups in public education.

Anita McBride
Surrey

Beginning teachers' conference

I attended the Beginning Teachers' Conference January 16-18, 1997. I really enjoyed my time there. The sessions I attended on Friday and Saturday were all interesting and very relevant. The most important thing that I learned there, though, was just how much support there is for new teachers. Many of us go through a time in our first few years when we feel as though we are all alone. We are unaware of the level of support, or if we are aware of it, we do not know how to avail ourselves of it. Everyone who attended the conference was, in my opinion, shown how to make use of the many opportunities and outlets that the BCTF offers.

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The one thing that I noticed about the conference was how upbeat it was. In other words, I think it was excellent for young teachers who might be feeling buried by the amount of work they are doing at this time of year. I certainly remember feeling that way last year, in my first year of teaching. However, with this upbeat feeling comes one problem. I found that what I call the "possible pitfalls" of teaching were ignored. Even though I am only in my second year of teaching, I have been made painfully aware of just how careful teachers need to be in terms of people's perceptions of what they are doing. I think that it is vitally important for all new teachers to be aware of the guidelines that our unions have regarding our behaviour as teachers. As we all know, we are "under the microscope" all the time, and if we are accused of wrongdoing, our careers are in jeopardy. I firmly believe that next year's conference should include this. Of course, we do not want to scare anyone, but they need to be aware of problems they may face.

Dave Young
Chilliwack

Salmon Arm reunion

The 1947 graduating class of Salmon Arm High School is having a 50-year reunion September 12-14, 1997. Members hope that a few of their teachers will be able to attend, but so far we have been able to contact only two. If you taught at SAHS between 1943 and 1948, contact me at 813 Cavalier Drive, Vernon, BC V1T 9M6.

Mary Wetherill
Vernon

Attention, teachers of Chinese or Sikh ancestry

A research project conducted by members of the SFU Faculty of Education is documenting the experiences of teachers of Chinese ancestry and Sikh ancestry. Our objective is to support entry to the profession of future teachers of minority ancestry. At present, we are focussing on the two largest groups in British Columbia: teachers of Chinese or Sikh ancestry.

We would like to know what experiences have helped teachers of Chinese ancestry and Sikh ancestry to pursue their careers, as well as the experiences that have made that difficult. We also want to know if skills in minority language(s) and culture(s) are part of their work.

We would like to hear from teachers of Sikh or Chinese ancestry in the Lower Mainland interested in participating in an

interview at a location and time convenient to them. We want to interview individuals at all stages of career development: recent graduates as well as those established in the profession. Interviews will respect confidentiality of information.

If you are interested in helping out, please phone Dr. June Beynon, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University (604) 291-3519, or e-mail June.Wyatt-Beynon@sfu.ca.

Dr. June Beynon
Simon Fraser University

AGM response

I have just had the opportunity to attend the 81st Annual General Meeting of the BCTF and want to express how much I enjoyed the experience. The days passed with surprising swiftness, and the event left me tired yet excited about my profession. I never knew how many enthusiastic, hardworking people are committed to improving the working life of teachers and students in our province. The amount of energy was amazing—from the spirited discussion and debate on the recommendations and resolutions, to the fun and warmth of the hospitality suites after the sessions.

I thank the Federation for its continuing support of education in the province and the "old" executive for their work on our behalf. To the new executive, "May the force be with you!"

Also, a heartfelt thank you to Geoff, the piano/guitar player, and the singers who sang along on Sunday night. (Who hosted that room anyway?) What a great time I had! Thanks for letting me play along. I hope we can do that again sometime. And Geoff, can you please send me a copy of your songbook? (I'll trade you a copy of mine.) I can be contacted through e-mail at mtooren@cln.edc.bc.ca. In closing, I would like to add that despite the controversy and protests, we make a difference in the lives of our students and their families.

Let's be proud.
Murk Toorenburgh
Maple Ridge

Reciprocal pension update

Our Reciprocal Pensions Committee met with the B.C. Teachers' Pension Plan Advisory Committee (TPPAC) at the BCTF in late November 1996 to express concerns regarding pension portability and to offer solutions.

At the 1997 AGM, Recommendation 63, which contained a number of principles on pension portability, passed. On page 38 of *Reports and Resolutions*, the supporting statement reads "What they are asking would require that monies would be taken from current contributors to subsidize their

pension transfers..." That statement is false—no one from this group has ever suggested that our B.C. colleagues subsidize us at their own cost. Two members of TPPAC present at the AGM concurred with our concern regarding that false statement.

This issue is a shared responsibility between provinces and to resolve it requires constructive dialogue. We have continued to communicate with other provinces regularly to keep abreast of developments. Therefore, we were pleased to inform the Executive, the pension committee, and delegates that a reciprocal agreement between Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Manitoba had been reached. They informed us that as soon as the document is executed it will be shared with all other teacher pension plans across the country. The three administrators stated that they "will make ourselves available, upon request, to attend any meetings with other pension plan boards or administrators to discuss the new agreement." We anticipate that our TPPAC, BCTF, and/or designate will contact these negotiators with the intent to address and to bring closure to the pension-portability concerns of BCTF members.

Jean Fraser, Garry Storsley
Reciprocal Pensions Committee

Women's carpentry program

The April issue of *Teacher* includes a letter to the editor regarding the Women's Carpentry program. I am listed as one of the signatories, but I did not write the letter, did not sign the letter, and did not know that the letter had been sent until I saw it published in the news-magazine. As well, I was never contacted by *Teacher* magazine regarding the letter. For the record, I do not have a problem with a program targeted specifically at increasing the number of women in the trades. In fact, I believe that it is a good idea. The plywood is, however, layed the wrong way.

Mike Shaw
Kelowna



Write to us

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

Articles contained herein reflect the view of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the B.C. Teachers' Federation.

The B.C. Teachers' Federation does not endorse or promote any products or services presented in the advertising sections of the newsmagazine.

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

Ministry policy changes

by Anita Chapman

The ministry has sent a fax, dated May 2, 1997, to superintendents announcing changes to ministry policy on accreditation, languages, and reporting. As you can see in the following summary, there is good news and bad news.

First the bad...

Accreditation
The minister claims to be acting on the unanimous recommendations of the Accreditation Work Group, a committee with reps from the BCTF as well as principals, parents, superintendents, and trustees. The accreditation program announced by the minister was not recommended unanimously by the working committee. BCTF representatives to that committee argued for voluntary self-assessment based on an opportunities-to-learn model of accountability.

One recommendation that was unanimous was to have an additional (a seventh) non-instructional day for each school each year for the purpose of working on accreditation or the follow-up school growth plan. The minister has instead expanded the purpose of the Implementation Planning Day to include accreditation. This in no way addresses teachers' workload concerns. One non-instructional day is clearly inadequate for dealing with the implementation of new curricula and policies, and school accreditation and

growth plans.

The only change to accreditation is that there will now be fewer criteria statements (topics). Nothing else about the process has changed, and it continues to be mandatory for both elementary and secondary schools.

Now the good...

Aboriginal Languages Policy
The languages policy that requires all students to take a second language in Grades 5 to 8 has been amended to make it easier for boards to continue to offer aboriginal-language programs.

IP (In Progress) Letter Grade
The minister has announced an amended reporting policy that:

- replaces the reporting symbol IP with I
- allows I to be used in informal as well as formal reporting
- does not require the teacher to write a written IP (I) plan
- removes many of the rules about when and how conversion to another letter grade must occur
- maintains the onus on teachers to notify students and parents of learning problems and consult with them about possible courses of action.

This is very close to what the BCTF has been asking for.

Anita Chapman is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional Development Division.

Teachers seek change at the Workers' Compensation Board

Teachers are calling for a complete modernization in the way workplace health and safety are dealt with in schools. In May, Alice McQuade, BCTF president, made a presentation to the Royal Commission on Workers' Compensation in British Columbia, reviewing the entire system of workers' compensation in B.C. McQuade outlined teachers' need for a reformed, publicly owned system that recognizes work in non-industrial settings like schools and focusses on prevention, backed up by clear regulations, monitoring, and enforcement.

McQuade made the following points:

1. Current WCB regulations aren't effective and relevant for education settings. All regulations must be reconsidered to ensure that they take into account schools as workplaces. Stringent but achievable standards must apply. The WCB should encourage collaborative efforts between unions and employers aimed at prevention. The WCB should also monitor and enforce employer compliance; reporting annually.
2. Teachers need to maintain three key health-and-safety rights: the right to participate,

the right to know, and the right to refuse to work in unsafe conditions. A pregnant woman should have the right to paid leave when a worksite presents an immediate danger to the well-being of her fetus.

3. The health risks of portable classrooms must be considered. Communications systems are necessary for teachers working in portable classrooms. Adequate snow and ice clearance between the portable and the main school building must be ensured.

4. Existing WCB regulations on the prevention of violence in the workplace must be enforced, including the completion of risk assessments and training for all school staff, including teachers on call, so that they can more effectively deal with incidents of violence. The WCB should reconsider the mechanism for assessing compensation for teachers on call so that the calculations of days worked are averaged over a longer period.

5. The WCB should recognize stress in the workplace as a source of illness, explore ways to reduce stress at work, and pay compensation for absence related to stress.

The Royal Commission's final report is due September 1998.

