

# TEACHER

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers’ Federation

## Strategies for countering the accountability agenda

The following is an edited version of the keynote address, Dr. Wayne Ross, BCTF Representative Assembly, November 2, 2007.

A third-grade teacher refuses to administer a mandatory reading test after witnessing the psychological toll on her students and is disciplined by the school board and attacked in the press for her actions. A dean of education praises the teacher for taking a principled stand and protecting her students from “psychological and educational vandalism” and engaging in civil disobedience.

The dean is then attacked by the Minister of Education as “irresponsible” because rather than telling teachers to “work co-operatively with others on issues of mutual interest” he encourages teachers to exercise professional judgment, even if that requires one to be civilly disobedient.

So, it’s come to this, exercising professional judgment as a teacher, at least in some contexts, requires them to be civilly disobedient. How did teaching in public schools get to this point and what can we do about it?

I’d like to begin to answer this question and perhaps spur your thinking about what we can do to counter an accountability agenda that promulgates psychological and education vandalism on students, de-professionalizes teachers,



Dr. Wayne Ross, UBC professor of education, addresses the BCTF Fall Representative Assembly.

BEV HUMPHRIES

reduces education to a commodity, and treats schools like stocks—ranking them as the biggest gainers or biggest losers based on test scores.

**So, it’s come to this, exercising professional judgment as a teacher, at least in some contexts, requires them to be civilly disobedient.**

Accountability of schools is a relatively contemporary concern, dating probably to James Coleman’s 1966 report “Equality of Educational Opportunity.” This report examined achievement of American children of different races and shifted attention toward outcomes and away from resources and inputs. Since then, demands for schools to be accountable have been accentuated by the often-conflicting demands of policymakers and politicians who control the education purse strings, and professional educators with the knowledge and skills to educate children within a democracy.

Accountability has become the means of enforcement and control used by governments and corporations to enact educational “reforms.” Governments and corporations can only demand that others remake schools by delegating the authority to carry out this mission. Delegation takes the form of uniform outcome measures of productivity (e.g., scores on standardized tests), which provide evidence that the authority delegated is being properly exercised.

Accountability is an *economic* means of interaction. When power is delegated and dispersed to those within a hierarchical system there is an expected return from the invest-

ment of that power in others. Those to whom power has been delegated are obligated to answer or render an account of the degree of success in accomplishing the outcomes desired by those in power. Because of the diffuse nature of many hierarchical systems, accountability depends on both surveillance and self-regulation.

The power of surveillance is born out in part by the spectacle that may result from accounting by those to whom power has been delegated (e.g., Fraser Institute school rankings). Self-regulation, which is the faithful exercise of delegated authority, is in part based on surveillance and the concomitant possibility of spectacle (as in the case of Kathryn Sihota’s refusal to administer a reading test), but also on the perception of the legitimacy of those delegating power.

**Neo-liberalism is the prevailing political economic paradigm**

Neo-liberalism is the prevailing political economic paradigm in the world today and has been described as an ideological “monoculture.” The tenets of neo-liberalism include: the rule of the market, cutting public expenditures, deregulation, privatization, and elimination of the concept of “public good” and replacing it with “individual responsibility.”

Neo-liberalism also works as a political system, one in which there is a formal democracy, but the citizens remain spectators, diverted from any meaningful participation in decision-making. Education is a key target of the neo-liberal project because of its market size and centrality to the economy and is also a target because of its potential to challenge corporate globalization if it succeeds in producing critical citizens for a democratic society.

Governments have introduced

curricular reforms and accountability systems that commodify public education by reducing learning to bits of information and skills to be taught and tested and marketize education through programs that promote privatization and user fees in place of free, public education.

Neo-liberal educational reform policies focus on creation of curriculum standards, where the state defines the knowledge to be taught, and “accountability.” The specification of curriculum standards is nearly always accompanied by accountability strategies. It does not

**Education is a key target of the neo-liberal project because...of its potential to challenge corporate globalization if it succeeds in producing critical citizens for a democratic society.**

good to establish expectations if one does not ensure they are met and, if they are not met, that there is a planned remedy. The dominant approach to educational accountability is an “outcomes-based bureaucratic” one, which relies on mandated student testing.

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## Fall RA zeros in on support for teachers and students

Teacher leaders from around the province met in Richmond on November 2–3 to discuss the key issues facing BC teachers this fall, top amongst them being the negative impact of the government’s accountability schemes and class size, class composition, and support for students with special needs. The Representative Assembly, made up of local presidents and local representatives, meets three times a

**...it was very clear that teachers around the province are gravely disappointed in the failure of Bill 33 (2006) to meet students’ needs.**

year to consider recommendations from the BCTF Executive Committee, consider motions brought forward by locals, develop action plans, receive reports, and deal with the Federation budget.

