Busy year ahead for social justice

by Marian Dodds, BCTF staff

The new Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ) has now been in place for one school year and all five action groups have been busy examining current policies, advocating for new ones, organizing events, and reviewing resources for teaching for social justice. A new analytic lens for social justice work, a new and larger committee, a joint BCTF/BC Federation of Labour provincial conference, and plenty of actions were highlights of the 2007–08 year in the world of social justice at the BCTF. On July 1, 2008, the staffing changed from one to two FTE; Marian Dodds and Jane Turner completed their time with the program and welcomed the two new staff people, Joan Merrifield and James Chamberlain.

At summer conference and in fall zone meetings, expect plenty of discussion of the social justice lens and how it applies to all facets of the work of the BCTF. The lens was published on the back page of the last social justice newsletter and is available online at bctf.ca (go to social justice/...
by listening to teachers in schools all across BC and feeding back their ideas and concerns to the provincial committee, local contacts provide a grassroots voice for members, which enables the CASJ action groups to focus their attention on what matters most to classroom teachers. It also strengthens them in their role as advisors to the BCTF Executive Committee on social justice matters. Ultimately this is a collective enterprise, and with more happening at the school and local levels as well as at the provincial, we can most effectively create changes that result in more social justice in schools and society.

The role and function of school-based social justice representatives will be discussed in detail at summer conference and all local SJ contacts will be encouraged to nurture a network of representatives from every school in the local. There is a new social justice SURT for school social justice representatives that allows the time and opportunity to examine their roles and responsibilities within the local. There is no shortage of topics to discuss and issues to explore, thanks to the work of the CASJ and others before them. Many locals already have such networks and will no doubt have suggestions to share.

Here’s an idea to consider: the 2008 AGM passed a motion “that the BCTF encourage sponsor teachers to support pre-service teachers to integrate social justice issues into their practicum teaching.” Consider hosting an after-school “social justice social” for teachers and their student teachers to highlight SJ topics/issues and share teaching resources. Perhaps even book a social justice workshop at a time when the student teachers will be on their long practica.

Elections are in the air this year and activists will no doubt have many questions for candidates on issues related to adequate funding, safety in schools, poverty, sexism, racism, globalization, LGBTQ rights, privatization, military recruiting in schools, and much more. Remember that teachers have credibility with the public and we have the skills in public speaking, writing, and organizing that are needed in elections at all levels so don’t hesitate to get active. Work closely with your LEC (local election contact) and you will surely have an impact.

Happy new school year!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008–09 Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>• advises the BCTF on social justice issues</td>
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<td>• reviews and promotes social justice workshops</td>
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<td>• liaises with community groups and NGOs</td>
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<td>• develops policy on emerging issues</td>
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<td>• reviews and develops materials for classroom teachers</td>
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<td>• develops and supports networks of social justice contacts in the following action group areas:</td>
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<td>Antiracism, Poverty, Status of Women, LGBTQ, Peace and Global Education</td>
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<td>• co-ordinates the work of the five action groups</td>
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**Antiracism Action Group**
- Michael Aaku
- John Petersen
- Treena Goolieff
- Daniel Shiu

**LGBTQ Action Group**
- Nancy Ingersoll
- Greg Laing
- Shannon Lanaway
- Darren Storsley

**Peace and Global Education Action Group**
- Clay McLeod
- Susan Ruzic
- Janet Steacy-Stephenson
- Greg Van Vugt

**Status of Women Action Group**
- Maeve Moran
- Karen Kilbride
- Louise Gonsalves
- TBA

**Poverty Action Group**
- Roz Johns
- Stacey Kemp
- Chris King
- Julia MacRae
Slave Day is not OK

by Treena Goolieff, CASJ—Antiracism Action Group member

Despite policy outlined in our Members’ Guide, slave days as “fun” or innocuous fundraisers continue to be used by school clubs and teams to generate funds. However, I argue that these activities are socially regressive, hurtful, and trivialize or dismiss the brutal reality of slavery. Permitting slave days in our schools, abdicates our responsibility as teachers to protect students from oppression and to engage them in learning that enhances their ability to empathize and be socially responsible members of a just society.

In order to truly challenge and eliminate racism, educators must continually “increase the sociological understanding of racism and prejudice, their functions and their ever-changing forms” (Moodley 2000, p.44). Sociological understanding as proposed by Moodley necessitates that we continually confront the dynamic forms of racism and recognize its nuances.

Slave-day fundraisers effectively stall or reverse movement toward a more just society as they overlook the underlying implications of purchasing another human for personal use. When we teachers permit slave days, we disregard the reality that a slave is the property of another person and she or he is a subject of the owner, and by our inactions we condone the bondage of another. Although this extrapolation may be dramatic, there is an underlying inconsistency to what we teach and what we do in practice.

Moreover, Friere (1975) urges educators to continually engage students in a process of consciousness raising that aims to challenge the social, political, and economic inconsistencies within society in order to make positive change. When we allow slave days, our responsibility as leaders and facilitators in this process is ignored. We fail to link the underlying implication of slave day to our actions. To engage students in consciousness raising, and to move toward a promising practice that focusses on the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression, teachers must challenge oppression in all cases. Otherwise, we deliver inconsistent messages to students that efforts to end oppression are prioritized and selective.

Furthermore, we overlook the possibility these events may evoke hurtful emotions among students whose familial history has been victimized by the slave trade. Its sanction contradicts pedagogical goals to promote social responsibility and foster students to become members of a civil and just society.

All students must be confident that their schools are safe places where they will be protected against oppression. Kumishiro (2000) argues that when we fail to work against the various forms of oppression, we are in fact complicit with them. Therefore, we cannot then pick and choose when we are going to stop oppression, the subtle manifestations must be sought out and stopped too.

Slave days are socially incongruent with social responsibility and the goal to empower students to be empathetic and socially conscious members of a just society. These events trivialize the brutality of bondage and deliver inconsistent messages to students about oppression. It is irresponsible to overlook the hurtful implications of slave days because they promote the
ignorance of slavery and its brutal history here in North America. There are many who are still subjected to forms of bondage and slavery throughout the world. Slave days also underestimate the emotional responses felt by some students and send mixed messages to others that oppression is selectively stopped or permitted. Slave days are regressive events that stall our movement toward a just society—they do nothing to promote social justice.

As teachers who sponsor student fundraising events and as members of staff committees who provide guidance on this issue, we must ensure students think critically about how slave days are inappropriate and hurtful and why they are not acceptable fundraisers.

References:

The Peace and Global Education PSA has a new web address: www.page.bc.ca

Book review


**Finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award**

Reviewed by Shari Metcalfe, retired Surrey teacher

In telling the tale of *The Hanging of Angelique*, Afua Cooper has researched not only slavery in Canada, but she also gives an account of the development of the business of slavery. She mentions Aboriginal slavery (panis) and white slavery as well. *The Hanging of Angelique* is a sad story of the social injustices of 18th century New Canada. Many people do not know that the original settlement of Canada was a place where slavery was legal. We would like to believe that Canada has always been a just society but Cooper’s research shows us that part of the foundations of the present Canada were made by people enslaved for their labour.

This rigorously researched work of non-fiction provides historical details of European wars that “hemorrhaged Africa to feed the plantation needs of overseas European colonies.” Cooper recounts four centuries of Atlantic slave trading by the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Jews, “new Christians” (former Jews), French, and English. Canada practised slavery for 206 years, ending in 1793 when Governor John Graves Simcoe managed to pass a bill preventing new slaves from being brought to Canada. That is the time of the famous underground railway when Canadian slaves were fleeing to Michigan and New England while southern American runaways were coming to “free” Canada.

This is also a history of commerce in Canada, the fur trade with its native alliances, and other endeavours like iron forging, developed by enterprising merchant bourgeois. Canada’s slaves “subsidized the colonial economy, making them an economic as well as a social necessity.”