—Heather McLeod

Top 10 BCTF lesson aids

Women Inventors: A co-operatively planned unit on women inventors for late intermediate social studies or science. Judith Coffin, Marlowe Irvine, Ramona Sousa, 102 p. 1994. Examines both the achievements of women inventors and the barriers they faced. Ten activities, handouts, summary of resources are required. Activities 1-5 for late intermediate social studies units on the Industrial Revolution. Activities one, and 6-10 for late intermediate science units on women inventors and discoverers. Grades 4-10. LA 9265—\$10.50

Salmonids in the classroom—Egg-to-Fry Display. Produced by Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Wooden display rack (15cm x 10cm x 3cm) holds four securely mounted glass vials that contain salmon at an early development stage: eggs, eyed eggs, alevins and fry. Specimens are preserved in liquid to retain their natural colour and shape. Recommended by the B.C. Ministry of Education. All levels. LA S50—\$22

Charles E. Chum: Audio cassette and book. Produced by Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. 75 p. and 670 min. audio cassette ©1991. The original "Chucky Chum" story is in the curriculum package *Salmonids in the Classroom* (LA 535). The story could be used as model for identity stories or whole language activities and lends itself to adaptation for puppet plays. Audio version is divided into five episodes with a list of difficult vocabulary for each episode. May be used with individuals (listening posts), small groups, or with the entire class. Includes audio cassette, book, and teacher's guide. Primary. LA S36—\$15

The Lives of Medieval Women: A co-operatively planned humanities unit on medieval women for the late intermediate

level. Judith Coffin, Marlowe Irvine, Ramona Sousa, 73 p. 1994. Presents a glimpse of the lives of peasant, middle class, and aristocratic medieval women. Ten activities, handouts, and summary of resources included. Grade 8. LA 9248—\$8.25

Earth Book for Kids: Activities to help heal the environment. Linda Schwartz, illustrated by Beverly Armstrong, 184 p. ©1990. Shows the reader ways to make a difference and includes facts to better understand the problems. Activities include arts and crafts ideas, experiments, recycling projects, and research topics. Sections include: energy, resource and recycling, air, land and water, plant and animal habitats, more ways to make every day Earth Day, where to write, and a glossary. Elementary-Adult. LA E200—\$14.85

The Art Book. Pam Milburn, 213 p. 1981. An illustrated resource book of art activities and information compiled for teachers of art who have no special training in art. K-7. LA 8606—\$18.85

Applying Critical Thinking Skills to Television Viewing. Kay Kennedy (Briggs) 98 p. 1993. This media literacy curriculum is divided into six units with over 30 lesson plans. Topics include: visuals, audio, grammar of television production, programming, news selection, and advertising. A bibliography and evaluation materials provided. Ages 8 and up. LA 1010—\$11

Fun with Integers—A Grade 6 & 7 Math Activity. Gaynor Dayson, math co-ordinator, BCTF K-7 in-service project. 60 p. ©1996. Written to support the new Mathematics Integrated Resource Package. Includes teacher notes, journal ideas, six Grade 6 student activities, 12 Grade 7 student activities, integer problems, assessment, games using integers

and a bibliography. Grades 6 & 7. LA 9423—\$6

Infundo—Exploring integrated learning through the music of South Africa. Britannia World Music Project 17 min. VHS video cassette, 30 p. teacher's guide ©1994. Infundo video introduces integrated studies focusing on the music of South Africa as an interdisciplinary theme. Implemented in conjunction with Black History Month and the primary focus on learners in Grade 9 and those in ESL, International Baccalaureate, and alternate programs in other grades. Uses the fine arts as an instructional tool for experiential learning through interaction with artists as resource people. Teacher's guide and strategies to be used to plan an artist-in-residence program. Grades 6-10. LA 2623—\$17.95

The Interactive Career Guide to the 21st Century. Produced by the Vancouver School Board. 58 p. ©1997. Designed to help students answer career questions and to explore, reflect, and discuss what students are learning and thinking about themselves and their futures. Resources, word definitions, a guide for the VSB Career Centre Web site, and an evaluation form are included. Secondary. LA 2209—\$11

For a complete listing of over 800 BCTF Lesson Aids, consult the catalogue in your school library or the 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.

Report from an iceberg

Ever wonder what it would be like to teach in Napoleon's France or maybe the mythical world of Beaver and Wally Cleaver? Well, the comptroller general of B.C. has a plan for you. We now have before us *The Report on Accountability in the K-12 Education System*. This is a report from a gnomic little up of accountants in the comptroller general's office of the ministry of Finance. They have recommendations on how the public-school system should operate, which would be quaint if they weren't so potentially disastrous for child-centred public education. The comptroller general thinks we should have a results-based accountability framework with provincial assessments of student performance. And how well students do on those standardized tests should be used to evaluate teacher performance. The comptroller general is a little out of touch with 1997 schools. The report recommends a highly bureaucratic and centralized accountability system with little, if any, teacher autonomy. The report hardly acknowledges student differences or the diversity of the student population in today's schools.

The BCTF is preparing a brief on the report and will have

discussions with education partners to prepare a possible joint response.

For further information, contact Mike Lombardi or Pat Clarke, Professional Development Division, BCTF, (604) 871-2283 or toll free 1-800-663-9163. E-mail plombardi@bctf.bc.ca or mlombardi@bctf.bc.ca or a copy of the report is found on the ministry's Web site at <http://www.est.gov.bc.ca> under News or Publications.

—Pat Clarke

Oops

In the April issue we printed a wrong phone number for Teachers' institute on Canadian parliamentary democracy, p. 3. The Public Information Office, Library of Parliament number in Ottawa is (613) 992-4793. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

BCTF Online

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

To join the open BCTF listservs or mailing lists:

Send an e-mail message to: 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
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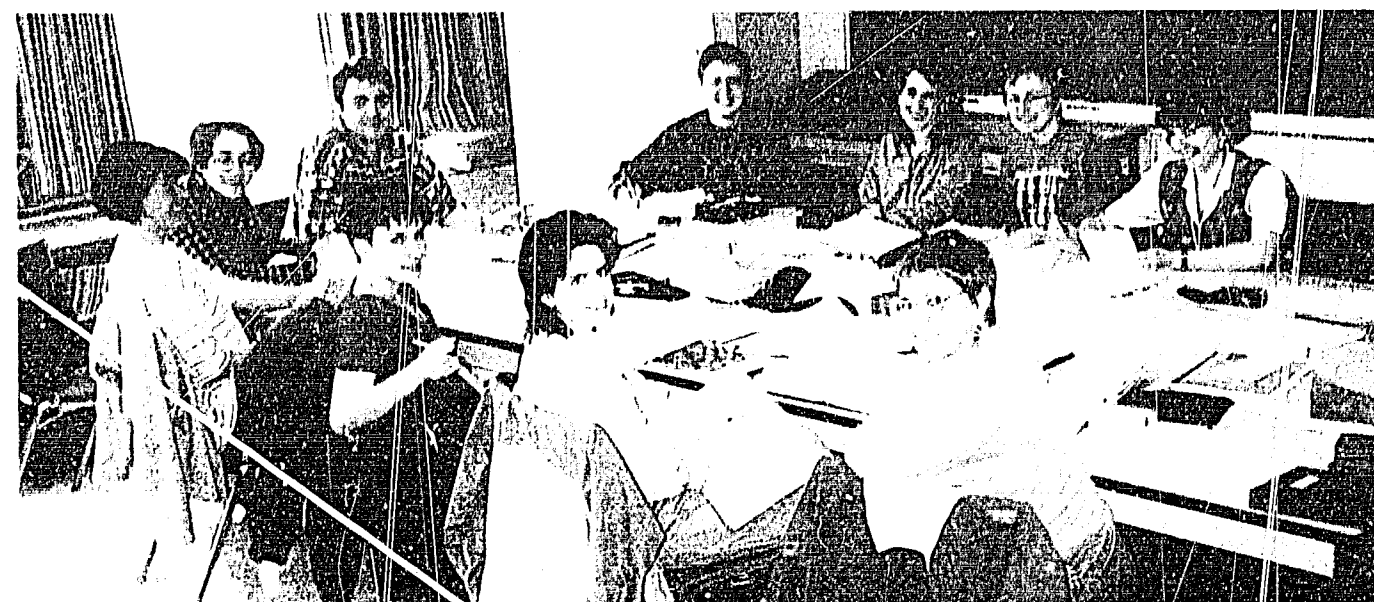
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• Check out our new BCTF Web-site search page.

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EdPress
Distinguished Achievement Award



Clockwise from bottom left: Ghislaine MacBride (Dorothea Walker Elementary), Paula Ziebart (Lakeview Elementary), Eugène Ducatel (Kelowna Secondary), Paule Mondor (Belgo Elementary), Joanne Lapoint and Pierre Larouche (A.S. Matheson Elementary), Erika Van Oyen and Melissa Willock (Peter Greer Elementary), Brenda Jackson (Kelowna Secondary), Anne Veilleux (facilitator)

CONNECTION from page 1 occurs incrementally over time, discussing their professional reading, sharing, and building on their knowledge, giving themselves permission to take things one step at a time.

As we moved from the selection of an initial focus to the development and implementation of an action plan, teachers concentrated on the means by which they would bring about the changes that they identified. They cited activities they would undertake in their classrooms and established reasonable time-lines for implementation and completion. In their action plan, they highlighted the professional readings they would undertake and strategies related to the focus and goals of the self-directed plan. Teachers also indicated the evidence that would demonstrate the degree to which they had succeeded in meeting their initial goal.

As the project progressed, a sense of teamwork developed. Although the self-directed project plan is individualized, colleagues can provide considerable support and encouragement. Collaboration among teachers took many forms. During the round-table discussions, teachers suggested alternatives to colleagues who had reached an impasse in their implementation. Brenda Jackson led a workshop on classroom application of the Internet. The exchange of ideas, experiences, and expertise during our meetings resulted in the identification of new professional pathways—and new questions. Throughout the discussions, teachers were asked to identify what they had learned about language teaching and to consider new areas of exploration and inquiry.