This meeting, the Fall RA, adopted a plan to counter the misuse and overuse of standardized tests and the obsession with measuring, ranking, and data collection. LRs lined up at the microphones to convey teachers’ concerns for their students and debate the best ways to support authentic assessment for learning. Through the *Support for Teaching and Learning* plan, the Federation locals and members will be promoting fair, effective, and reliable assessment and engaging parents and the public in discussion of the negative impact of current trends toward more and more mandated, standardized tests.

Prior to debating the elements of the plan, LRs heard from Dr. Wayne Ross, Professor of Education, UBC, on “Strategies for Countering the Accountability Agenda.” Ross outlined the ways in which the accountability schemes change the very nature of teaching and learning, and undermine public education. He talked about the importance of advocating for students, the profession, and public education.

When the meeting turned to discussion of class size, class composition, and support for students with special needs, it was very clear that teachers around the province are gravely disappointed in the failure

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# President's message



Irene Lanzinger

When teachers went on strike in the fall of 2005, we had tremendous public support and sympathy. That

public sentiment forced the government to make a commitment to deal with the major issue in the strike—class size and composition. The round table met the Monday after the strike ended. Both the premier and the education minister were there.

The following spring the government introduced the class-size and class-composition legislation. They said it was the beginning, it wasn't perfect, and it would be reviewed. Unfortunately, they provided no additional funding to school boards to meet the limits in the legislation.

The message we hear from teachers is unequivocal. While there

have been some small improvements in class sizes in elementary, there are still really serious problems with the composition of classes and class sizes at secondary schools. There are not enough specialist teachers for the students who need them. Many teachers are struggling to meet the needs of all the students in their classes.

We have called for a meeting of the round table as soon as possible. The premier has not attended a meeting of the round table for over a year. We will take his presence—or lack of it—at the next meeting as a sign of the seriousness of the government in keeping this promise

to students and teachers.

Our input to the review of Bill 33 calls for major improvements to the legislation. We must have smaller class-size limits, enforceable limits for secondary schools, and guaranteed ratios for learning assistance teachers, special education resource teachers, librarians, counsellors, ESL teachers, speech language pathologists, and psychologists. And critically, we must have major education funding increases to ensure that boards can hire the teachers they need. They have the money: the government has a \$4 billion surplus.

This fall we will be campaigning

hard to force the province to live up to its promises. In late November, we ran print ads across the province. Locals will receive grants to help them engage in their own local campaigns to re-ignite the public support and interest that we achieved during our strike.

The Campbell government's cavalier attitude towards public education is unacceptable. They have increased standardized testing and bureaucratic accountability measures but have done absolutely nothing to meet the desperate need of teachers in the classroom. This government is short-changing kids in this province. It has to stop. ■

# Readers write

## Britannia remembers 100 years of growth and achievement

From September 2007 through June 2008, Vancouver's Britannia Secondary School celebrates its 100th birthday! As the oldest operating secondary school in BC, Britannia has seen changes paralleling those in the province. From its roots as Vancouver's east-side academic enclave and its "melting pot" slogan as early as the 1960s, Britannia has built its reputation on strong academics, superb athletics, and well-rounded citizenship. Britannia's site, the prototype of a comprehensive community centre complex, paved the way for other complexes designed in its wake.

Dave Barrett, Robert Bonner, Angelo Branco, Simon Chang, Larry Doyle, Barbara Howard, Frank Iacobucci, Shiuchi Kusaka, Tong Louie, and Shirley Mayse are some of the ground-breaking graduates featured in Britannia's photo-filled centennial memoirs book recapturing both the Britannia of yesteryear and Britannia of today.

On Friday evening, May 16, Britannia's grads will gather to reminisce and celebrate Britannia's 100th! Britannia will feature an Open House Saturday afternoon, May 17. Saturday evening's Gala Event at the Agrodome, an evening to remember, culminates the weekend's activities. Make plans to join us. Log on to [www.britanniacentennial.com](http://www.britanniacentennial.com) or phone 604-713-8266 for further information.

**Diane Minichiello**  
Vancouver

## Time for a wake-up call: FSA tests and the corporate agenda

Standardized tests are the subject of much discussion amongst teachers lately. Yet it perplexes me as to how few colleagues understand the issue.

The struggle against FSA testing isn't an attack on standardized testing *per se*. It isn't even about the inefficacy of these tests in evaluation of learning, as much as that is the case. It isn't about valuable time taken from authentic learning while teachers, subjugated by administrators, ignore their own moral and professional standards and devote time to practicing for the tests. And, it certainly isn't about improving literacy in a post-literate society—whatever that means.

Behind the struggle with FSA testing lies the largest struggle confronting education today: the struggle to retain, protect, and pass on to posterity, a truly publicly funded education system, equally accessible, regardless of geographic or socio-economic factors in the face of a relentless and ruthless attempt by the corporate sector to hijack education and replace it with a profit-driven free-market model. Thus, we are charged with protecting a greatly valued public institution, gravely threatened by private, greedy corporate interests determined to exploit our children as a potentially lucrative market. And, all under the insidious guise of accountability and fiscal responsibility. Privatization by proxy, if you will.