In order to flesh out Marie-Joseph Angelique, Cooper looks at her life in Portugal, Flanders, and old Montreal. Because there is not very much tangible evidence, Cooper examines the life and times of her owners and attempts to paint a picture of an Angelique who would be influenced by her surroundings. In so doing, we see a strictly hierarchical Montreal with Angelique the lowest of low in terms of race, gender, and social status. Cooper states that, “Angelique chafed under such oppression and had little respect for the world in which she found herself. Alienated from it, she would attempt to destroy it.”

Angelique was a strong woman who wanted her freedom. She hated her mistress, the French, and whites in general. She pitted herself against the system and lost. I think this would be an excellent supplementary text for a history class researching slavery or colonial French Canada, or women’s studies. The book is well-referenced with notes, sources, and an index. Personally, I would have liked to have seen a few maps; in particular of the Portuguese slaving expedition/explorations and of old Montreal and the water routes used for transport of goods and people, but overall I would highly recommend it.
Childcare matters: politicians need to listen

by Rita Chudnovsky, member, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

In the coming year, British Columbians will go to the polls to elect new municipal, provincial, and federal governments. While there are many important issues, families, early childhood educators, and childcare advocates will put childcare on the top of the agenda for every candidate seeking our vote. Here's why:

• **The evidence is in—the early years matter.** The pathways for social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development begin long before children walk through a Kindergarten door. Quality childcare promotes healthy childhood development but poor care can do harm.

• **Mothers are in the labour force and are here to stay.** In 2005, 64.3% of BC mothers whose youngest child was under the age of two and 75.7% of BC mothers whose youngest child was three to five years old were at work. In Canada, 82.6% of women between the ages of 25 to 44 are in the labour force. Their families and our economy depend on them to be here.

• **BC faces a growing labour shortage but access to quality, affordable childcare is the key barrier for parents who want or need to work.** Many BC municipalities now realize that they cannot attract young families unless there is childcare. And, a growing number of Chambers of Commerce are putting childcare at the top of their list too.

• **The childcare policies of our federal and provincial government have clearly failed.** Childcare is in a crisis. Fees are up, wages are down, and wait lists are years long. And, while the BC government claims they are creating more spaces, existing spaces are at risk of closing and new ones may not open because of a critical staff shortage.

• **The current federal government’s decision to replace dedicated childcare transfer payments to provinces with a $100 a month taxable family allowance has not helped create spaces, or made childcare affordable, and has not improved quality.**

• **BC was the only province to respond to the loss of dedicated federal childcare funds with yet more cuts to BC childcare. Now, they are using public funds to welcome corporate childcare chains into BC through new capital grants.**

• **After 30 years of research, advocacy, and lived experience, we still don’t have a universal, high-quality, publicly funded, community controlled childcare system.**

We know we can count on teachers across BC to advocate in the coming elections for the childcare system our children need and deserve.

For more information on childcare solutions, see www.cccabc.bc.ca/cccabdocs/index.html.
Debating whether or not governments should invest in childcare is a waste of time. The fact is, they have been investing for years (albeit inadequately) and federal, provincial, and territorial governments have made many public commitments about improving access to childcare services. It’s not a question of “if” but of “how much” governments should invest, and how to ensure that public funding results in measurable improvements.

For most of the last 30 years, childcare policy in Canada has been grounded in the wishful thinking that, through the magic of the market, desired services will be available on demand. This market-based approach equates childcare with clock radios. It assumes that families can pick the mix of quality and affordability that they desire for their young children’s education and care, that there are a range of community-based services that meet family needs, and that those choices have no public consequences.

Over the years, we’ve seen grudging acknowledgement that market-driven childcare doesn’t deliver the desired services to the necessary places at the right prices after all. Yet responses from governments outside of Quebec have been minimal. A little public funding is provided to lower-income families to compete in the high-priced marketplace but other families are left to fend for themselves.

The result is a triple market failure: Canada has the lowest childcare access rates in the industrialized world, with regulated spaces for fewer than 20% of children, parent fees are among the highest in the world, often exceeding the annual cost of university, and childcare workers frequently earn wages that leave them below the poverty line, particularly if they have children of their own. Quality is constantly undermined by low wages and poor retention rates for college-trained early childhood educators. In short, “wishful thinking” hasn’t worked.

Will this approach continue? That depends. If families continue to make do, and if women continue to provide childcare for low wages, then it might. But the evidence is clear—Canada’s market-based approach to childcare is failing children, women, families, and communities and undermining Canada’s economic performance.

Given the childcare crisis in Canada, it was disturbing to hear recently from Professor Deb Brennan, visiting Australian childcare expert, that things could be even worse. The pressure to increase public funding is strong, but the pressure to maintain a market-based approach, with no strings attached to public funding, is formidable.

Like Australia, Canada could increase public funding for childcare by providing more money directly to parents, with “no strings attached” for where programs are located, who they serve, or how much they cost. In Australia, “no strings attached” means public spending is up, public accountability is down, and public goals are unmet.

Australia provides a glaring example of what can go wrong when the rhetoric of “parental choice” trumps all other considerations.

Canada needs to take another course of action—one that finds substantial common ground between the large and supposedly left-of-centre childcare community and the powerful and supposedly right-of-centre OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

The recommendation? “Accountability for results” through a focussed public investment strategy that provides direct funding to childcare services. Public funding is tied to measurable improvements in affordability, quality, and accessibility through reduced parent fees, increased wages for trained staff, and additional spaces.
In countries that have adopted this strategy, childcare programs are an expected and planned part of neighbourhoods. Like schools, libraries, and recreation centres, childcare programs are available, accessible, and affordable to all who choose to use them. Children’s healthy development and parent’s work/life balance are well-supported, the current and future labour force is enhanced, and the economic returns on public investment are promptly realized.

It will take the courage to admit that the market has failed childcare to move from “wishful thinking” to “accountability for results.”

As the OECD says: Canada’s indecision about whether early childhood education and care should be publicly funded or remain in the private field may stem less from lack of knowledge…than from adherence to an economic orthodoxy that sees the state as a residual provider of services, intervening only when markets fail. There is, in reality, no room for indecision, if Canadian governments wish to invest in human capital at this age, and lift childcare out of mediocrity and weak access (2004).

There is a growing concern about the state of the environment, yet we are often daunted as teachers by the complexities of economic, ethical, political, and social justice issues involved. Fortunately, there have been recent developments in BC curricula in response to this increasing awareness and interest in environmental learning. Over the last few years, a new provincial framework for environmental education, *Environmental Learning and Experience (ELE)*, has been developed and is ready to assist educators around the province in nurturing care for the environment in our learners.

**Environmental education and the ELE framework**

Environmental education (EE) aims to integrate concepts and principles in the sciences and social sciences under a single, interdisciplinary framework. EE can help students learn about how they are connected to the natural environment through traditional subjects and through direct experience in both natural and human–designed environments. Through effective EE, students can come to know and understand that all human environments, societies, and cultures are deeply embedded and dependent on natural systems.

In 2005, the Environmental Educators Provincial Specialists’ Association (EEPSA) and core group of partners, including Simon Fraser University, Royal Roads University, Metro Vancouver, and the BC Working Group for Sustainability Education, launched a review of BC’s foundational EE curriculum document, *Environmental Concepts in the Classroom*, developed in 1995. With permission from the Ministry of Education, we embarked on a 17-month public consultation about environmental education with educators around the province.
In 2007, we completed a draft document, *Environmental Learning and Experience*, which will serve as a cross-curricular framework for EE in BC. The Ministry of Education has fully approved this curriculum framework, and is now hosting it on their website and supporting the ongoing linkage of it with other BC curricula.