An action-research model for professional development allows teachers to make the connections between theory

and practice. It allows them to engage in professional dialogue with colleagues about pedagogical issues of particular importance to them. It nurtures the development of collaboration and professional autonomy. The action-research team in Kelowna is organizing a session for other teachers in the district so that they can share what they have learned through the process and present the results of their research. Congratulations to all teacher researchers in the project.

Anne Veilleux teaches at Kelowna Secondary School, Kelowna

LE COIN FRANÇAIS

Faire le lien

par Christine Pelletier

La recherche-action me permet d'être en contact avec mes besoins, d'apprendre à les identifier et d'établir une démarche pour atteindre des objectifs de changement. La recherche-action, grâce à la réflexion personnelle qu'elle produit et à son dynamisme, aide à sortir de l'enseignement statique qui consiste à répéter toujours les mêmes choses sans vouloir améliorer les résultats d'apprentissage. Elle me permet également de devenir plus consciente de l'impact de mes interventions en classe.

Je crois profondément en la force mobilisatrice de la recherche-action. J'ai parlé du projet à plusieurs reprises avec mes collègues qui enseignent ici à Prince George, tant à l'élémentaire qu'au secondaire, et cela a suscité beaucoup d'intérêt. L'idée est bonne et ils sont prêts à l'adopter. Cependant, il ne faut pas oublier l'encadrement qui demeure, à mon avis, un élément primordial. Il est

essentiel de sensibiliser les administrateurs à cette nouvelle approche et de les convaincre de son potentiel. Le processus d'apprentissage que les participants effectuent en se familiarisant avec la recherche-action se fait lentement; les séances de discussions et de partage sont essentielles, les lectures, l'écriture du journal, les réflexions demandent beaucoup d'énergie et de temps. Par conséquent, l'appui des administrateurs est une part importante dans le succès des projets.

En fait de développement professionnel, la recherche-action est de loin, l'expérience la plus enrichissante que j'ai vécue jusqu'à maintenant. Cela permet d'avancer et de toujours continuer à se poser des questions. Cela me permet de clarifier pourquoi je fais certaines activités en classe et pas d'autres. Je peux travailler sur ce qui m'intéresse vraiment. J'apprécie aussi beaucoup l'aspect discussion avec mes collègues qui me fournit le soutien nécessaire et combat l'isolement de la salle de classe.

La plus grande qualité des projets de type recherche-action c'est qu'ils permettent de répondre aux besoins réels des enseignants en salle de classe. Ils donnent le pouvoir à l'enseignant d'identifier ses propres champs d'intérêts et d'articuler son plan de développement professionnel. Comparé aux types traditionnels d'ateliers auxquels nous sommes habitués, cela constitue une approche plus sophistiquée et plus réflexive pour améliorer l'intervention pédagogique auprès des étudiants. Suite à mon expérience avec ce projet, l'efficacité de la recherche-action se présente sans équivoque.

Christine Pelletier, enseignante à Duchess Park Secondary, à Prince George.

Alice McQuade at one of many press conferences she hosted as BCTF president over the three years of her presidency.

Alice McQuade ends her tenure as BCTF president

by Carlea Rainforth and Heidi Zealand

As a part of our work experience at the BCTF, we were asked to interview the president of the organization, Alice McQuade, as her presidency was ending. Unfamiliar with interviews and especially the policies and organization of the BCTF, we were pleased with the interview's outcome. We found Ms. McQuade to be very charismatic, and she showed a great deal of respect for the BCTF and teachers in general.

What have you learned from your term as BCTF president? I learned a lot more about the school system, such as the Primary Program. I also learned that you can never make everyone happy at the same time. I learned, more than anything, that I am in awe of the BCTF organization.

Why do you think it is important for the union to be involved in social issues? Teaching is a social issue. If the Kindergarten children in a class are hungry and they come from families who are abusing them, it makes it more difficult to teach them. That's one of the reasons why the BCTF deals with social issues.

When you became president of the B.C. Teachers' Federation, what goals did you have in mind for your tenure as president? Number one, I wanted to try to build unity. I wanted to try to build links between people. I wanted the president of the BCTF to be known as a teacher. Also, I wanted the BCTF to be seen as a positive advocate for public education. I want the Federation to be able to do provincial bargaining.

Can you recall in your presidency something funny or humorous that happened to you?

Well, the only funny thing that ever happens to me is, I have

this extreme fear of flying. I go through terror every single time I get on or off the plane. I've tried everything to deal with it: I've gone to acupuncture, I've gone to courses, I've tried tranquilizers. Nothing seems to work.

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing teachers today?

I think teachers' biggest challenge is trying to meet the needs of every child. Their needs have changed. More kids are coming to school with problems that teachers have to deal with.

Where to next for Alice McQuade?

I'm hoping to return to my old school to teach social studies. I may try teaching CAPP, even though it's quite controversial. I would also like to spend some time with my family.

Are you reluctant to leave?

I'm not reluctant to leave, because it was my decision. There were so many things that we had started, and completed. The public-education campaign was well in hand, and the education-policy issues had been dealt with.

When people look back on your term as the 62nd president, what would you like them to remember?

I hope they remember me as someone who maintained or improved the status of the teaching profession. For the short term, I think people will remember the collective agreement.

Anything else you would like to say, a final word to the teachers?

I would say to people who are really involved in the BCTF to lead from where the members are.

Carlea Rainforth and Heidi Zealand, Grade 12 journalism students at Port Hardy Secondary School, did their work experience program at the BCTF with the news-magazine staff.



Carlea Rainforth and Heidi Zealand look over a copy of the March issue of Teacher news magazine.

Bargaining: Safeguard for the classroom

by Garry Litke

Bargaining has significantly improved working conditions for teachers and learning conditions for students in British Columbia over the years. Bargaining has continually increased the level of funding and support to the system, reducing class sizes, supporting integration, and improving many other classroom conditions. Bargaining has introduced and enforced fair processes for teachers in evaluation, discipline, and hiring. Bargaining is the only avenue we have to achieve fair salaries for the jobs we do.

You may be asking questions about this new round of bargaining. The mountain we are looking at may seem too distant and too high to climb, especially when boards are singing the annual spring budget blues and threatening layoffs and cutbacks.

But the bargaining team, with the direction and support of teachers, is intent on bargaining a new contract that will continue to improve teachers' and students' lives. There is a "ray" of hope here, not only because Ray Worley is the chief negotiator, but also because the Provincial Bargaining Conference in February expressed strong support for key objectives brought forward by members.

The conference decided that a provincial agreement will be achievable if we introduce a streamlined package focussing on significant bargaining objectives. The objectives include key workload issues such as class composition and support for ESL students and students with special needs. Members said we must address the problems created by education changes. And they said that benefits need

improving, including the introduction of early-retirement incentives.

Right now, the bargaining team is developing language to meet these objectives, preparing a package for presentation to the employer (BCPSEA). The process is quite strenuous. We must be careful to be consistent with other parts of the package and with the 75

"no contract stripping" is of major importance.

existing agreements. We must be careful all the while not to undercut anyone's current contract, as "no contract stripping" is of major importance.

The next step will be to circulate the package to local presidents for advice. Members will be included in that review process through local discussion. Finally, the package will be recommended for the approval of the BCTF Executive Committee.

Meanwhile, we continue to meet with BCPSEA. So far, we've heard nothing that dissuades us from our assessment that their agenda is to remove significant provisions from our collective agreement. In spite of that, we have finalized the split of local and provincial issues, and we are working to achieve a contract for adult educators, many of whom have only recently been added to our bargaining unit.

Bargaining works. At the end of the process will be a contract signed by both parties. What happens between now and that predictable event is less foreseeable, but the provincial bargaining team is looking forward to the challenges, and we will keep you informed along the way.

We will forge ahead until that signed contract is in the possession of 40,000 teachers in B.C.

Garry Litke is a member of the BCTF's negotiating team.

Grievetalk

by Lynne Sinclair

I have always liked the grievance that resulted in a direct and immediate benefit for teachers. Such was the case with two recent Vancouver grievances, both dealing with post-and-fill issues.

The first grievance was about whether teachers on temporary appointments have the right to prior consideration for placement after June 15 and what prior consideration means. The Vancouver language has post-and-fill priority bands whereby positions are filled in priority order, but after June 15 vacancies are not posted and the employer fills the positions from people not yet on assignment. In addition, Vancouver has language in another article that gives teachers who are on or who held a temporary contract in the past three years prior consideration for positions. The employer did not place a number of teachers in this category after the regular post-and-fill process, claiming that they were not entitled to prior consideration over the summer. Arbitrator Marguerite

Jackson upheld the grievance, ruling that over the summer period, teachers who had held temporary contracts must be given prior consideration over individuals not within the priority groups above them in the post-and-fill language. She further ruled that prior consideration means that the teacher on temporary contract with the necessary qualifications is to be awarded the position over anyone not in a higher priority band. This is a significant interpretation of prior consideration and will assist locals around the province in fighting for the rights of internal applicants. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Vancouver locals, many teachers have been given positions and continuing appointments.

In another post-and-fill grievance, Arbitrator Marguerite Jackson mediated a settlement by which 25 teachers will receive continuing appointments and a portion of their salary as far back as two years. In addition, nine teachers who had left the district will receive some retroactive salary from September 1, 1995, until the date they left the district and will

be entitled, if available, to a permanent TOC position from April 1, 1997 until June 30, 1997 and to apply and participate in the post-and-fill process this spring as internal candidates.

The employer had flagrantly violated the post-and-fill rules of the collective agreement by not posting vacancies and by making placements without regard for the priority bands in the post-and-fill process. Again, lots of work by the Vancouver locals has had a huge payoff for many teachers who would otherwise be unemployed and without tenure.