Skeptical? Check out the Fraser Institute web site. By their own admission, "The FI ranking of schools based wholly on FSA and provincial exam results, offers parents "competitive market solutions," when shopping for the "best" schools in BC and elsewhere. According to the FI, they use "objective data to rate the schools," (FSA results), so that parents "will be better prepared to ask relevant questions when [they] interview the principal and teachers at the schools [they] are considering." The Fraser Institute's callous vision of our public schools is blatantly clear and transparent as revealed on its web site. Instead of lobbying governments and holding them publicly accountable for providing

the best possible education to all of BC's children, the organization advocates school "shopping" for those that perform the best on government standardized tests (we all know which schools those are), reducing our public education system to a market-based commodity to be bought and sold to the highest bidders. Do BC teachers really wish to participate in such a process?

The struggle against FSA testing may prove to be the most important battle of our era. I, for one, am not interested in replacing our publicly funded education system with something like the Pattison Education Group. Let's work together to see that the quality of education for future Canadian children is not determined by their street address.

**Dan Companion**  
Nanaimo

## World music program

Thank you for including the photo of the marimba band in the launch of the Advantage Program (*Teacher*, October 2007). The band is *Kutapira*, and they are quite a success story. With roots in the world music program at Britannia Community Services Centre, they are an example of how young musicians can excel at playing percussion-based music from African and Latin cultures. If any teachers are looking to start a world music program in their school, they are invited to contact music teacher Paul Nicholls at Charles Dickens Elementary (604-713-4978 or 604-269-9201). Paul is a member of the World Music Continuum, a collective of Vancouver schools that incorporate world music in their band programs.

Who knows? Perhaps other students will follow in Kutapira's footsteps and perform a private concert for the Queen, as the band did this summer at Balmoral Castle. Kutapira can be contacted at [kutapira@shaw.ca](mailto:kutapira@shaw.ca).

**Valerie Dare**  
Vancouver

## Ministry backs away from secondary spending cuts

The Ministry of Education appears to be partially backing away from its mid-year claw back of funds from school districts. Its October 18, 2007 announcement of cuts to secondary schools had created the potential for significant disruption of school classes and programs in most districts.

In an attempt to deal with the controversy created by blindsiding Boards of Education budget plans, the ministry has now released six pages of revised rules for school districts to use in recalculating funding for the current school year. The new policies are announced in the document: "Frequently Asked Questions: Funding Formula Adjustments."

"It is clear that a revision of the revision of the funding formula is under way," said BCTF president Irene Lanzinger. "These changes continue to send shock waves in school communities. The process of reporting to the ministry has just become even more complex and time-consuming for school districts and once again school districts are unevenly punished by the changes."

The ministry is short \$50 million in a \$4.3 billion budget. "Where does it look for savings? Not to the ministry itself, or its increasing bureaucracy, or to pet projects like the BC Educational Leadership Council. Instead, they attempted to take it directly from classrooms and from our most vulnerable students..." said Lanzinger.

Clawing back funds that support students makes no sense when there is a healthy provincial surplus of \$4 billion. The question arises why huge cost overruns have been tolerated for the downtown convention centre but not when it comes to our children's learning.

At a meeting with Education Minister Shirley Bond, the BCTF executive members raised the concerns expressed by the BCTF Representative Assembly about the recent changes to the funding formula. The minister provided a copy of Frequently Asked Questions regarding the funding changes and also agreed that once the latest data on class size and composition was available they should hold another bilateral meeting specifically on this topic, in addition to any discussion at the roundtable.

## BCTF meets with the minister of education

In October, Education Minister Shirley Bond publicly stated her willingness to meet with teachers about the mandated testing issue. BCTF President, Irene Lanzinger asked Bond to make good on her pledge. The meeting took place Tuesday, November 6. The BCTF was represented by Irene Lanzinger,

First VP Susan Lambert, Second VP Jim Iker, and Executive Director Ken Novakowski

According to Lanzinger: "The minister stated that the government is supportive of the current role standardized tests play in their education agenda. They may not support the way some of the testing data is used by outside parties, but she does not feel government has any control over that. She did not want any commitment to engage in a dialogue about testing to set false expectations for participants."

Emery Dosdall, the deputy minister stated that the FSA is a good test but that it is a major problem when FSA results are used for ranking schools. He acknowledged that a dialogue about the collection and use of data would be useful.

The minister insisted that she had not heard from anyone in her travels and consultations about what the BCTF calls the "proliferation of testing."

Lanzinger responded by underlining that testing "...is a major issue for teachers because they are continually required to administer tests that are unrelated to what is going on in their classrooms." She suggested to the ministry that random testing of students using the FSA—where students or schools were not identified—would still provide the big-picture information that the ministry needed for its work.

The minister stated her opposition to the concept of random sample testing but still left the door open for further discussion on the issue of testing. She suggested her staff meet with the BCTF to determine a possible framework for these discussions.