**What is ELE?**

The ELE guide represents an integrated approach to environmental learning because so many school subject areas and learning outcomes touch on environmental topics in some way. By emphasizing the study of environment across the curriculum, it is hoped that students will come to understand how their actions affect both local and global environments.

This resource offers a conceptual framework for introducing environmental learning in all classrooms, while providing several general principles of teaching and learning to guide teachers in designing integrated activities for their learners. The framework provides a number of perspectives around which environmentally-focused lessons may be developed.

Designed as a support framework to guide teachers in their education planning, the guide also aims to support the implementation of many of the provincial Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) and will be complemented by web resources to support environmental learning in diverse subjects like science, social studies, and language arts. It is a guide to interdisciplinary practice using the environment as an organizing theme.

**ELE and social justice**

The ELE framework, being interdisciplinary in nature, embraces social justice issues as integral to environmental learning. It builds on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) values and principles, notably that sustainability and environmental education must foster:

- respect for the dignity and human rights of all people and a commitment to social and economic justice for all.
- respect for the human rights of future generations and a commitment to intergenerational responsibility.
- respect and care for the greater community of life in all its diversity, which involves the protection and restoration of the Earth’s ecosystems.
- respect for cultural diversity and a commitment to build a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace, both locally and globally.

**Making it work for teachers**

We are now moving into the implementation phase of the process. Priority goals are to develop an extensive curriculum map/matrix so that teachers are able to implement the framework across subject areas and grade levels, and to develop web portals that will link teachers to learning resources and programs in the community to support their practice. We now have funding, provided by BC Hydro and the Ministry of Education, to support this key phase of the project.

We also know that teachers need high quality professional development around new curricula and approaches to teaching and learning. EEPSA and its partners are deeply involved in this continuing work to support teachers through professional development, multimedia resources, and community resource linkages.

Please contact EEPSA (bctf.ca/eepsa or probertson@sd45.bc.ca) to learn about professional development opportunities, and support for your efforts to nurture environmental learning.

The ELE curriculum framework is available online at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/environment_ed/.
Keeping school drinking taps flowing and combating the privatization of water

by Louise Gonzalvez, CASJ—Status of Women Action Group member

The BCTF is urging its members to oppose the sale of bottled water in schools as a way of taking a personal stand against water privatization.

According to Chamberlain as cited by Biggs (2006), "Bottled water is 'the thin edge' of a much larger trend toward the global marketing of water by companies such as Coca-Cola (which owns Dasani) and Pepsi-Cola (which owns Aquafina)."

Addressing the issues

At the 2008 BCTF AGM, the following motions were passed:

- That the Federation oppose the sale of bottled water in schools, and promote policies that ensure free safe drinking water access for every school.
- That the BCTF endorse the concept that water resources be kept public and free.

According to Barlow and Clarke (2002), "Today's global water industry is dominated by 10 corporate players, which fall into 3 categories, or tiers. The first tier is composed of the two largest water titans in the world, Vivendi Universal and Suez. Together, they have a monopoly over 70% of the existing world market. Suez operates in 130 countries and Vivendi in well over 90." According to Howard (2003), "The bottled water industry has exploded in recent years, and enjoys annual sales of more than $35 billion worldwide." According to Baskind (2007), bottled water sells for approximately five cents an ounce in comparison to tap water that sells at two cents an ounce. Remember your last trip to the gas pump? Well, just imagine a future, where you can’t afford your water bill at home, and the school only offers bottled water at a cost. If we want free drinking water in our schools and public control of our fresh drinking water, then individuals and institutions of this province need to take a stand. Water should remain a public resource and this will only happen if we oppose the privatization of our water.

The commodification of water is a global issue. My research project on water policy in South Africa exposed the fact that 14 million people in the country are being denied access to clean drinking water. When water was privatized, costs soared. Families could no longer afford to pay their water bills so delivery to their homes was terminated. Privatization was supposed to improve water infrastructures but many South African women still walk long distances to gather water. The number of people dying of water-borne infections is equal to the combined numbers dying from AIDS and malaria. Water privatization has created a water-based genocide and it is reproducing divisions similar to that of apartheid. Palestine, like South Africa, is now experiencing what the United Nations Development Programme calls a "water apartheid." (Ngonyama) According to the US National Intelligence Council, as stated by Wood, "By 2015...nearly half the world’s population—more than 3 billion people—will live in countries that are water stressed.” The potential for conflict and wars over water is steadily increasing. Water is a cultural, political, and economic issue and the issues are not limited to marginalized nations.

Canada is not immune to the temptations of the global water market. The federal government is examining bulk overseas water sales using giant bladders and currently exports water using large tankers. Shockingly, the Canadian government voted against a United Nations motion that called for water and sanitation to be recognized as a human right. Chris Wood in his book, Dry Springs: The Coming Water Crisis of North America, states, “Of all the expanded production from the oil sands that is planned for up to 2015 is achieved, the 'virtual' water content in the synthetic..."
crude flowing south would fill a veritable fleet of Exxon Valdezes every day, the equivalent of one shipload of Canadian water departing every two and a half hours.” Compounding the water issue is British Columbia’s new energy plan that provides tenure leases to private companies; these companies harness the energy of our mountain streams for electrical power. Once power is given away, it is extremely difficult to regain it. Water should remain a publicly controlled resource and refusing to sell bottled water in schools is taking a stand. Keep drinking water free and accessible to all.

Water education resources

For all grade levels
www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/kids.html

Elementary
www.2learn.ca/G2L/g2lgc/G2LGCsites.asp?type=5
tinyurl.com/4hf8pp

Grades 6–10
school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/activities/watereverywhere/

Grades 9–10

Secondary
tinyurl.com/5xvy3

Secondary (South Africa study, includes PowerPoints, Webliography, film)
louise1957.googlepages.com/home

Geography/Earth Sciences
11–12
tinyurl.com/5srgrb

Taking further action
Take action for World Water Day (suggestions)
cupe.ca/privwatchfeb08/Water_for_people_not

Inside the Bottle campaigns
www.insidethesnake.org/

Save Our Rivers
tinyurl.com/5z8odk

Ryan’s Well—Make A Difference campaign
www.ryanwell.ca/difference/

Council of Canadians campaigns
www.canadians.org/water/

Right to Water (advocacy and community action)
www.righttowater.org.uk/code/Community.asp

Taking action in your school

• Awareness: Show the movie *A World Without Water* or read *Ryan’s Well*.

• Involvement: Encourage students and teachers to produce informational posters.

• Curriculum: Infuse water education into your curriculum.

• Ensure: Drinking fountains with safe water are available.

• Approach: Advocate to remove bottled water from dispensing machines.

• Celebrate: International Water Day campaigns and events.

• Lobby: Write local, provincial, and national governments.

• Network: Build solidarity with other action groups—get students involved.

BCTF Social Justice Lens

For more information about the Social Justice program at the BCTF, go to www.bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx
The environment is on everyone’s mind these days and so here are some of my thoughts:

• How about only ordering in food from companies who supply the food in reusable containers? No more styrofoam.

• Try not to use the disposable cups that are attached to water dispensers. Instead use real glasses and mugs whenever possible.

• Get into the habit of printing everything on both sides—it’s an easy option to figure out on the print window of your computer. And print in “econo” mode when your document is staying in house—it saves ink!

• Make a serious effort not to print off e-mails—especially if you are just going to read them and then recycle them.

• According to the David Suzuki Foundation, Canada is the largest consumer of energy in the world on a per capita basis, and the second largest producer of greenhouse gases (after the United States). We have just over 30 million people, but we use as much energy as the entire continent of Africa, home to 700 million!

So switch off your monitors at the end of the day (and even at lunchtime!), turn off the lights in offices and boardrooms when not in use—and do the same at home.