As the post-and-fill process gears up for next year, all members should be vigilant of their rights—we fought hard to win them and the results are rewarding! In particular, TOCs and teachers on temporary contract may need the added eyes and ears of their colleagues in ensuring that posted positions are applied for, etc. Good luck to any of you who are thinking of applying this spring.

Lynne Sinclair is the BCTF's grievance co-ordinator.

Your bargaining team



(L-R) Front: Joan DeBruyn, Jean Rand, Alice McQuade, Linda Watson, and Jim Iken. Back: Teri Sobo, Brian Porter, Al Cornes, Ray Worley, Carol Price, Garry Litke, and Sandra Audet.

If at any time you wish to substitute your own activities, do so

by Darryl Smolik

I knew when I accepted a three-day assignment in a Grade 6 classroom that I would encounter a variety of challenges. I was relieved, however, to be greeted by a note attached to the day plan: "If at any time you wish to substitute your own activities, do so. It is important that you feel comfortable with what you are doing... It is not easy for you to step into my shoes, so I have planned activities accordingly."

The teacher who wrote this memo appeared to appreciate the challenges of a teacher on call. (Stepping into another person's shoes is not easy when an audience of 25 to 30 children is just waiting for mistakes to occur. When activities are not conducted exactly as the regular teacher would conduct them, the TOC is inevitably criticized by the

students. I frequently need to explain to students that I am in the classroom to teach for

My aim was to maintain the initial learning objectives and to focus on activities with which I was familiar.

their teacher but in no way can I pretend to be their teacher.) With the invitation to be myself and teach my way, I couldn't wait to begin.

I read over the well-organized plans and looked over the worksheets and activities that the homeroom teacher had prepared. Some of the material I would use but other material was definitely not "my thing." I knew I would have to make changes.

Recognizing that it would take at least a day for me to identify the needs of individual students and of the class as a whole, I taught the first day pretty well as the teacher had planned. Quickly establishing my expectations for student performance and arranging the activities for on-task student activity would determine the day's success.

Establishing a positive rapport with this energetic group of Grade 6 students was also important. I wanted the kids to feel comfortable with me and with the way I teach, but most of all, I wanted their respect. The first day would establish a pattern for the days to follow.

My aim was to maintain the initial learning objectives and to focus on activities with which I was familiar. To provide a curriculum-based educational program geared to

my teaching style, I chose activities and resources I believed would meet the needs of both the students and my teaching style. (Kathy Askew states in *Teacher*, March 1997, "...TOCs are skilled professionals with unique talents and...can be trusted to provide an excellent education program.") The planning resulted in a stimulating but non-

To be a teacher and to be recognized by peers as a teacher is both meaningful and valuable.

threatening learning environment for both the students and me.

I taught this energetic and interactive group for eight days. During that time I became familiar not only with

the students but also with other members of the staff—peers and support staff. I supervised students, created a bulletin board, developed overheads and charts, planned, marked, assessed, and evaluated. I felt like a teacher.

To be a teacher and to be recognized by peers as a teacher is both meaningful and valuable. This recognition and support builds self-esteem and removes the stigma of being a "substitute" for the real thing. A regular classroom teacher who invites the on-call teacher to plan and work alongside him/her rather than step into his/her shoes, is a supportive teacher for all peers.

Darryl Smolik is a teacher on call in the Central Okanagan School District.

Smoking prevention through peer education

by Judith Frankum

worksheets and guest speakers will probably always be a part of education; however, particularly in CAPP (Career and Personal Planning), students are asking for and needing more. Peer education has been used in the delivery of health education (e.g., personal development) for some time. Abundant research supports its effectiveness in education about smoking, alcohol and drugs, and AIDS (Canadian Association for School Health, n/d; Klepp *et al.* 1986; Perry *et al.* 1986).

...the number of young people smoking is about 23% of youth in B.C.

"Tobacco Prevention Through Peer Education" is a collaborative project among the Canadian Cancer Society B.C. and Yukon Division, B.C. Student Voice, and the Directorate of Agencies for School Health (DASH) aimed at the number of young people smoking (about 23% of youth in B.C.—Health Canada n/d). The project, funded through the Tobacco Demand Reduction Strategy of Health Canada (1994-97), is disseminating a new tobacco-prevention resource (print & CD-ROM), *Improving the Odds*, for Grades 5-8. *Improving the Odds* discusses the reasons young people smoke (with special attention to young women), the influence of the tobacco industry (a timely topic), and a comprehensive approach to tobacco-use prevention. Educators can use the resource to address the learning outcomes related to "identifying and understanding the influences of gender, the media, and peers" in Personal Planning (Healthy Living, Grades 5-7) and CAPP (Substance-Abuse Prevention, Grade 8).

A variety of strategies fall under the umbrella term *peer education*. Carr (n/d, p. 8) notes that "Although peer helping has shown considerable growth in Canadian schools in the last 20 years, there is still some confusion as to what peer helping is and is not." Some approaches are peer helping, peer counsellors, peer facilitators, peer support workers, peer leaders. Carr suggests that because the educator and the person receiving the education are similar, they are more likely to talk to and confide in each other. In the case of adolescents this couldn't be more true!

The importance of looking to students' peers to assist in smoking prevention seems clear when we consider the "interrelationships between home and school environments as well as peer relationships" (King *et al.* 1993-94, pp. 183-85), as highlighted in *The Health of Youth A Cross-*

National Survey. Further, in a study of high-risk, adolescent female smokers, the data strongly suggests that "smoking and other high risk behaviours are endemic among these cohorts as requisites of group membership and maintenance" (King *et al.* 1988; Radford, King, and Warren, 1989; Warren, Connop, and King, 1996 in King *et al.* 1996, p.3). Educators may be asking, "How can I expect to have an impact in my smoking-prevention program?"

While one may have an excellent smoking-prevention program in other respects, such as good content and resources, the delivery may need to be adjusted or supplemented to include a peer education/facilitation component. When trained peer educators help deliver the content information or facilitate small-group discussions, there will likely be more interest, more openness, and more chance to discuss the issues that are relevant to the students in a meaningful way. It is important to recognize that *peer educators need to be trained*. This is "vital to ensure that accurate information is disseminated in an effective manner" (Berg *et al.* 1993, p. 23).

Basic components of a peer-education training program follow:

Knowledge Acquisition:

- philosophy of peer education
- factual information on health topic
- interactive teaching techniques
- reflection/discussion of newly acquired information in light of pre-existing values, beliefs, and attitudes

Team building:

- Bring peer educators together over prolonged period to work jointly on task of creating the peer-education program.
- Establish relationships of mutual responsibility and trust.
- Introduce outside sources of expertise.
- Sustain enthusiasm that led students to become peer educators.
- Begin empowerment process (Berg *et al.* 1993, p. 23).

Of course, the benefits are not only for the students receiving information from their peers. Peer educators develop leadership, communication, and facilitation skills that will be of benefit to them in their future careers.

Judith Frankum works with the B.C. and Yukon Division of the Canadian Cancer Society.

Improving the Odds is available through the Canadian Cancer Society, B.C. and Yukon Division, Vancouver, B.C.

Reducing Tobacco Use, Promoting Health: Teaching Strategies and Resources (CASH/CAP/CASA, 1995) is being delivered to all school principals in Canada this spring.

Bullying

The most underrated and enduring problem in schools today

by Alyson McLellan

The memory of individual schoolyard bullies remains clear and unblemished for many adults long after their reading, writing, and arithmetic skills have faded. Any child or adult can tell you about a time he/she were bullied, or he/she saw someone they knew being bullied.

Bullying is a series of repeated, intentionally cruel incidents, involving the same children in the same bully/victim roles. Bullying can also consist of one single interaction. The intention of bullying is to put the victim in distress in some way. Bullies seek power.

Students report that most teachers don't see bullying. A Toronto study on bullying showed that in 24/25 recorded incidents, only 4% met with intervention by teachers. Bullying is said to occur once every seven minutes, and incidents last approximately 37 seconds.

The bullying cycle

Students are reluctant to report bullying because they fear retaliation. The bully cycle works in the following manner:

- Victims fear that teachers will confront the bully in such a way that the reporters are put at risk.
- Witnesses fear that should they report on a bully, their confidentiality will be breached, their personal safety jeopardized, and their status within their peer group compromised.
- Bullies survive by creating the myth that should their behaviour be reported, retaliation will be swift and severe. This threat and resulting fear paralyzes victims into a code

of silence that extends the bully's reign of terror.

Teachers and other school support staff can reduce bullying and break the bullying cycle; however, a process must be in place that teachers are comfortable with and that students trust. Unfortunately, when personnel, including teachers, administrators, and support staff do not know how to intervene efficiently and effectively in bullying situations, the bullying continues. This leads to hopelessness among victims and increased power among bullies.

The effects of bullying

Bullying has a negative effect on everyone. It poisons school communities and contributes to an unstable learning environment for children. Bullies pay a high price for their behaviour, and victims and witnesses of bullying are also negatively affected. Educators must become aware of bullying in their schools and know how to take appropriate action.

Action plan against bullying

Teachers must make it safe for students to report bullying. It is crucial for teachers, administrators, and other school personnel to respect the anonymity of the victim and/or the reporting students. Until students trust that this will happen, bullying will go

unreported, and bullies will continue to thrive.

Adults must be aware of all forms of bullying. Bullying can be categorized under three main headings: physical bullying, verbal bullying, and relational bullying. Many bullies try to pass off acts of aggression as rough-housing between friends.

A clear and effective plan for dealing with the bully and the victim must be in place. All students must know the consequences for bullying. Bullies must be taught how to behave in a socially acceptable manner, and victims must develop friendship skills and learn to interact with assertiveness and confidence.