While Bond alluded to a university "think-tank" she had participated in that suggested students entering university from BC schools "aren't ready" for university, Lanzinger turned the conversation back to the number one issue of teachers—classroom conditions. "Teachers," she said, "feel betrayed by the legislation (Bill 33) that was supposed to address class-size and composition issues in schools and instead has become a 'broken promise.'"

The minister indicated that the information about this year's class sizes was not yet put together and that she would be analyzing it as soon as it was available. She stated that she was concerned about the implementation of Bill 33 but asked that teachers wait until the data was available so we could have a discussion based on up-to-date information. ■

## BCTF winter holiday closure

The BCTF office will be closed at noon on December 24, 2007, and will reopen at 8:15 a.m. on January 2, 2008.



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STRATEGIES from page 1

The manifestation of accountability in schools

Bureaucratic outcomes-based accountability is deeply embedded within the accountability agenda of the current BC government. A good question to ask at the start is: *Who is being held accountable by whom, for what, through what mechanisms and with what consequences?*

Under bureaucratic outcomes-based accountability, students, teachers, and administrators are accountable to a central government agency for demonstrating academic success on a small set of indicators of individual student performance. There are a common set of expectations/standards, a small number of indicators, clear cut-offs to indicate success or failure, and consequences at the individual and school level for failure.

The effects on learning are that it becomes a chore, with the emphasis on learning for marks, rather than fun. Critical, analytic thinking is limited. There is a valuing of achievement over ability and effort, an increase in stress and anxiety, and a loss of student control and choice.

**Developing an alternative perspective on accountability**

In order to protect public education and teachers' professional status, teachers and their allies must engage in and redirect the prevailing discourse and realities of accountability.

If you want your profession to remain a profession, if we're going to have public education that serves the needs and interests of the public we have to engage in this discourse. But we do not have to accept the lines of the discourse as they have been drawn.

**...teachers and their allies must engage in and redirect the prevailing discourse and realities of accountability.**

It would be a mistake to construct strategies aimed at rejecting accountability *per se*. Rather, teachers and others concerned with the collective good of society must: (1) disrupt the taken-for-granted relationships embedded in bureaucratic outcomes-based evaluation, and (2) aim to reconstruct the current conception of accountability in ways that...frame accountability around teacher autonomy and the public interest. We can think about *professional accountability*, which brings teachers, administrators, the government, and teacher education programs into the accountability framework, for they are the entities responsible for quality teacher preparation. They support students' academic and social success through self-regulation and review by the teaching profession in conjunction with governmental agencies. So we have standards of professional practice, peer review, assessments of novice teachers, mentoring systems, professional development, and continuing education.

Another model is *authentic accountability*. Schools are accountable to parents and communities—including students. Here the focus is on the local school community for how well a school educates its students and for the quality of the social and learning environment through the use of authentic and multiple indicators. We want to be thinking about high quality, local assessment systems.

I think low-stakes standardized tests in literacy and numeracy are okay, but there are lots of ways to do that without giving standardized tests to every student in the province—such as matrix sampling models. School quality reviews and

self-study would focus on the opportunity to learn, the quality of resources, the standards of professional practice, and the responsiveness to students. This model would include annual reporting by the school to *its* community and a focus on improvement of schools, not rewards and punishments. The second thing is resisting demands to give or score tests that do not contribute to good pedagogy and creating programs aimed at re-defining what constitutes quality education and quality schools, e.g., "Rethinking Accountability" conference and the "What Really Counts" fact sheets, as well as the new BCTF brochure "Testing, You Bet."

Promoting authentic accountability models, test resistance actions (e.g., opting out), and lobbying government are all areas that lend themselves to collaborations with parents and students. Here are some examples of successful collaborations south of the border:

- Parent/teacher protests in Los Angeles forced school officials to back off a plan to intensify grade retention.
- In Massachusetts, officials were forced to redefine cut scores on state tests that otherwise would have prevented as many as 83% of Latino and 80% of African-American students from receiving diplomas.
- In Detroit, teachers have engaged in wildcat strikes, focusing on "Schools, Supplies, and Lower Class Size," with widespread public support.

In BC we have what I would call "chronic" grassroots networks, which are grassroots networks that are really connected to thinking about education in the public interest. The BCTF and the Charter for Public Education are great examples.

We also have "acute" grassroots networks, like student groups or parents who opt out. In New York State, for example, one of the key elements in the anti-testing movement were the Scarsdale moms from a fairly wealthy suburb of New York City. They decided that the state-mandated tests in the eighth grade were abusive of their kids. They not only opted their kids out, they picketed the schools. Quickly the Scarsdale moms worked in other organizations, including the Coalition for Common Sense, which had a powerful effect on the discourse around accountability in New York State.

There are a number of resources available, including:

- *Fairtest*—the National Center for Fair and Open Testing ([www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org)), which supports a test resistance network across the US with regional co-ordinators, operates listserves that focus on resistance strategies, hosts conferences, and publishes resources.
- *MASS CARE*—the Massachusetts Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education ([www.ParentsCare.org](http://www.ParentsCare.org)), which educates and organizes people across the state to support quality public education and oppose the high-stakes testing system. MASS CARE organizes educational forums, petition drives, boycotts and rallies; does outreach to schools to get resolutions passed on testing, works with the media, maintains email lists, conducts research, and publishes resources.