• The average meal travels an incredible 2,400 km (1,500 miles) to get from the field to your dinner plate. All that transport creates serious environmental problems. Plus, pesticides and herbicides used to prevent moulds and fungus during shipping can be harmful to health. By purchasing food produced closer to home, you can reduce smog, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution and support Canadian farms at the same time.

• Try not to buy products that are going to end up in the trash (by the way, when we say we are throwing something away—where is away?) such as Swiffer products, paper towels, J-cloths. There are alternatives—our parents never used these products!

• Here’s another product to avoid—the microwave cleaner. This little plastic bag is placed in the microwave and heated for several minutes, producing steam which loosens stuck-on food. Then the plastic bag is “thrown away.” How about boiling a cup of water for two or three minutes in the microwave—has exactly the same result.

• A great way to avoid receiving unsolicited mail is to return it all in the prepaid envelope after having written “please take me off your mailing list”—works like a charm. I very rarely receive unsolicited mail these days.

• Consider banking with Vancouver City Savings: Vancouver City Savings Credit Union is the first North American-based financial institution to be carbon neutral. They have accomplished this by working with the David Suzuki Foundation. How would it feel if the BCTF and schools were to become carbon neutral?

• If you are serious about helping our planet, go to www.davidsuzuki.org/NatureChallenge/at_Work/download.asp and find out more about how we can make our workplaces and homes “greener.”

Editor’s note: This article first appeared in the BCTF in-house wellness newsletter, Wellness@BCTF. Dawn McCormick works in the Training Department of the Professional and Social Issues Division. Locals may wish to encourage their schools to form joint union/management wellness committees to explore ways to green their schools. If you already have such a committee, drop us a line about what you are up to so we can share the news! Contact Joan Merrifield at jmerrifield@bctf.ca.
With funding from the government of Canada through a CIDA global Classroom Initiative, the BCTF held two very successful Global Education Symposia in June 2006 and April 2008. These events brought together BCTF global educators, university and college faculty working in the field and NGOs involved in development education. A DVD set with highlights from both symposia is available on a limited basis from the BCTF. To request a copy contact jmerrifield@bctf.ca.
Co-opting courage: Canadian military recruiting and the transformation agenda

by Marianne Neill, president, Burnaby Teachers' Association

The Security and Prosperity Partnership is part of a broader plan for North American deep integration that includes reorganization of the military. According to Michael Byers in a speech given on August 19, 2007, at a public forum, sponsored by the Council of Canadians, on the Security and Prosperity Partnership Leaders Summit in Montebello, Quebec:

- After September 2001, the American and Canadian governments made plans to put the Canadian Forces under the new US Northern Command.
- …a bi-national committee was formed to study and report on how to improve the North American defensive system.
- Soon after the current government came to power, the report was released...suggesting a preferred option of full integration, with operational control resting with the US military. Whereas co-operation had, in the past, taken place on an ad hoc basis, there would now be systematic, ongoing integration.

Most of the report is concerned with public relations, noting that Canadians are particularly attached to sovereignty, and recommending an incremental approach to change.

Byers asserted that the bi-national planning group is evidence of increasing Canada-US military “interoperability” including Canada’s involvement in the US-led counterinsurgency in southern Afghanistan, and support for Bush administration foreign policies on climate change, nuclear proliferation, and the Middle East. He calls it “continental integration by stealth.”

There is evidence that huge amounts of money are being invested not just in militarizing Canada but in changing Canadian culture to make us more accepting of militarization. Steve Staples of the Rideau Council refers to a “PSYOPS,” the military term for a psychological warfare mission—“to persuade the Canadian public to give up the notion of Canada as a peacekeeper, and accept new war-fighting missions under US leadership.” Staples outlines the transformation agenda within the Canadian Forces that is moving from UN peacekeeping toward combat-oriented, “enemy-centric” fighting—often under US command.” While in 2005, 69% of Canadians considered peacekeeping “a defining characteristic of Canada” the number of Canadian military personnel on UN peacekeeping missions worldwide has dropped from 1,149 in 1991 to only 56 in 2006. Canada is increasing military spending every year until 2011. Our current investment in real dollars is higher now than it was at the end of the cold war in 1990 and while the number of Canadian soldiers who died on UN peacekeeping missions over 50 years was 121, the number of Canadian soldiers who have died in Afghanistan in 7 years is already 85.

According to Staples, “(former) Chief of Defence staff General Hillier is on the front lines of a defense lobby intent on perpetuating the notion that the military is a war-fighting force and that peacekeeping is nothing but a quaint anachronism. Once the public accepts this perception, the vision of a new Canadian military will become a reality.” Some of the features of the new recruiting culture initiated by Hillier include a marketing mentality, focussing on vulnerable groups, and partnering with financially strapped education institutions.

To the average Canadian, the idea of targeting children for recruitment is abhorrent. Current recruiting practices raise questions as to whether this is happening. Consider the following:

- In the last two years, the CND web site has gone from defining
the Canadian forces in terms of “diplomacy, development, and defense” to defining them as a “fighting force.” The Canadian recruiting site is now identical to the American recruiting site in look, feel, and messaging, providing visual evidence that interoperability includes Americanization of our recruiting culture.

• Recruiters have brought a tank into the schoolyard at Tamanawis Secondary School and promoted this event online, proudly declaring that students thought the tank was “cool,” noting this is a good way to get young people interested in the Canadian armed forces.

• Recruiters have come to career nights in Burnaby schools wearing combat gear, they have brought guns to career nights in Richmond, and are targeting children with downloadable ship models on the web site, on a page called “cool stuff.”

• Canadian Forces applicants must be at least 17, and have 15 high school credits. When they apply, they write an aptitude test, and a counsellor talks to them. If they then pass the medical, they may have a job within a week. There is no longer a fitness test, but if they prove to be out of shape, they are enrolled in a program to build fitness. On enrolment day, a contract is signed for three to nine years. Anyone involved in combat or combat support could be deployed to Afghanistan within two years.

• Special investment has been placed in appealing to Aboriginal youth. They promise the life of a warrior, manipulatively integrating military and Aboriginal iconography.

• In Toronto’s public and Catholic boards, the military co-op program pays kids to join the reserves, gives them four high school credits, and trains them in, among other soldiering arts, machine gun shooting and grenade throwing.

• At a mall in Cambridge, Ontario in 2007, soldiers painted children’s faces with camouflage, displayed guns, and gave the kids tactical helmets and vests to try on, while tanks and armoured vehicles were parked outside.

Resistance is required

As teachers, we are concerned that our most vulnerable students will be recruited. Government policies that affect tuition fees, support for immigrant and refugee populations, support for Aboriginal youth, equity in public education, and attainment of a living wage can create the circumstances for an economic draft. The appeal of free education, travel, respect, and belonging gains significance for vulnerable youth. The BCTF has a policy against the portrayal of violence as acceptable (Members’ Guide to

How do we oppose recruiting in the schools and still support our troops?

• Ensure their courage is not co-opted to the service of an agenda they don’t know about, that they are there by choice rather than need, that the soldiers working alongside them are not there because they think it’s cool to hold a gun, and that when they are told they are serving their country it means Canada.

• Promote a responsible democracy where troop deployment is openly debated.
• Keep public schools recruiter-free so they know the nation they’re serving still thinks children should learn that war is not condoned and peace is possible.

• Resist attempts to change Canadian culture and support counter-recruitment messages and programs in our schools.

School boards can be key agents in the struggle to resist cultural transformation. When a board sets policy opposing military recruiting in the schools, it sends a vital message to students to maintain a questioning mind. Teachers in their locals can make a difference by lobbying schools and school districts to take the position that it is not appropriate for the military to recruit in schools.