School personnel need to know about the different kinds of bullies. Some apparent victims are actually provocateurs who change their role from victim to bully depending on with whom they are interacting.

The most effective way to deal with bullying is to mobilize the masses of students who are neither victims nor bullies to take action against bullying. Those students have the potential to reduce bullying significantly simply by reacting appropriately when they witness bullying: refuse to watch bullying, report bullying incidents, and/or distract either the bully or the victim. School personnel must learn to recognize and acknowledge the caring efforts of students who take a stand against bullying.

The key to a successful anti-bullying campaign is to involve everyone in working toward a solution. School and communities can build positive, safe, caring environments. Together we can make a difference.

Alyson McLellan is a team leader and home economics teacher at Kwagwiltum Middle School in Port Coquitlam. She is co-author of the book, *Take Action Against Bullying*, along with Cindi Seddon and Geselle Lajoie, both vice-principals in the district.



Tri-national coalition

by Larry Kuehn

When a group of Mexican teachers asked staff at Britannia Secondary School, in Vancouver, whether they had to work at more than one job to make ends meet, they weren't thinking of just a little moonlighting.

Mexican teachers often work at two or three full-time jobs to support a family. Even with a recent 16% increase in salaries, an elementary teacher makes only \$300 a month, not nearly enough in an economy troubled since the currency crisis that followed the North American Free Trade Agreement.



Teachers from Canada, U.S., and Mexico discussing common problems at the third Tri-national Conference on the Defense of Public Education hosted by the BCTF and sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

how assessment systems are shaping what happens in classrooms.

Recently, private testing companies hired by the Mexican government have been evaluating high-school students already certified to continue their studies and denying them entrance to Mexico's universities. This has led to massive protests by parents and students over the last year.

These teachers from Mexico met in Vancouver in early March with union representatives from across Canada and the western U.S. to talk about common problems, as well as differences in their situations. All were in B.C. for the third Tri-national Conference on the Defense of Public Education, hosted by the BCTF and sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, other Canadian provincial teacher organizations, and the Mexican section of the Tri-national Coalition in Defense of Public Education.

The Tri-national Coalition grew out of shared concerns about the impact of NAFTA on the economies of the three countries and also on the whole of society, including education. Previous tri-national conferences were held in the United States and Mexico.

Conference participants discussed cuts to education and pressures toward privatization in all three countries. They shared experiences with

difficult for the union to represent effectively the needs of teachers.

Speakers from each of the three countries outlined the trends in education and tied these to the globalization of the economy reflected in NAFTA, APEC, and other trade agreements.

Participants agreed that it is useful to have these tri-national discussions on problems and strategies; a fourth conference will likely be in Mexico next year. Learning more about our different realities through exchanges was also encouraged. (Elsewhere in this issue of *Teacher* there is information about a project sponsored by Global Exchange, an organization that participated in the conference.)

A one-hour video of portions of the major presentations is available, as are papers and reports from the conference. They can be requested from the BCTF International Solidarity Program. The papers and reports are also available on the Internet at www.islandnet.com/vglobe

Larry Kuehn is director of the BCTF's Research and Technology Division.

Teacher-to-teacher human rights delegation

Two programs in Mexico provide opportunities to meet teachers, learn about education in Mexico, or take part in an exchange where you can learn Spanish.

Global Exchange is organizing an international teacher-to-teacher fact-finding and human-rights delegation to Mexico in August 1997. Global Exchange, a group that organizes international exchanges, participated in the recent Tri-national Conference in Defense of Public Education.

Mexican teachers are in a difficult struggle over democracy and human rights within their unions and in the country at large. From August 10 to 20, 1997, a delegation of teachers will travel to Mexico City, Guerrero, and Oaxaca.

The delegation will visit both government-controlled and dissident-teachers' organizations, as well as prisons where several teacher activists are being held on political charges. The group will visit

school sites including "alternative" schools in Mexico City run by democratic teachers organizations. In Oaxaca, the group will visit bilingual schools—teaching in Spanish and indigenous languages. Oaxaca is a world leader in bilingual-education techniques.

While many schools will be on vacation, there will be opportunities to exchange pedagogical strategies and techniques with Mexican teachers and to talk about common challenges facing teachers in Mexico, the U.S.A., and Canada.

The cost of the trip is about \$1,200, plus airfare to Mexico City. Further information is available from Ted Lewis, at Global Exchange, 1-800-497-1994, gx-ted@globalexchange.org

Details and online registration are available on the Web www.globalexchange.org/tours/indtours/rmteacher.html

Language exchange with Oaxaca, Mexico

The Language Center of the University of Oaxaca is looking for people prepared to host, with food and lodging for one month, a student who will be in Canada to learn English. The likely time for Mexican students to come to Canada is during the summer or in February.

In return, you can go to Oaxaca for a month, live with a Mexican family, and get free Spanish classes at the Language Center of the University. Oaxaca is a beautiful city located in the south of Mexico, with a rich history and culture.



For further information, contact the program coordinator, Mario Lopez, by fax at (951) 65922 or by e-mail at gopar@uabjo.cu.uabjo.mx

Secondary school students wanted

by Rana Ghose

CoDevelopment Canada is looking for secondary school students to participate in a Youth Forum for the 1997 APEC People's Summit taking place in Vancouver, November 7-11. The forum will include the opinions and viewpoints of youth regarding the rapid economic integration and industrialization around the Pacific Rim. The Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation is a group of 18 countries in economic trade with each other seeking to lessen barriers to such trade. Yet, APEC's annual meeting is behind closed doors on issues unknown to the public. There has never been a forum directed toward youth at previous APEC leaders' summits. It is unclear if the interests of different sectors of society, including youth in the Pacific Rim, are being given discourse.

This overlooking of youth is especially disconcerting as the decisions being made by the APEC nations will directly affect their future welfare. The proposed Youth Forum seeks to alert youth now about the potential effects APEC will have on their lives, relative to three main issues: the environment, access to post-secondary education, and access to jobs, including equitable and safe working conditions, health programs, and social security. The conference will include 60 youth from around B.C., 20 from the rest of Canada, and 18 from the APEC nations (Australia, Brunei, Chile, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand).

An Internet site on the conference is being developed to make information regarding the forum available to youth overseas. This will facilitate communication between potential youth participants regarding the three issues and, most important, will enable the youth themselves to add issues that they feel are

The Youth Forum is an excellent opportunity for secondary school students to gain valuable leadership skills as well as a unique learning experience regarding current global issues.

not receiving adequate attention. The forum will be directed by a youth steering committee responsible for formulating the agenda and

will consist of a cross section of youth from their respective geographical locations. While the steering committee will be assisted by adults experienced in international conferences, the direction and content of the conference will be decided by the youth participants. One day of the forum will be devoted to each of the issues; a keynote speaker will address the youth on each issue. The steering committee will be responsible for developing a list of questions, culled from the Internet discussions, to present to the speaker. A report will then summarize the conclusions reached regarding the issues; two participants will present the conclusions at the Civil Society Leaders Summit taking place at the Peoples Summit. As well, the steering committee will represent youth at the APEC Peoples Summit news conference. Following the Youth Forum, 18 B.C. participants

will return to their schools accompanied by an APEC nation participant to address fellow students at their respective schools, to ensure that the conclusions reached are heard by other youth within the province.

Over the next six months, 60 youth will be chosen from secondary schools within B.C. Teachers, particularly social studies teachers, are encouraged to alert students regarding this conference. The Youth Forum is an excellent opportunity for secondary school students to gain valuable leadership and public-speaking skills as well as a unique learning experience regarding current global issues.

For further information, please contact Rana Ghose, Co-Development Canada, 205-2929 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC V5N 1S8. Phone: (604) 708-1495. Fax: (604) 708-1497. codev@web.net

PUBLIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Children, schools, and poverty

"Someday we have to decide what kind of country we want to be, what kind of Canada we want to live in."

—Sandy Cameron
April 12, 1997

by Gavin Hainsworth

Cameron's challenge was cited by speakers and participants alike at the third annual BCTF public-education conference, Saturday, April 12, 1997. Two hundred fifty teachers, parents, students, trustees, administrators, and support workers from across the province came together to begin changing challenge into action for their classrooms, schools, and communities. In response to motions from the BCTF AGM and Representative Assembly to make fighting poverty a two-year priority for the Federation, the conference provided an important forum for increasing awareness and translating that awareness into action.

Since 1989, the number of two-parent families living in poverty has increased by 48%, and the number of children and families experiencing long-term unemployment has increased by 54%.

"Poverty hits schools in different ways," stated Alice McQuade, BCTF president; yet "the public-education system is, in theory, blind to socio-economic differences in children and parents: poor kids, middle-class kids of two-parent families still together, and rich kids all come to school and have the same

...we see the faces of kids in poverty every day...

opportunity. No child should be left behind." Teachers, through their Federation, have worked to bring reality in line with this theory, stated McQuade.

However, despite increased academic performance, and improved retention rates, teens who are poor are twice as likely as non-poor teens to drop out, "and as a result will experience economic insecurity throughout their lives."



Heather-jane Robertson (centre), the keynote speaker at the BCTF Public Education Conference discussing her address on Children, Schools, and Poverty. "We don't look at percentages, poverty lines, or low-income cutoffs as statistical parameters we can manipulate: we see the faces of kids in poverty every day."

"Essentially, teachers are involved in social responsibility because issues, conditions, and concerns in society are inextricably enmeshed with learning and schooling," concluded McQuade.