These are activities that are also being done in different ways in BC. It is a question of what are the resources we have here, what are the other resources that we need to tap into, and how can we build a coalition of resistance that can shift the discourse on accountability away from bureaucratic, outcomes-based accountability to an accountability that is authentic, that includes communities, that protects teacher professional autonomy, and that protects education in the public interest. ■

FALL RA from page 1

of Bill 33 (2006) to meet students' needs. LRs and presidents expressed the frustration of their members who are striving to support their students with too few resources and too little time. The Executive Committee reported on the provincial grievance under way and a soon-to-be-launched public relations campaign on the broken promise of Bill 33, legislation passed in the spring of 2006. The BCTF continues to press the government to deliver on its promise to address classroom conditions and adequately fund the system.

Representatives of the Langley Teachers' Association provided the meeting with a report on the Special Education Inquiry, sponsored by the BCTF and organized by the LTA, the CUPE local, and the DPAC in Langley. In recognition of the work being done by the teachers in Langley and the fact that this inquiry will benefit all teachers, the meeting voted to provide the LTA with additional funding to successfully complete the project and publicize the results province-wide.

Langley special education inquiry wraps up

By Susan Fonseca

After three days of back-to-back presentations, the Langley Special Education Inquiry, co-sponsored by the Langley Teachers' Association, CUPE 1260, and the Langley District Parent Advisory Council, wrapped up the public hearing process. The Steering Committee was overwhelmed with the level of participation in both the focus groups and the public hearings:

- 100+ hearing presentations
- 89 focus group participants (teachers, support workers, and parents)
- 48 participating work sites
- 15 inquiry hours
- 14 focus group hours

Panelists heard or received written submissions from a variety of individuals, local specialist associations, and community groups. We were very fortunate that all three panelists were gracious in terms of going overtime at every one of the six hearings to ensure that all presenters were heard. At the final hearing, both CUPE 1260 and the LTA gave up their allotted presentation times to allow a number of unscheduled parents to

The Federation table officers reported on Minister Bond's recent changes to the funding of students in Grade 10, 11, and 12. On October 18, the minister of education sent an e-mail to school district secretary-treasurers announcing a mid-year claw back of secondary funding. The impact was estimated to be a loss to school districts of \$40 to 50 million province-wide. In response, the RA called on the minister to reverse this directive

**LRs lined up at the microphones to convey teachers' concerns for their students and debate the best ways to support authentic assessment for learning.**

and encouraged locals to work with trustees and other stakeholders to this end.

The Representative Assembly also adopted an employment equity plan for Aboriginal teachers. The overall goal for this plan is to ensure that the Aboriginal teaching population in each district be

proportionate to the ratio of Aboriginal students in the district. The Federation will be supporting locals in developing a local employment equity strategy.

A guest speaker from the Council of Canadian's *Stop TILMA* campaign, Caelie Frampton, ([www.Canadians.org/DI/issues/TILMA](http://www.Canadians.org/DI/issues/TILMA)) brought LRs up-to-date on the implications of the Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement between the BC and Alberta governments. This agreement, signed with absolutely no debate in the BC Legislature, has significant ramifications for the ability of local governments and school boards to set policy and make decisions based on the needs of their communities, reducing the power of elected officials, and increasing corporate power.

Members are encouraged to ask their LR(s) for further information about these items and upcoming agenda topics. The next Representative Assembly, the Winter RA, will be held on February 1 and 2, 2008.

– Moira Mackenzie

classes; long wait lists for psycho-educational assessments; and frustration and anger at the provincial government for making local school districts accountable for the student outcomes while not taking responsibility for funding the system adequately.

The panelists went away with several thick packages of written submissions and they've been busy reading these and requesting further background information from the local and the Ministry of Education. At the time of writing, the panelists are back in Langley working on their report expecting to release it in January.

*Susan Fonseca is 1st vice-president, Langley Teachers' Association.*



(front row) L-R: Panel members, Dr. Shirley McBride, Mike Suddaby, Nadine Guiltner; (back row) Presenters on behalf of Aboriginal Services Gail Stromquist and Christine Stewart.

Looking back

70 years ago

The B.C. Teacher believes that the schools of this continent are in grave danger of being robbed of the precious inheritance of true classical culture and that the blame lies chiefly at the door of present day classical teachers themselves. In view of the prevailing defeatism and futile expostulation at the stupidity of other people, it is a comfort from time to time to come across a classicist who is awake to the fact that new conditions call for sweeping and fundamental reforms in the methods and the curricula of the classical departments of our secondary schools.