Related resources

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: www.policyalternatives.ca

Council of Canadians: Marching Orders: How Canada abandoned peacekeeping—and why the UN needs us more than ever by Steven Staples, October 2006, at www.canadians.org/peace/issues/peacekeeping.html

Canadian marketing association standards: www.the-cma.onon

Countering recruitment messages found at operationobjection.org

Extensive resources for teaching for peace at www.teachingforpeace.org

View military ads at www.forces.ca

The Burnaby Teachers’ Association used funds from a social justice grant to hold a forum on military recruiting, called Co-opting Courage. Watch it online at www.workingtv.com/co-opting.courage.html

The following quotes are from a speech delivered by General Rick Hillier at the Conference of Defence Association Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, February 24, 2006:

“...we need a culture and an approach that is radically different for how we recruit and how we train to take us much further than the approaches of these past years...we have to get back into advertising...”

“We’ve got to make recruiting every service man and woman’s business and I mean this. Going from 300 recruiters at present to very quickly 30,000 recruiters and then eventually to 80,000 recruiters touching every community, geographical and ethnic, in Canada. And we’re moving from a passive approach on recruiting where essentially we sat around waiting for you to come to us to a more active and aggressive one...”

“Our approach has got to be recruit a family and recruit a nation.”

“...we’re going to focus on seven big events across Canada as an operation under Canada Command: Pacific National Exhibition, Calgary Stampede, Canadian National Expedition, Canada Day here in Ottawa, Carnaval in Quebec City; Nova Scotia Tattoo; and of course, the Grey Cup Game here.”

“It means a different look and approach to offering—you know a week off to somebody who brings a friend or an individual into the recruiting centre and, if they enroll, offer them a week of leave gratis.”

“Maybe we want to go and seek with Citizenship and Immigration Canada an agreement that if landed immigrants join the Canadian Forces they have an accelerated route to citizenship in our great country.”

“You heard our minister yesterday and we know what the Conservative government’s platform is for the Canadian Forces. And if we’re going to take in those large numbers of men and women, many of whom are destined towards the land forces, we’re going to...take operational units in lower states of readiness and turn them into schools to train those men and women in about 80 to 85% of the skill sets that we need. What we want to do is drive them to the recruit training centre down in Borden and St. Jean to do the training for those specific technical trades until we can start shifting that technical training out to Canadian colleges under a contractual basis.”
Divide a sheet of paper into two columns. Label the left side Culture of War and the right side Culture of Peace.

In the left column, ask the group to create a list of all the war-related words/phrases that we commonly hear. Read the list aloud. Suggest that to create a culture of peace, we first must raise awareness of how embedded the language of war is in our media and everyday conversation. Introduce the concept of transforming language from war to peace. In the right column, write an alternative wording that reflects a culture of peace.

The following list was created by Grades 2 to 5 students at Moody Elementary School in Coquitlam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture of War</th>
<th>Culture of Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We’re in the trenches.</td>
<td>We have a lot to do; this is difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kill them (referring to opposing team).</td>
<td>Let’s win this game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shoes are destroying me.</td>
<td>My shoes hurt me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m going to explode.</td>
<td>I’m very angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bombed my test.</td>
<td>I failed my test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give them no mercy.</td>
<td>Don’t give them a chance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This work is torture.</td>
<td>This work is very hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I destroyed you in a game of chess.</td>
<td>I won the game of chess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hits on websites</td>
<td>visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>war on drugs</td>
<td>get rid of drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m dead (when something valuable is lost).</td>
<td>I’m in trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s kill some time.</td>
<td>Let’s pass some time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got my shots today.</td>
<td>I got my needle to protect me from the flu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoot, I forgot to get it!</td>
<td>Oh no, I forgot to get it!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow-up:

- Encourage students to take mental or written note of how language is used in daily conversation, the media, sports, etc.
- Have students create a class bulletin board to keep adding to their chart. Include space to post current events articles with war language highlighted.
- Teacher activist suggestion: Try this at your next dinner party or quietly in your notebook at your next union meeting!
The Social Justice Committee of the Burnaby Teachers’ Association utilized a BCTF social justice grant to assist in the development of a comprehensive and user-friendly peace and justice website, teachingforpeace.org. The site contains lesson plans that link students and teachers to various international peace and social justice movements, concepts, ideas, historic footnotes to research and reference, and amazing music and film footage specifically designed to initiate and enhance peace education for students and teachers.

The home page of this site offers more than two dozen primary, intermediate, secondary, and post-secondary lesson plans, complete and ready to be implemented. Some of the very easily accessible resources here focus on lessons pertaining to social justice movements in Latin America, the conflict in the Middle East, and an analysis of the lyrics of various historic and contemporary peace and social justice songs. The home page also contains a 57-page primary peace education curriculum that can be easily downloaded, with many teacher-created and reproducible graphic organizers and suggested primary peace activities.

One of the most comprehensive peace and global education websites on the Internet, this site contains more than 20 categories of investigation, such as peace and women, environment, peace organizations, peace and the arms trade, and peace songs.

The website offers a virtual plethora of famous videos, speeches, articles, and lectures from today and long ago on various social justice issues. For example, one lesson will allow students to quickly and easily link to a video of Martin Luther King reciting his famous “I have a dream” speech. Students will then have the opportunity to investigate various similes, metaphors, and other literary devices in a follow-up activity. Another fascinating resource for students and teachers to access is a video of Billy Holiday singing her thought-provoking song, Strange Fruit. After viewing, students will then link to the lyrics of this song and analyze them in a literary and historical context.

Linking to the environment category will allow students to calculate their own and their families’ ecological footprint, and provide concrete evidence of what we individually and collectively contribute to the devastating environmental trouble of our planet. Connecting with the speeches and essays category and then linking further to “Women’s

Speeches,” students will be able to access lectures from the past 150 years.

Other peace and global justice opportunities that this website offers are Jimmy Carter being interviewed on his new and controversial book, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, Sting performing a heart-felt song about the mothers of the disappeared, a Phil Ochs performance of I Ain't Marching Any More, and the modern-day Mexican revolutionary leader, Sub-Comandante Marcos being interviewed in the jungles of Chiapas.

This website offers students and teachers a unique opportunity to bring peace and global social justice into their classrooms. Never before has it been easier to address these critical issues with our students, and never before has it been more important! All we are saying is please, give peace a link.
Global education focusses on futures and emphasizes action

Two crucial components of global education are its action orientation and its focus on the future. Although global education looks at the lessons of the past and takes a comprehensive view of the present, it sees the connection that our contemporary contexts and actions have with the future. This concern with the future is a link with global education's call for students to become involved in projects allowing them to learn content, develop attitudes, and practice skills while engaged in real activities that impact the future. This allows students to develop what Walt Werner (1997) calls a sense of “personal efficacy,” which he sees as being “a driving force behind any achievement.”

Pike and Selby’s four-dimensional model
Graham Pike and David Selby (1999 and 2000, and Selby 1999) have constructed a four-dimensional model of global education that provides a useful framework for these values and ideas.

Spatial dimension
This dimension describes the complex and weblike system of relationships and interdependencies of people and ecosystems on Earth. It represents the environmental, political, economic, and social connections and relationships between people, places, and things associated with what we often call “globalization.”

Issues dimension
This dimension acknowledges the multidisciplinary nature of many of the big issues that arise when one looks at globalization and other challenges facing citizens of the world. It also recognizes the fact that such issues do not exist in a vacuum and are often interconnected and multifaceted. On top of that, depending on one's culture, values, viewpoint, and aspirations, there are a multiplicity of perspectives that can be taken on any global issue(s). The issues dimension gives global education an almost unlimited potential for curricular integration in the classroom, because most global issues have obvious connections to learning outcomes in several subject areas and disciplines.