Heather-jane Robertson, co-author of *Class Warfare: The Assault on Canada's Schools*, and director of Professional Development for the Canadian Teachers' Federation, described the particular relationship that teachers have with poverty. "We don't look at percentages, poverty lines, or low-income cutoffs as statistical parameters we can manipulate: we see the faces of kids in poverty every day," stated Robertson, while demographically "many teachers are themselves only one generation from poverty...as the first employed professionals in our families."

Teachers are in the vanguard of the struggle to protect the social safety net that is now under assault in this country. According to

Neither vision has any room for the nation-state or citizens, both reduced to mere adherents or consumers. Neither McWorld nor Jihad is interested in democracy because it limits free flow of market forces and promotes the free flow of ideas.

Governments, which should stand up for the poor, don't, stated Robertson. Instead, they follow the role described by Lloyd Axworthy: "Government should act like a high-class waiter in an expensive restaurant, efficient but invisible." By abandoning an active and visible role in society's and

Only one-third of those who would have been eligible for unemployment insurance four years ago could claim it today...

citizens' greater good, governments' broader their responsibility, stated Robertson. The high rates of poverty, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the worldwide abuse of human rights, are "the inevitable fallout of reorganizing the state along the lines of McWorld."

High rates of unemployment, poverty, and uncertainty and "a safety net made of very cheap thread" also keep labour costs down to benefit the companies of McWorld. Only one-third of those who would have been eligible for unemployment insurance four years ago could claim it today; while the richest one percent world-wide saw their wealth increase by 60% in the last decade. A person working at minimum wage would have to work 80 hours a week to reach the poverty line.

Kathleen Ruff, former director of the B.C. Human Rights Commission, characterized this flow of wealth as a

"revolution, a transfer of wealth and power to a small privileged elite" whose "ideals are Victorian aged." This neo-Victorianism, according to Ruff, is to turn the clock back to time before "unpleasant inconveniences" to business interests, like child-labour laws, workers' compensation, and safety standards. "You could really make a lot of profits when it didn't matter if some workers lost their arms in the machines," said Ruff, and the unemployed "could either starve or go to the poor house." Charity served these Victorian interests as the poor had to beg and did not force their human entitlement or rights. Food banks do the same, stated Ruff.

According to Ruff, the world's 358 billionaires control \$762 billion in wealth, more than 45% of the planet combined—2.4 billion people! There is a "grotesque skewing of priorities" where UNICEF says world poverty could end for \$34 billion, and \$40 billion is spent world-wide for golf.

Such statistics may seem overwhelming, but as Kit Krieger, BCTF's president-elect, stated, we don't see enough of the right kind of statistics in our media; instead



Participants at the BCTF Public Education Conference discuss ways to alleviate poverty in their communities when they return.

we "see daily reports on stock rates, and baseball, and hockey scores" and rarely on the real poverty faced by all too many Canadians. Sandy

"We are potentially, all one cheque, one illness, one divorce away from poverty."

Cameron, the principal author of a forthcoming BCTF lesson aid on poverty, urged conference participants to see the human faces behind poverty, and not to differentiate between child and parent poverty—a trap of defining "deserving" and "undeserving" poor.

"We are potentially, all one cheque, one illness, one divorce away from poverty," concluded Cameron. The BCTF's "Children, Schools, and Poverty" conference was a valuable first step toward helping schools and communities think the world of all our children."

Gavin Hainsworth teaches at North Surrey Secondary School, Surrey, and is a member of the Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board.



Student participants Susan Parkinson and Kumi Motohashi at the Public Education Conference.

One voice

by Susan Parkinson

The Oxford Dictionary of Current English explains poverty as "being poor," and poor as "without enough money to live comfortably." What do I think about poverty in my school? This is a hurtful problem that I think many students face, unfortunately.

...the reason I am unaware of the less fortunate people of my school is that they hide it from other students.

We must all be aware of as much as we can in our immediate surroundings. If people don't know what is happening, they won't care, and if they don't care enough, the situation can't be helped. Such is the situation at my school.

I believe the reason I am unaware of the less fortunate people of my school is that they hide it from other students. They camouflage themselves to fit in: They wear basic clothes so no one questions where they got them; they tell their friends they had a big breakfast and are too full to eat more than a muffin for lunch; they tell them that they can't come over because (fill in an excuse here)—oops, already used that one twice this week. People blend themselves in, which is all right as long as they are not changing their true selves.

So what about the guy in the tight yellow joggers half way

up to his knees? Style unconscious? Or waiting for his mother's (who is a waitress and mother of five) next pay cheque to go toward a pair of new pants that actually fit. Too bad he didn't have a dad to take him shopping.

Poverty—I do see it. Not just in my school and community, but everywhere! Downtown people on the streets beg for change. Is the girl who sits next to me in math class going to be there some day? Am I? To prevent this and to help others who are already caught in it, we have to start helping where we can. Should I bring this concern to my principal? Should I request a free-breakfast program for the needy in our school? How about free extra-curricular activities? Movies, sports, and possibly tickets to games and shows would be a grand success, guaranteed. They are just ideas, just one student's idea. But if one student doesn't

If all it will take is one voice to get things started, I am still here.

voice her opinion, who will? Suppose I do work with my ideas. Maybe by next October, I'll spot a few people looking more alert in the mornings after having a "real" breakfast. Poverty is an issue in my school that I believe must be brought up and worked with. If all it will take is one voice to get things started, I am still here.

Susan Parkinson is a Grade 9 student at Sir John Oliver Secondary School, Vancouver.

Excerpts from a speech to the BCTF's Public Education Conference, April 12, 1997.

by Peter Owens

John Dillon, research coordinator for the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice and author of the book *Turning the Tide—Confronting the Money Traders*, spoke at the BCTF's second Economic Alternatives Seminar on April 17, 1997.

Dillon made the case that we must reassert democratic control over our financial markets. According to the *Economist*, the total foreign currency reserves of all the industrialized countries' governments amount to about \$640 billion U.S. The daily turnover on international money markets is double that—\$1.5 trillion U.S. according to *Le Monde Diplomatique*.

Dillon estimated that 95% of those transactions are speculative. Money traders are exerting undue control over our economies without responsibility for the consequences.

John Maynard Keynes first warned against money's dominating the real economy when financial transactions were about twice as large as merchandise trade. By 1995, financial transactions were 72 times greater than merchandise trade.

Dillon pointed out a number of disturbing similarities to the 1920s and 1930s. In the old industrial capitalism, the stock market was used to raise capital to expand production. The late 1920s saw the market boom, with speculators investing borrowed money. Recently U.S. Federal Reserve Board Chair Alan Greenspan warned that stock markets reflect an "irrational exuberance." Early in 1929, Greenspan's predecessor at the Federal Reserve, Paul Varburg, warned against "unrestrained speculation" on stock exchanges but was hooted down by stock-market enthusiasts.

"The investors' warnings concerning the perils of government debt involve a massive amount of hypocrisy," said Dillon. "Canadian government debts have been caused by the very policies advocated by the investor class." According to the Dominion Bond Rating Service (DBRS), "Of the total debt outstanding at March 31, 1994, the program spending imbalance accounted for a modest 16%, or \$82 billion of the \$508 billion net debt. The remaining 84% of the debt is due to compounding interest on the relatively modest program deficiency."

Touching on a few points from his book, Dillon illustrated how we can begin to reclaim control of our economy.

- The Bank of Canada can reduce real interest rates and keep them down.
- The bank can increase its holding of federal bonds and reduce the amount held by private and offshore interests.
- The government can require that registered pension plans (RRSPs) and registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) invest a minimum proportion of their portfolios in government bonds as a condition for tax deductibility.

"Holding more debt through the Bank of Canada means that all of the profits earned by the bank will eventually revert to the federal treasury," concluded Dillon.

In his book, he describes 13 practical means by which we can reorganize financial markets, avert financial crises like the 1994-95 Mexican peso crisis, and build a more just and environmentally sustainable economy that creates jobs and reduces inequality.

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



John Dillon, author of *Turning the Tide—Confronting the Money Traders*, at the BCTF-sponsored Economic Alternatives Seminar discussing how we can reorganize control of our economy and have it serve the needs of people in our society.



Teaching tolerance in the Aryan-Nations heartland

by Sandy Dore

Richard Butler, leader of the Aryan Nations movement in the United States, was told of the invitation given to the Canadian Jewish Congress's antiracist outreach education symposium by the citizens of Bonners Ferry and Sand Point, Idaho. His response was, "Northern Idaho is a place where people come to get out of the cesspool created by the blacks and yellows and the Mexicans. The communist Jew is out to mongrelize this part up here too. We (Aryan Nations) might go up and monitor the speeches to counter them if we can."

Hardly an encouraging idea for the members of our group as we headed into Idaho to discuss the Holocaust, human rights, and antiracist education with students and citizens of Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint, but not unexpected from Butler, a leading white supremacist resident of Hayden Lake, about 40 miles to the south of the two communities.

Marilyn Berger, of the Canadian Jewish Congress, had invited me to join Holocaust survivors Bronia Sonnenschein and Robbie Waisman to travel to Idaho to discuss the concept of racism-free schools, as counters to Butler's philosophy of bigotry and hate.

The timeliness of the program was heightened by the fact that in Spokane, Washington, on the days we were speaking, trials of two suspected Aryan Nations bombers from the Sandpoint area were taking place.

The BCTF Program Against Racism has been very involved in the struggle against racist ideologies in school systems, and the chance to exchange ideas and strategies with schools in northern Idaho made me aware that our program is well known, a comment on the work done by so many in the BCTF over 22 years.

Our group flew to Spokane, where we were met by Julian Boucher, a rancher in Bonners Ferry who organized our visit.