– November 1937, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

Teachers are sometimes told that taxpayers are quite unable to pay more for schools or teachers' services. That is hogwash. Fantastic sums are spent on alcohol and tobacco, for no better reason than that people want them. The

prosperity of this country is such that the public could pay half as much again for teachers' services and still not make a significant dent in its all-important standard of living. Teachers are too much put upon. Teachers, to be professional, must not put up with impositions that would be tolerated by no other professional group. They must first respect themselves, and the respect—and the financial support—of the public will inevitably follow.

– November 1957, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

So who now is being asked to carry the ball? Teachers, of course. The argument is that teachers see children daily and therefore are in a position to judge whether they are witnessing a child bearing the bruises of a beating or of simple clumsiness. Despite the urgency to have teachers co-operate to eliminate the nightmare of child abuse, many teachers continue to be reluctant to become involved. It is one more social eclipse that the

teaching profession has been urged to alleviate.

– Nov./Dec. 1977, *The BC Teacher*

**10 years ago**

Having ground rules governing corporate and business involvement in our public education system is critical if boards, schools, and teachers are not to be seduced by corporate funding. Vending machines emblazoned with corporate advertising are a common sight in most schools. The CEO of Prism Communications comments, "They aren't so much children as what I like to call 'evolving consumers'." A corporate magazine cites the school setting, for corporate sponsors, as particularly effective for targeting students, because the classroom is "a positive and credible environment that kids love and adults trust."

– Nov./Dec. 1997, *Teacher* newsmagazine

*Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich*



# SFU Dean of Education addresses graduates

“Enlightened moral action is our highest calling... We are obliged to act.”

— Paul Shaker

On October 3, 2007, SFU Education Dean Paul Shaker delivered the keynote address to the graduating class of the Professional Development Program. He spoke eloquently of the higher calling of teachers—and how Sooke teacher Kathryn Sihota exemplified that calling when she refused to administer the DART test. What follows is an edited version of his remarks. A complete version can be found at: [www.educ.sfu.ca](http://www.educ.sfu.ca).

I come before you today to celebrate your accomplishments as an educator at the end of his career speaking to educators near the beginning of theirs. Here, in this convening of fellow teachers, I wish to invoke images and ideas that bind us together and strengthen us in our profession. I do so in order that we might do good work together for others.

In counselling my children as they enter careers in society, I have urged them to give priority, not only to the nature of work in a field, but to the nature of the workers in that field. In other words, it matters little whether certain activities appeal to you if you are not compatible with those colleagues who populate your world of work. In this I feel most grateful: living my work life among teachers and other educators has been inspirational to me.

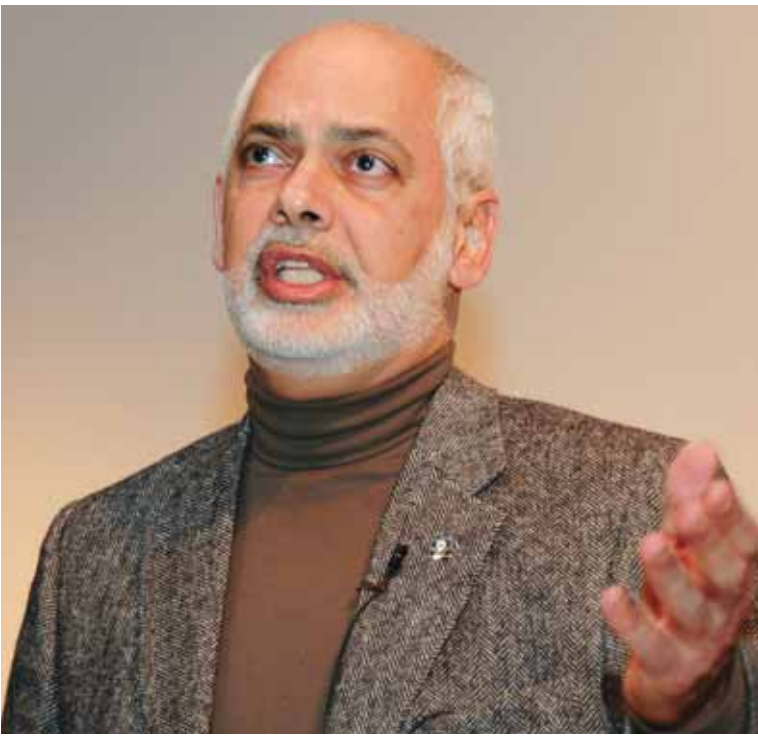
This personal satisfaction can be largely explained by the fact that I think of educators as a ...unique tribe within the larger nation. My hope is that we stand for something at variance from the norms of today's society, something emergent and of special value that is helping create a more realized world for tomorrow. We are not solely needed for our ability to teach in classrooms and convey formal instruction. There is a larger, indirect, and as vital a role for us as examples of this other, hopefully better, way of life in our postmodern world.