Temporal dimension
This dimension illustrates the connection between the past, the present, and the future. This dimension recognizes that events of the past have shaped the present and events of the present, including our actions, will shape the future. The temporal dimension provides a justification for global education’s future focus and its emphasis on authentic student action. A crucial aspect of the temporal dimension is the notion that there are three different classes of alternative futures:

- **probable** futures are those sets of circumstances that are likely to arise in the future if present trends continue
- **possible** futures are those sets of circumstances that may possibly arise in the future, as long as certain conditions change
- **preferable** futures are those sets of circumstances that we would like to arise in the future because they match our values and aspirations.

Inner dimension
This dimension represents the tension described above, between honouring the student as an individual while taking into account the global context in which the individual finds herself or himself. The inner dimension recognizes that, as we grow as individuals, our actions impact and change our environment, and our relationship with the world itself evolves. The inner dimension encloses two parallel journeys taken simultaneously by the student—the journey outward to discover the world at large and the journey inward.
to understand and tap into one’s potential as a human being. “The two journeys are complementary, reciprocal and mutually resonating. This is nothing more or less than education for authentic personhood.” (Selby 1999, p. 132)

In the words of Graham Pike and David Selby (1999):

“Both journeys constitute a necessary preparation for personal fulfillment and social responsibility in an interdependent and rapidly changing world. In conducive conditions, both journeys can be undertaken simultaneously. Through encountering multiple perspectives, envisioning the future and understanding global systems, students are faced, inevitably, with challenges to their own beliefs, values and worldviews. Personal development goes hand-in-hand with planetary awareness. In this sense, global education is as much an exploration of the global self as of the global village.” (pp. 12–14)

What this model looks like in the classroom depends on the personality, style, approach, and needs of the teacher implementing it, as well as the needs of her or his students. Global education can provide an angle from which to approach a task, project, or skill block, or it can provide the foundation for a sustained unit on a multidisciplinary global issue.

Rather than a set of additional outcomes, global education is a lens through which to view the outcomes that one is already addressing in one’s classroom. This lens allows subjects, disciplines, topics, and themes to take on real relevance and meaning, engaging students deeply and actively in the learning process. The focus on real global issues through authentic tasks allows global education to enhance and enrich the learning experience of teachers and students.

**War into peace in northern BC**

by Susan Ruzic, president, Peace and Global Education PSA

The Acts of Transformation: from War Toys to Peace Art show has successfully been implemented in yet another BC community. This year the northern town of Smithers worked together to create a community-wide show of peace art with 300 children and over 40 adults participating in the project. Kids from every school in the community helped out—donating their violent toys and making the art as class projects, school-wide projects, and in free community art-making workshops.

Sarah Milner, a professional counsellor in the community of Smithers, was inspired by the Acts of Transformation workshop she attended at the 2006 Peace and Global Educators’ conference sponsored by the PAGE PSA. She returned home full of enthusiasm and with a plan to implement this project in her community.

The Smithers Art Gallery hosted the show throughout March with works of art from local artists and children from each of the five elementary schools and one high school in the community.
To accomplish this, Milner met with children in multiple classrooms, school-wide assemblies, and free community art workshops to talk about the concepts of war and peace and invite children to participate in the project. Local artists facilitated numerous art-making workshops where the violent toys were “decommissioned” of their meaning and transformed into peaceful works of art. The children looked at the toys and brainstormed with the artists to develop clear ideas of how they wished to express peace.

Art projects were dynamic and consisted of a range of media:
• a giant dream catcher 10 feet in diameter with decommissioned toys caught in the middle
• a slide show of images depicting kids acting out war-to-peace stories
• a giant-size comic strip telling the story of war to peace through photographs of scenes of toys set up by kids at one of the community workshops
• a triptych created by youth at a community workshop showing a video game image on a computer accompanied by two large canvases. One canvas was painted with violent video game images and the other represented the transformation into a peaceful image.

The show was on tour in Terrace in July and may go to Vancouver and Montreal. To implement a similar show in your community, contact PAGE (www.pagebc.ca) to get a copy of the Acts of Transformation: from War Toys to Peace Art Teaching Resource Guide.

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First national survey on homophobia in Canadian schools

Source: Egale Canada phase one results released May 12, 2008

LGBTQ=lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Two-Spirit, queer and questioning

• Over 1,200 participants so far from every province and territory in the country.
• About 20% no longer in school, enabling us to compare current and past students’ responses.
• Kids from big cities, small towns, rural areas, reserves, armed forces bases.

Based only on those who self-identified as LGBTQ or straight and who were enrolled in school in the last year, safety is a primary concern:
• Over two-thirds of LGBTQ participants reported that they felt unsafe at school, compared to one in five straight participants.
• Over one-third have skipped school because they felt unsafe there or on their way there, compared to one-eighth of straight participants.
• Half the LGBTQ participants are only out to a few friends at school, or to no one at school.
• Over half of LGBTQ participants reported that they have been verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation.
• Almost half (49%) have had mean rumours spread about them at school.
• Almost one-third (31%) have had mean rumours spread on the Internet or through text messages because they are LGBTQ.
• Over one-quarter have been physically harassed because of their sexual orientation.
• 41% had been sexually harassed compared to 19% of straight kids.
• LGBTQ participants reported feeling unsafe on school buses, in the gym and changing rooms, in the cafeteria, under stairwells, and in hallways.
• LGBTQ participants who had been harassed or assaulted were much less likely than straight participants to report it to school staff members.
• Fewer than half felt comfortable talking to their parents about LGBTQ issues.
• Almost half (47.5%) agreed with the statement, “It is hard for me to feel accepted at my school” (compared to one-fifth [19%] of straight participants).
• Almost two-thirds (62%) agreed with the statement, “Sometimes I feel very depressed about my school” (compared to just over one-third [36%] of straight participants).
• Almost 40% of straight participants reported that they made homophobic remarks sometimes or frequently.
• 19% of LGBTQ participants made homophobic remarks sometimes or frequently, perhaps to fit in.
Things look better if you're not the target, but still a long way from perfect:

• 49% of straight participants thought that at least one area of their school would feel unsafe for LGBTQ people, compared to 70% of LGBTQ participants.
• 60% of straight participants thought teachers addressed homophobia effectively, compared to only 33% of LGBTQ participants.
• 54% of straight participants and 61% of LGBTQ participants reported that they had not been taught about LGBTQ issues in any school classes or assemblies over the past year.
• Of those who reported that they had been taught about LGBTQ issues, 17% of straight participants saw the coverage as negative, and 24.5% of LGBTQ participants saw it as negative.

Be part of the solution—go to www.bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106 to find links to numerous teacher and student-friendly resources, including the poster shown below.

Homes for all

by Linda Shuto, BCTF staff

Colourful, turquoise-themed demonstrations began in October 2007 with a single Stand in Vancouver's Little Mountain neighbourhood. Launched province-wide, online, and through a display at the April BCTF/BCFed Human Rights/Social Justice conference, the “Homes for All” movement went provincial on May 3, 2008, when 75 sites in 30 communities participated in the one-hour vigil. Media coverage was extensive and the response was extremely positive. One Stand in Victoria reported 75 people.

Many communities continue to hold weekly Stands to remind the public and government that affordable housing and homeless people need further attention. Advocates make it clear that city and senior governments need to work together to resume construction of non-profit and co-op housing for low-and moderate-income singles and families. In the past, all levels of government co-operated to provide tens of thousands of homes each year. These programs were cancelled from 1993 to 2001. Canada is the only G8 country without a national housing program. While government repeats statistics that show their successes and mantras that repeat their “highest spending ever” on housing, the problem grows.

We need to persist. Provincial and municipal governments will become more vulnerable as the elections draw nearer.

Pictures are being collected for an online album.

For Stand materials and information, contact CALMhousing@hotmail.com.

For weekly Stand locations and the date of the next provincial Stand, visit: www.my-calm.info.
In the words of the social justice contacts...