Boucher, who has grown up in Bonners Ferry, was the first of many people we met who put to rest the racist images of Hayden Lake, Aryan Nations, and Ruby Ridge.

Boucher wanted students to discuss the Holocaust with survivors and hear their stories so that they could better understand where complicity and bystanding led when confronted by racist groups who preach the doctrine of racial supremacy.

Tension was evident as Boucher drove our team from Spokane to the Idaho border, where we were led and followed by sheriff's deputies in unmarked cars to Bonners Ferry.

The meeting room was packed with 250 to 300 citizens of Bonners Ferry, a town of only 2,700 people. Security was tight, the audience was supportive, and the opening evening was a huge success without incident, although as we were leaving, I was told that two members of the Aryan Nations had been in the audience. I woke in the middle of the night to find a security person guarding our hallway, and a real sense of danger was reinforced.

The next morning, over 450 high-school seniors attended our presentation; their support and caring were overwhelming. These students were not what I had expected in this area, and they demonstrated that they are committed to antiracist, human-rights ideals by their comments, questions, and sincere emotions at the end of our presentation.

We left Bonners Ferry in positive frames of mind and drove the 30 miles to Sandpoint through a beautiful countryside, discussing the tremendous response we had received.

The citizens were welcoming, and we shared our supper with members of the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force, formed in 1992 as a counter to racist graffiti and Aryan Nations recruitment in their town.

As two of their group said, "We've always been proud of

where we live, and these people (Aryan Nations) threaten our image and self-esteem. We cannot let fear alter our behavior, because if we do, we are already defeated."

We left for our community forum again with tight security and entered the town centre, where over 500 people were gathered, with many more outside the doors. The evening was a reaffirmation of the community's desire to be viewed as opposing the beliefs of Butler and his followers, and they received Waisman, Sonnenschein, and me with great warmth, hospitality, and support for our antiracist message.

The evening over, I slept—a sheriff's deputy parked outside my hotel window.

The next morning, as we were preparing to address the area students, the owner of the hotel appeared and said, "We have had many big-name celebrities in our hotel lobby lately (a fact attested to by the many signed photographs of well-known faces on the wall) but no one as important as you."

All of us felt honoured by her statement and secure in the knowledge that our message was being well received.

Another packed audience awaited us with over 600 students in the local theatre who again received Waisman and Sonnenschein with many

tears, hugs, and assurances of remembrance! I was gratified that as in Bonners Ferry, these students also decided to implement the racism-free-schools concept and were committed to opposing the Aryan Nations philosophy of hate in every way they could.

Our group left full of the realization that we had been welcomed and well received by our host communities.

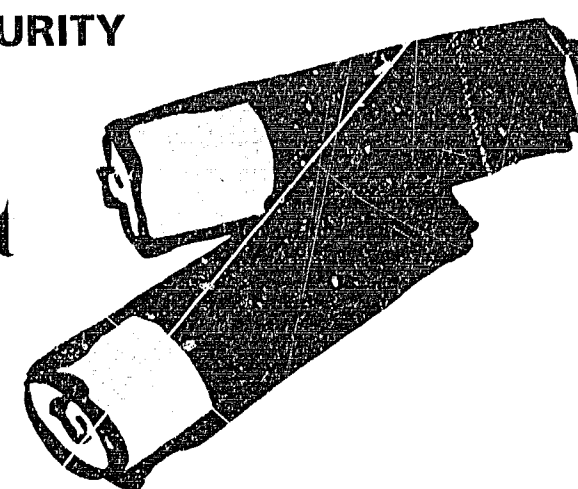
Recently we received many thanks from people in the area. The Bonner County Human Rights Task Force wrote, "You may or may not know that many more heard you than were present at the meetings; the videotape of the evening presentation ran for several days on our local cable television station. People here are still speaking about how powerful the presentation was. Thank you for coming, speaking, sharing, and meeting a gruelling schedule, for in doing so, you have made a difference!"

I was proud to represent the Program Against Racism on this team, and I will never forget the kindness afforded to us by the students and citizens of Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint.

Sandy Dore teaches at George Pringle Secondary School, Westbank, and is a BCTF Program Against Racism associate.

INCOME SECURITY

Energy account low?



by Ann Matthews

Imagine that your daily energy bank is like an account full of money. Every day, you go to your bank machine and take out "\$100" (or energy) by bathing, getting dressed, making meals, doing housework (activities of daily living), working, and participating in leisure activities. You may run out of "money" before you run out of things to do. Almost everyone has had one of those days, and even one of those weeks!

Now imagine that you go to the bank machine in the morning and you find a low balance in your account. You have only \$10. How can you get through the day with only \$10? Some of us can spend \$10 worth of energy just getting out the door to get to work. The empty energy "bank account" is common for people who suffer daily with the symptoms of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), a chronic debilitating illness. These people often describe waking up in the morning feeling extremely fatigued and unable to carry out their normal activities of daily living.

The role of the occupational therapist on the CFS team at D.B. Hanson and Associates is to help these clients use pacing and energy-conservation techniques to do the activities that they need or want to do. For some, it's just getting through the day with managing self-care and household chores; for others, it means managing their daily

energy "bank account" to be able to teach.

These principles of energy conservation, common-sense approaches to reducing the amount of energy needed to carry out an activity, can be used by those of us who find ourselves using up our energy "bank account" faster than we would like.

1. Avoid rushing. Rushing is inefficient and can lead to accidents.
2. Organize activities so that heavier tasks can be spread out over several days.
3. Set priorities. Do the most important tasks; eliminate those that aren't really important.
4. Use good posture and body mechanics to ensure that a minimum amount of energy is consumed and injuries don't occur. Keep your body aligned, use large muscles instead of small when you can, and use gravity to assist whenever possible.
5. Avoid unnecessary motion or energy expenditure. Use shortcuts whenever you can. Gather everything you need to complete a task before you start the job, and sit to work whenever you can, because sitting requires less energy than standing.
6. Use assistive devices or appliances to reduce work.
7. Incorporate frequent, planned, rest breaks. Fatigue leads to poor body mechanics and decreased safety awareness.
8. Have an appropriate work environment in terms of work height, lighting, noise

level, and ventilation. Arrange your work areas so that everything is within easy reach. Reaching consumes energy.

Use these energy conservation techniques to reduce your energy expenditure and leave a bigger balance in your "account" to spend on the things you enjoy.

Ann Matthews, an occupational therapist and a mother of three, works with the CFS team at D.B. Hanson and Associates.

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Homophobia motion is all about tolerance

by Paul Ramsey

April 17, 1997, marks the 15th anniversary of Canada's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. I would like to use this very important date in Canadian history to set the record straight on discussions about homophobia in our schools.

Our democratic system is built on the acceptance and practice of the principle of equality of rights, opportunity, and treatment. If we wish to uphold our democratic

freedoms, we must teach our children to respect others and to honour differences. Our obligation as citizens demands at least that much.

All children have the right to learn in an atmosphere free of fear, hatred, intolerance, and harassment. It is our job as parents and educators to teach our children to respect differences in abilities, race, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Discrimination on any grounds is still discrimination.

The learning curriculum in our schools teaches respect

and understanding for the diverse views, beliefs, and lifestyles of others. The standards guiding the personal-development section of the curriculum set the expectation that students will demonstrate respect and tolerance for others. The focus is on attitudes, not on specific issues. We are not going to be offering courses on homosexuality or heterosexuality. We will, however, continue to teach children about the dynamics of discrimination.

The BCTF motion to eliminate homophobia in schools

does not mean that information about homosexuality will be taught in the classrooms. The resolution, authorized by the BCTF at the annual convention on March 17, 1997, is to "form a committee which would create a program to eliminate homophobia and heterosexism within the B.C. public school system." The resolution identifies the need to help students examine attitudes of discrimination based on sexual orientation—it's not a plan to introduce a new learning resource.

Provincial legislation requires any learning resources used in schools to be evaluated and approved by the ministry or by the local school district. This includes any materials the BCTF may develop to address homophobia. The resolution is not about teaching students to be homosexual or heterosexual; it is about teaching tolerance and respect for differences.

Paul Ramsey is minister of education, skills and training.

Source: This article was run in a number of newspapers throughout the province.

Surrey School Board opposes tolerance...again

The Surrey School Board's recent vote to ban materials portraying same-sex parents is reminiscent of its ban of BCTF anti-racist teaching materials 20 years ago. Educating students about discrimination prepares them for more responsible citizenship in the real world, and once again, the Surrey School Board is attempting to deny students the opportunity to explore the question of fair and equitable treatment of all.

In January 1977, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the Surrey trustees had decided against allowing the use of a slide-tape presentation on the history of racism in B.C. because it was "not in good taste," according to Jock Smith, then board chair. Smith added that the BCTF

materials didn't give "both sides" of the racism issue.

The historical events covered in the 1977 presentation included the 1907 race riots in Vancouver, led by the Asiatic Exclusion League, when thousands of whites stormed the Chinese and Japanese areas of the city; the *Komagata Maru* incident in 1914, when hundreds of immigrants from India were kept quarantined for weeks in a ship in the Vancouver harbour and finally refused entry to Canada; the wholesale evacuation of Japanese-Canadians from the West Coast in World War II; and the eradication of the Aboriginal potlatch ceremony in 1951.

According to Alice McQuade, BCTF president, "Teachers led the way in the 1970s with our

Program Against Racism. Our work is now recognized as vital; in fact, the BCTF received a B.C. Eliminates Racism Together award from the provincial government this year," McQuade added. "Our members have told us that we must now take a stand against homophobia. Our schools must be safe and respectful of all our students."