I think of our minority status each time I hear our work described in economic terms. When I hear the purpose of schools and teaching defined as providing workers and sustaining competitiveness, I feel wonder at how our calling can be so misunderstood and undervalued. It is as if we said to our political leaders that their role was only to pick up trash and remove snow, and on these grounds alone would we evaluate them and rank them with our votes. I believe we have a much higher aspiration for our students than the voices of the marketplace ascribe to us.

Jonathan Kozol, perhaps the most poetic of contemporary writers on teaching, has commented on this theme in his new book—a book for you—*Letters to a Young Teacher*. “But teachers, and especially the teachers of young children, are not servants of the global corporations or drill sergeants for the state and should never be compelled to view themselves that way. I think that they have a higher destiny than that. The best of teachers are not merely the technicians of proficiency; they are also ministers of innocence, practitioners of tender expectations. [They] believe that every child who has been entrusted to their care comes into their classroom with inherent value to begin with.”

At times and places throughout history that mission of education has been labelled a religious one, in service to a god or gods, or it has been called a civic one, preparing citizens for the polis, the kingdom, the nation/state, and it has been designated in economic terms, as we so often hear today. This reflects a tone deafness in much of the contemporary discussion of education in our society—a deafness to our humanity.

This underestimation of formal teaching and learning is more astonishing because it occurs in a world so affected by non-material motives. The yearning underlying humanity's wars in Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere derives from issues deeper than careers and material abundance. We observe



our Western democratic societies shaken by a rage that is entirely non-economic. In the face of these events, amateur observers of education direct us toward the viability of our students as cogs in the economy and they seek to box us in to this pursuit by “accountability measures” that trivialize,

**I believe we have a much higher aspiration for our students than the voices of the marketplace ascribe to us.**

deracinate, misdirect, and undermine our work.

Originally, it seemed heuristic to employ business metaphors in schools and universities. Open to new associations and understandings, we entertained thinking of students as “customers” and evaluation as “accountability.” But as time has gone by, the new symbols have for many, consumed and distorted education's original pursuit. I urge you to restore in your careers, the language of teaching to education and leave the market-

place terms in their rightful context.

Enlightened moral action is our highest calling as humans, and formal education aspires to inform our understanding of ethics while arousing in us the strength to act on our best judgment. The news this fall has been replete with the story of Kathryn Sihota, who exemplified these standards by engaging in an act of professional conscience and civil disobedience when she refused to administer a designated reading test to her third graders.

You should remember that you entered the profession at the moment when this courageous teacher was taking her principled stand. Let her character, conviction, and willingness to act be an inspiration to you. ...Essential to societies we consider “free” is the right and responsibility to engage in civil disobedience, that is, to follow the dictates of our conscience in non-violent ways when we are so called upon. When our conscience is stirred professionally, however, we are called to yet a higher standard. *We are obliged to act. Essential to the professional identity is the obligation to protect our students*

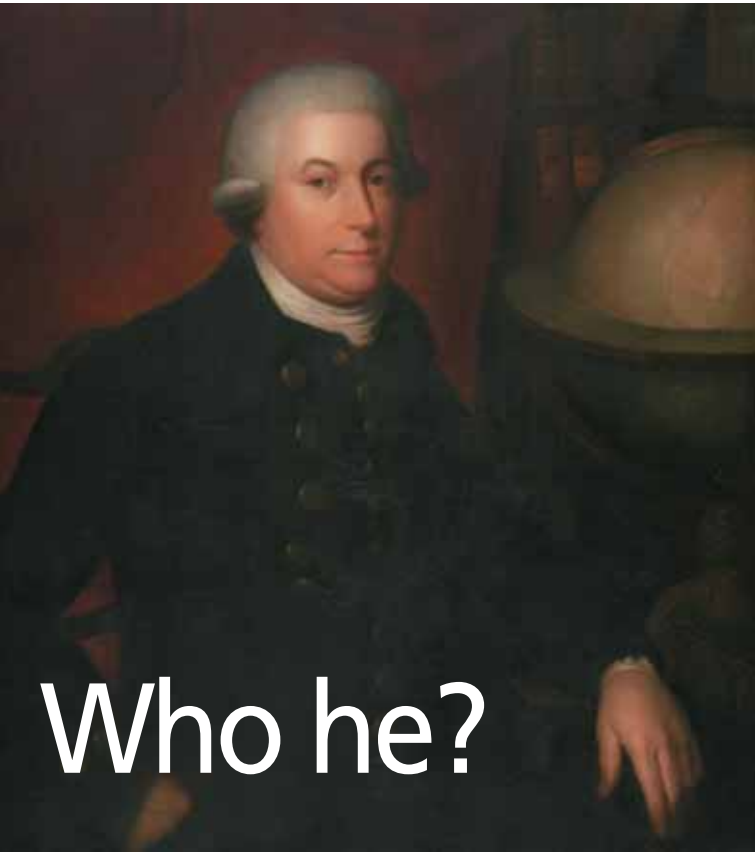
*...from psychological and educational vandalism against their spirits. And this is what Kathryn Sihota has sought to do.*

Throughout human history, teaching was seen as almost exclusively a conservational pursuit done in the name of transmitting existing knowledge and perpetuating societal values. Gradually, since the dawn of the modern era, along with the rise of science and rationalism, has come a new, progressive ideal for our profession.