At the Rights: Not Wrongs conference, social justice contacts were asked to jot down their thoughts on the conference, on being a contact, and on why social justice work is important. The following are some excerpts from their musings:

**Being part of this social justice conference…**

Was important for me as a beginning teacher and young activist to network and learn from the experience of others before me. The hard part will be choosing an issue to embrace and take on fully because I am leaving energized to take them all on.

_Amy Dash, Local 55_

Has struck in me not just a desire, but a need to ensure that I teach and model social responsibility and that I open my eyes as a citizen and as a teacher. I must instill it in my students to have passion and the desire to make change in their world.

_Amanda Bartle, Local 87_

Has opened my eyes to many new issues that I had not thought of. I now have much to do and new ideas to try out. I have been inspired to try to do more for environmental sustainability in my home town. This was the single most inspiring experience of my life. I am honoured that I was able to be here.

_Lindsey Kingsfield, Local 81_

Has been inspiring, encouraging and transformational. It has put into words what my intuition has been telling me; that is, that our society is deteriorating in front of our eyes. It has also provided me with hope because this many people who are listening to the injustices being perpetrated around the world could move forward on grassroots initiatives that will lead to change.

_Shannon Iverson, Local 68_

Was an opportunity to broaden my perspective on urban and international social justice issues. I felt extremely privileged in having taken part in such profound professional development. I strongly encourage teachers to get out of their classrooms, widen their scope of involvement, and become political activists. We all are the BCTF and should feel honoured to be affiliated with such a compassionate, social justice union.

_Gloria Mertens, Local 74_

Shook me out of my complacency and made me realize once again that if I remain silent I am part of the problem. I must resist and I must act.

_Carmen Marafon, Local 44_

Was motivating and energizing. It reminds me of how important it is to remain mindful of social justice issues and provides me with the ideas, contacts, and tools to benefit my teaching and union involvement as I infuse SJ issues throughout my daily practice.

_Christiana St-Pierre, Local 93_

Social Justice work is important for the BCTF to do because…

As individuals we can make many small, significant differences but as a collective we have the ability to make even more profound changes in our world.

_Michelle, Local 61_
We need to teach the whole child. Our students cannot check poverty, racism, sexism, violence in the home, homophobia, racial profiling, and the like at the classroom door. These issues are roadblocks to academic achievement, and our position as educators is vital to removing them. Our activities in social justice help make this world a safer, more equitable and more inclusive world.

*James Sanyshyn, Local 41*

We are a public body of educated professionals...As our awareness increases, we can use our power as a collective to be a voice for marginalized people. Let’s get away from the testing work that the government mandates to keep us busy and let’s get back to what really matters—the overall welfare of every citizen.

*Naomi Hazon, Local 38*

We, the BCTF, have a solid/safe place from which to speak, to lobby for social change for all those who do hold a secure place in the economic realm in our province.

*Heather Sims, Local 87*

We all desire a socially just society, therefore we need to continue to do social justice work to protect our world and its citizens, especially those who are not able to take care of themselves.

*Derek Imai, Local 36*

We have powerful members; we have a great network in BC and internationally. We can make a difference.

*Debra Sutherland, Local 41*

Members of the Committee for Action on Social Justice attending the Friday evening session of the local election contacts training on May 24, 2008 were greeted by a tableau created by streams of justice. A **tableau is a representation of a striking scene or picture by a person or group posing silently and motionlessly in appropriate costume.** It is a way to engage the public in a very creative and different way because it causes people to stop and think about **what the scene means and what issue is addressed.** The streams of justice group actively pursues a more just, equitable, inclusive, and compassionate society through 1) analysis, action and reflection that expose and challenge unjust social structures, and 2) creative initiatives that open up space for imagining and embodying alternative possibilities of human solidarity and communal life.

The Committee for Action on Social Justice will be discussing key messages and questions and both traditional and creative processes to engage politicians on social justice issues in the upcoming municipal, school board, provincial and federal elections with local social justice contacts at the August summer conference sessions.

To learn more about the group that created the tableau go to [http://www.streamsofjustice.org/2007/02/introducing-streams-of-justice.html](http://www.streamsofjustice.org/2007/02/introducing-streams-of-justice.html)
**Resources for social justice**

**Sexy Inc.: Our children under influence**
This new DVD provides an analysis of the hypersexualization of our environment and its noxious effects on young people. Experts criticize an unhealthy culture created by advertising and the media, and the many examples shown illustrate how children are reduced to consumers bombarded with images of girls treated as purely sexual objects. It would be appropriate for senior level classes or teacher/parent groups wanting to discuss the pervasiveness of images that lead to a “normalization” of seductive poses by young girls and the implications of such images to self esteem and the exploitation of girls and women. Produced in 2007 by the National Film Board of Canada, this 36-minute DVD and 17-page facilitation guide covers themes of mass media and children, sex in mass media, and women in mass media. It contains clips in both French and English. Go to the NFB link for a teaching guide and further description—www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/?id=55401.

**Reflections of me—Body image project**
In 2004, the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) released the results of a major research study on body image. The study looked at the international literature on body image and recommended ways in which ETFO could address the issue in elementary schools. The research found that by age four, children want to be thin, by age eight, while both girls and boys are struggling with body image, girls experience the issue much more keenly, by age 12, many girls won’t risk exposing their bodies to ridicule and by age 15, many girls react to constant teasing and harassment about their bodies by resorting to extreme weight loss and binge eating. Girls who internalize negative thoughts about their bodies may withdraw from physical activities and other learning experiences. A positive body image builds self-esteem and creates well-adjusted children who are enthusiastic about life’s opportunities. More recent research has confirmed those initial concerns, showing that girls indicate body dissatisfaction at many different stages of their lives. Learn more at www.etfo.ca/IssuesinEducation/BodyImage/Pages/default.aspx

**Kudos to BCTF status of women web page**
“The BC Teachers’ Federation (bctf.ca) has a great Status of Women page with links to lots of the union’s own materials, and, best of all, a whole page of links that novice-through-expert webheads can use to find materials they can actually use.”

Vancouver Elementary also has an excellent web resource on women’s issues. Link to it from the VESTA site vestawomen.blogspot.com/

**The prostitution debate**
Several debates have taken place this past year on the prostitution issue. Learn more about varying perspectives by visiting FIRST, an organization in favour of decriminalization of sex work first.vcn.bc.ca/home and Rape Relief for an opposing view, www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca, and plenty of research on violence against women.

**Creative protest methods: The Panties for Peace campaign**
The Panties for Peace campaign was launched by the women’s organization, Lanna Action for Burma, on October 16, 2007, in the hopes of bringing an end to the military regime’s rampant abuse of Burma’s population and the abuse of Burma’s women in particular. Founded in the wake of the military’s brutal response to monk-led pro-democracy uprisings across Burma last fall, the Panties for Peace campaign was given new and pressing importance by the regime’s self-interested and inhumane
response to the devastation of Cyclone Nargis.

The campaign aims to exploit the regime generals’ superstitious belief that coming into contact with garments used to cover women from the waist down will rob them of their strength. Women’s underpants are seen as especially dangerous. The campaign’s founders at Lanna Action for Burma sought to exploit this fear by asking women from Burma and around the world to mail their panties to the regime’s leaders.

The Canadian Panties for Peace campaign goals are raising awareness about the human rights abuses against women in Burma and encouraging Canadian support for ongoing efforts to help victims of Burma’s humanitarian crisis. More information at pantiesforpeace.ca.

Best practices in preventing and eliminating child labor through education

Authors: Grisewood, N; Brand, S; Ruiz, H
Produced by: Child Rights Information Network (2008)

Creating awareness of the importance of education and the difference between acceptable work for children and exploitative child labour can help break the cycle of child labour and poverty. This manual aims to provide best practice advice derived from evaluations of 100 projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Split into two sections, the manual attempts to provide a holistic overview of child labour, lessons learnt and best practices. Section one provides background information on the interrelated issues of child labour and education including the causes and consequences of child labour, and the existing legislative framework. It also takes a look at project design guidelines aimed at combating child labour through education interventions. Section two outlines the practical learning organized under the following topics: Awareness Raising, Advocacy, Education, Vocational education and skills training, Peer education, Child labour monitoring, and Data collection.