At a press conference on May 5, 1997, Minister of Education Paul Ramsey said, "The banning of several books from school libraries in Surrey showed a lack of tolerance and acceptance. 'Students in Surrey who are gay or lesbian, and students whose parents are gay or lesbian, are directly hurt by this action.'"

—Heather McLeod



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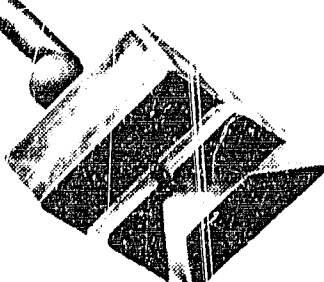
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EDUCATION WEEK

Have you had your education today?

by Elizabeth Komar

Education Week was an activity-filled week for students at Avalon School, one of Kitsilano's alternate programs. "Word of the Day" challenged students to include new words in their vocabulary. "I feel trepidations today about that math test" and "Everything is copacetic" were just a couple of the comments heard around school.

In a variety of presentations that the students prepared, we sampled a delicious Spanish omelette, learned the secrets of card tricks, watched judo demonstrations, listened in on CB conversations, and marvelled at Iggy, a bright green iguana.

Colourful posters emphasizing the powers and effects of education were designed and displayed in the classroom with such slogans as "Have you had your education today?" "Over 9 billion learned," "Look, listen, and learn," and "If you're my buddy, you'd better study."

Education Week gave teachers and students the opportunity to examine some of the processes and goals of education—and to have fun along the way.

Elizabeth Komar teaches at Avalon School, Vancouver.



Esquimalt Secondary School students act out their play to illustrate ways to counter racism.

by Barbara Gunn

At Esquimalt Secondary School, racism is not ignored. Students in the Victoria suburb

have not only been talking about ways to combat racism—they've also been acting out the fight.

They aren't the only British Columbia students who've turned to theatre as a way to solve problems. With the assistance of Vancouver's Headlines Theatre, students from all over the province have been involved in workshops and short theatre productions aimed at addressing such sensitive issues as racism, substance abuse, and family violence.

In December Frank Conibear, Esquimalt's native youth co-ordinator, invited Headlines into his school to oversee a number of workshops that culminated in a short play dealing with racism. Conibear had been told about Headlines' Theatre for Living,

...participants—both on the stage and off—can better understand the problem presented.

which has offered workshops throughout Canada and the United States, and in Brazil, New Zealand, Germany, and Namibia—and he'd been impressed by what he'd heard.

The Theatre for Living approach is simple. Typically, a Headlines' facilitator will first work with a core group of students (in Esquimalt there were 13, 6 of them First Nations students. To them non-natives). For one week, they'll focus on a specific problem, take part in trust games and theatre exercises, and eventually develop a play to present to a larger student audience. The play—the culmination of the group's week-long efforts—defines Theatre for Living. As Headlines' artistic director David Diamond explains, the script is completely loose, so much so that members of the audience are encouraged to climb up on stage and get involved.

"(Members of the larger community are invited to

intervene in the action of the play, replacing characters they see as being oppressed," says Diamond.

Denise Golembalski, Headlines' general manager, says the plays aren't intended to provide solutions to the issues at hand; that's left up to the cast and the audience. "The play usually builds to a crisis point," she says. "The audience can stop the play at any point. Someone from the audience can shout for it to stop and then go on stage to replace a character."

Diamond says the production becomes a laboratory, where the participants—both on the stage and off—can better understand the problem presented.

Conibear says it's difficult to concretely measure what effect the interactive theatre has had in fighting racism, but he feels that for all the participants, the exercise was nothing but positive. All members of the group felt the production was empowering. "(The students) did an excellent job in working on stage, as individuals from the audience volunteered to take on one of the characters and suggest alternative ways to deal with the racism they witnessed," he says. "It was hard work, for the process of solving a problem often took more than one attempt."

Esquimalt Grade 12 student Cyril Morris describes the Theatre-for-Living experience as "a long, fun, and exciting journey."

"Our messages were sent out and hit quite a few people who were sitting in the audience," he says. "People who volunteered to come up showed quite an interest in resolving the issues of racism."

His theatre troupe bonded so well that it will continue presenting its antiracism productions. Since December, Conibear has overseen three other series of workshops and plays in the Greater Victoria School District.

"We're building on the original plays we did," says Conibear. "It went very well; that's why we're continuing."

Barbara Gunn is a freelance writer in Delta.

Teacher education committee

(L-R) Committee members
Arlene McLaughlan,
Wayne Anthony,
Jeanette Scott (chair),
Peter Pullinger and
Eb Ebenezer discussing
issues in preparation for
the third annual
BCTF/university liaison
seminar on April 29, 1997.
The focus this year is
"Sponsor Teaching,
What's Working,
What's Not?"



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Space dreams



by Bob Carkner

The Canadian Space Agency's educational space resource centres are hosting CSA Astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason as he tours the country consulting with teachers and students on the development of educational experiments to be performed in space. "The goal of this process is to get Canadian students involved in the thrill and adventure of a space mission while helping their teachers deliver on required curriculum outcomes," said Minister of Industry and Minister Responsible for the Canadian Space Agency, The Honourable John Manley.

Bjarni Tryggvason will fly on the Space Shuttle *Discovery* on Mission STS-85 in July 1997. As part of the Canadian Space Agency's commitment to education, a four-hour window has been set aside during the 11-day flight, to allow Bjarni to conduct experiments developed with teachers and students. Six experiments will

be selected, two for each of the primary, intermediate, and secondary school levels. The project is not structured as a competition; rather, the idea is to have as many teachers and students as possible discuss these experiments, conduct similar *ground* experiments, and speculate on what will happen in space.

"I'm happy to have this opportunity to talk to teachers," said Astronaut Tryggvason. "I believe that science and engineering are important to Canada and we need to get kids interested in these subjects so that Canada can maintain its competitiveness in the coming years." The project comes on the heels of a major national and international assessment of student performance in mathematics

and science in which B.C. students placed first and second respectively in these disciplines. Of course, the results say much about the

quality of instruction in our province's schools.

Tryggvason's career path has inspired many young people, particularly those in the Richmond School District, where he completed his secondary education at Palmer, Steveston, and Richmond Secondary schools. In 1983, Tryggvason won out over 4,000 applicants to become one of six selected to Canada's astronaut program. Not forgetting his old schools, he has returned on several occasions to speak at assemblies about his dream to become an astronaut. As well, he assisted Richmond Secondary School with the implementation of two locally developed space studies courses at the senior level and

collaborated with staff and the private and public sectors in presenting a highly successful B.C. Space Symposium for teachers at the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium. Only a short time after this well-received conference by teachers, which feature not only Bjarni Tryggvason, but also U.S. Astronaut George Nelson and the Director of Education for the U.S. Space Foundation Dr. Jerry Brown, John Dickinson, the planetarium's managing director, announced that the facility will be named the Pacific Space Centre and when officially opened in October 1997 will have a variety of space simulators for young and old.

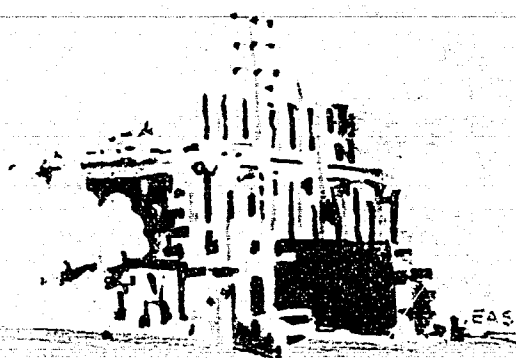
Tryggvason reveals that at age 12, when the Soviet Union launched its first *Sputnik* satellite, in October 1957, he first considered the possibility of space travel and becoming an astronaut. Thus, following graduation from Richmond, he studied engineering physics at

the University of B.C. and then furthered his education with post-graduate work in engineering, with specialization in applied mathematics and aerodynamics, at the University of Western Ontario. Tryggvason also has a commercial pilot's license.

Bjarni Tryggvason is about to realize a childhood dream. This former Richmond resident always wanted to be an astronaut; now he will have his opportunity to extend humankind's quest for space exploration and, equally, leave a legacy for educational involvement in the planet's most exciting frontier.

Bob Carkner, retired teacher and principal is active in global and space education.

Teachers interested in participating in this space project should contact Claudette Martin, coordinator of the Space Resource Centre at the Pacific Space Centre (604) 738-7827, local 241 or Shoshana dePaz, program coordinator at the Canadian Space Agency Fax (514) 926-4338.



A travelling teacher

my books and papers fit in 3 boxes
i am a travelling teacher
song sheets that lyricize
the celebration of spring
and the joyful release out of school
poke their edges
from beneath extension cords and bags of felts
a homeless teacher often needs her own equipment.

when i told the grade 3s
it was the last time for music before summer
children i had taught for 3 years
month by month watching their new teeth
finally fill the gaps in the front
ellen looked at ruth and silently mouthed yay
but i hoped that had less to do with me or music
and more to do with freedom and summer

still, i thought it made it easier to leave
at the end of the day i locked the closet
where i had stored my boxes
locked the room that vibrated with our song and movement
then returned both keys to the principal
a gesture of leave-taking that left me unlocked
swinging
the principal curiously silent
twice i had to repeat for him
which key was which
until he drew one crooked musical note
on a nearby kleenex box
and placed its match underneath

i turned my back to leave
ellen's "yay" rounded into
a musical note which sounded
somewhere in my inner ear
playing; never easy
never easy

— Renee Norman

Source: Renee is a part-time teacher in the Vancouver School District and a doctoral student at UBC working in the areas of autobiography, poetry, and women's writing. As a teacher of drama and music without an enrolled class, she is often required to leave a program and school due to enrolment changes and budget restrictions.