Available online at: www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/?doc=36785&em=070508&sub=educ

Food Force teaches students about world hunger

Food Force is a free computer game from the UN World Food Programme (WFP). Developed specifically to help children between 8–16 years old learn about the fight against world hunger and the work that goes into feeding people, Food Force is available as a free Internet download from its dedicated website www.food-force.com.

While playing the game’s six different missions alongside Food Force’s crack team of emergency aid workers, players will be faced with a number of realistic challenges to quickly feed thousands of people in the fictitious island of Sheylan; piloting helicopters on reconnaissance missions, negotiating with armed rebels on a convoy run, and using food to help rebuild villages.

Before each mission begins, the player is presented with an educational video about the reality of WFP’s work in the field, allowing them to learn and understand how WFP responds to actual food emergencies; where food originates, nutritional breakdown and how it is delivered. Then, it’s the players turn to take the mission challenge. Each challenge reflects one key element of the food delivery process—from emergency response through to building long term food security for a community.

The website houses further information, teacher packs and other ways for children to get involved with the work of WFP. The game is designed to run on a standard PC or Apple computer and features 3D animated movie sequences to ensure a rich multimedia experience.

Globalizing connections: Canada and the developing world

This latest in a series of books produced by TC², the BC-based Critical Thinking Consortium is designed to support critical thinking through a content-embedded approach with an emphasis on teaching intellectual tools to students. Globalizing connections (2008) centers on the critical challenge, How
“globalized” are our lives, and provides an analytical framework that examines historical factors, contemporary challenges and opportunities and responses to globalization. For more information, go to www.tc2.ca

Make a case against racism—A guide for teachers of grades 4–7

This new 44-page guide from Ministry of Education was developed to support activities around March 21st, the international day for the elimination of racism, a day that has been proclaimed by the province of BC. Activities are linked to a “Make a case against racism” contest to be held in early March and contain ideas for antiracism activities that match grade 4–7 learning outcomes. They can be used as a sequenced unit and are adaptable for any time in the school year.

Go to: www.welcomebc.ca/en/diversity/racism.html to download this guide and to find links to other related resources including:

• Diversity in BC schools
• Safe, caring, and orderly schools
• Focus on bullying: A prevention program for elementary schools
• Shared learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal content K–10
• BC Performance Standards on Social Responsibility.

Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) and HelloCool World.com launched a very successful “Superpower Project” to bust myths that say violence cannot be stopped. Using innovative online campaigns and comics, they are reaching out to promote respect in relationships amongst youth, with an emphasis on reaching younger male teens.

Learn more at: http://campaigns.hellocoolworld.com/index.cfm?campaign_id=1

Coming events

October 21–January 16—Vancouver Art Gallery
WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution
The first comprehensive, international survey that illuminates the profound impact of feminism on art, featuring innovative and risk-taking works that will help students think about gender, art and relationships. Students tours for grades 6-12 will examine a broad range of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, film, video and performance art. A workshops on Teaching from a Feminist Perspective linked to the show WACK: Art and the Feminist Revolution will explore foundational concepts of feminism that change the way we understand the politics of gender and art. Go online to learn more at www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

November 3–7—National Media Education Week
Special events are being planned by SFU Communications, Pacific Cinematheque, Vancouver Art Gallery, Librarians across BC and The British Columbia Association for Media Education (BCAME) http://www.media-awareness.ca

September 21—International Day of Peace
Find out more at http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org/un.htm

Please note: The BCTF is not responsible for the content or links found on any external website. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author.
Ed May Social Responsibility grants for individual members and groups of members

The Ed May Social Responsibility fund grants were established in 1994 by the BCTF AGM to support teachers in promoting socially responsible teaching in BC in the areas of gender equity, multiculturalism, antiracism, homophobia/heterosexism, LGBTQ issues, antipoverty, Aboriginal issues, environmental issues, violence prevention, child and youth issues, and peace and global education. The funds are based on $1.00 per member per year and the BCTF usually awards between 35–45 grants per year, ranging from $500 to the maximum allowable $2000. It is a competitive process with applications totaling well over the available funds.

Criteria:
• may be classroom or school-based, or may involve the community and school
• can be a current or new initiative
• funds may be used for release time, materials, publicity, communication, coalition building.
• funds may NOT be used for travel, overseas projects, purchase of food or school hardware (computers, furniture, etc.)
• a budget MUST be included with the proposal.

Priority will be given to projects that:
• are new rather than repeat proposals
• are innovative
• actively involve students
• have major impact on learners
• are collaborative (with funding from other sources)
• represent a geographical and topical balance.

Timeline:
Application must be received by 4 p.m. on November 28, 2008. Decisions will be made by the end of January, 2009. Successful applicants receive 50% of the grant to begin their project and the remaining 50% upon receipt of a final report by the December 1, 2009 deadline.

Tips:
• Try not to wait to the November 28, 2008 deadline when it may be a scramble to get required signatures.
• If you fax in your application, mail in a hard copy as well as faxes are often incomplete or hard to read.
• Ensure that your proposal is clear, succinct, and meets all the requirements.
• Do not present a budget that includes items that the application clearly has stated will not be funded (food, travel, overseas projects, etc.).
• Get your final report in by the December 1, 2009 deadline or you may not receive the final payment.
• Ensure that you credit the BCTF on any performances, DVDs, publications, reports, etc. related to your project.
• Applicants should familiarize themselves with the social justice lens as a tool to assist in proposal development. Find it at bctf.ca (p. 27, Social Justice Newsletter, Spring 2008).

Ed May grant applications can be found at bctf.ca.

BCTF Social Justice Grants for local social justice programs

These grants are meant to provide seed money for activities or projects that work toward systemic change within the local. They should fit within the local’s overall social justice plan for the year and could focus on gender equity, multiculturalism, antiracism, homophobia/heterosexism, LGBTQ issues, antipoverty, Aboriginal issues, environmental issues, violence prevention, child and youth issues, or peace and global education. They are NOT meant to replace funding that should be supplied by the school district.

Criteria:
• reflect BCTF social justice principles as seen through the social justice lens
• have on-going impact on teachers or teachers and students in the local
• involve several teachers
• may involve the community
• take place within the current school year
• fit within the local’s social justice plan.

Who may apply?
The local social justice contact or members of the Social Justice committee.

How much money is available?
Matching funds on a 4:1 ratio (BCTF/Local) to a maximum of $2000 from the BCTF. (Example: $500 local = $2000 BCTF). The BCTF has budgeted for a total of $25,000 for these grants in 2008–2009. They are granted on a first come basis.

Timeline:
Grant applications will be received from September 2008 until the final deadline of April 15, 2009.

Social Justice grant checklist:
• Proposal meets all the criteria.
• Project goals and plans are clear and succinct.
• Local social justice action plan is included.
• All required signatures are in place.

Tips:
• Do not wait until April—the money may have been spent.
• If you fax in your application, mail in a hard copy as well as faxes are often incomplete or hard to read.
• Ensure that you credit the BCTF on any performances, DVDs, publications, reports, etc. related to your project.
• Send a final report on your project to the BCTF.

Social Justice grant applications can be found at bctf.ca.

For more information about grants contact James Chamberlain, jchamberlain@bctf.ca
Ed May Social Responsibility Grants

Each year the BCTF provides seed money to nourish social justice work. Ed May grants, for up to $2000 are open to any member. Social Justice grants of up to $2000 are available to local social justice contacts and must connect with the local’s social justice action plan for that school year. Information about these grants can be found at bctf.ca (social justice/grants)