**As educators let us live up to the pledge of Desmond Tutu when he spoke on our campus and asserted that all people have value and that we must be in service to them all.**

This is that education also must involve the reconstruction of experience and knowledge. That a co-equal goal of teaching, along with conveying the status quo, is to inspire inquiry, imagination, and vision. Educators who break the mould are often responding to this mission. Along with others in society they have imagined racial, disability, and gender equality when the laws did not. They have doubted orthodoxies about science and social science only to be told what fools they were. They have had a vision of a world without want and of peacekeepers and river-keepers in the face of anger and ridicule.

This is the profession you enter on this autumn day. This is the profession to which I welcome you. As educators let us live up to the pledge of Desmond Tutu when he spoke on our campus and asserted that all people have value and that we must be in service to them all. I hope in retrospect that I have been a worthy member of the profession of education; and similarly I hope, as time goes by, that you will be so judged by your students, the community, and yourselves. Let a spirit of hope infuse your work. Draw forth all. ■



By Pat Clarke

Last spring a reporter from *The Vancouver Sun* called to ask if I knew what students in BC schools might be learning about Captain George Vancouver. He was writing a series on Vancouver to mark the 250th anniversary of his birth in

1757. I replied that it was difficult to say given the structure of the Integrated Resource Packages. The IRP for Grade 4 Social Studies did have an element on Aboriginal studies and contact with Europeans and it was possible that some students would learn something about Captain Vancouver there but

that sort of detail was up to individual teachers.

Then I went on to speculate that given the current government fomented hysteria over literacy and numeracy I doubted if very many Grade 4 teachers were able to find much time to venture into a topic not covered by a district or provincial testing program. The Grade 4 Social Studies program and, for that matter, the entire elementary school level social studies program (along with art, music, and science) has been pushed into a scholastic nether world where, in spite of the best intentions of teachers, it is constantly trampled by the imperatives of the testing program.

The state of the “non-tested” and increasingly marginal IRPs such as social studies is really the dirty secret of the cost of a myopic notion of “important” learning. So while we may have a student population that are world-beaters at number work and sentence structure and reading comprehension, their dexterity at responding to a challenge like, “Can we describe Captain Vancouver as a ‘brave explorer’ or is another description of his activities more appropriate?” is simply not known because they rarely have a chance to do that sort of inquiry. They are too busy boning up for the next numeracy test.

It is all quite alarming. Over 10 years ago, the last Social Studies Learning Assessment, (remember those? They look positively progres-

sive nowadays) observed “there may be a substantial number of students leaving the British Columbia school system with only marginal abilities in such important contemporary citizenship skills as detecting bias, distinguishing between fact and opinion, and developing a reasoned argument. The social consequences of a potentially gullible citizenry should be apparent.”

If that was a concern in 1996, it is a full-blown catastrophe in 2007. Of course it is hard to know. In 1996, we did have some evidence because we actually surveyed the

**...at least here in the “Greatest Place on Earth” our sociopaths will be literate and numerate.**

application and apprehension of various curricula through census-type learning assessments. We were able to tell whether or not students were understanding and applying fairly advanced learning such as critical thinking. Now we have no idea. We're too busy number crunching multiple-choice questions and cooking up comprehension rubrics for so called literacy.

The FSAs, the district tests and the secondary examinations program have very little, if any, capacity to do that sort of assessment of higher level learning but they have become principal deter-

minants in assigning “achievement.” Unfortunately, they are really a kind of lowest common denominator as a means to determine whether or not children are learning much in school. But because of the attention given them by the Fraser Institute and their media partners in stupidity, they have become the primary reference points for much of what goes on in too many schools.

Much of the opposition to the standardized testing obsession gripping the denizens of the Ministry of Miseducation in Victoria has focussed on the broad issue of teacher autonomy, the impact of such testing on student motivation, and the emotional effects of an industrial, outputs-oriented approach to schooling on children. There is another just as troubling story here however. The 1996 Social Studies Learning Assessment put it this way, “The longer-term consequence of this trend could well be an increasingly alienated citizenry, less involved in community issues, less confident of democratic traditions, and more inclined to socially dysfunctional behaviour.”

Oh well, at least here in the *Greatest Place on Earth* our sociopaths will be literate and numerate.

*Pat Clarke is an assistant director of the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division. On November 30, 2007, Candide-like he is retiring to his garden.*



# Early-learning initiatives in BC steeped in politics

BC misses out on a golden opportunity to get it right from the start

By Noel Herron

One-time book handouts to preschoolers, a drop-in program for caregivers masquerading as a genuine Head Start initiative, and to top it off the added embellishment of the minister of education's title with the add-on of Minister Responsible for Early Learning and Literacy.

**...the BC Liberals' approach to early-learning and preschool programs is nothing short of cynical manipulation.**

As in the recent case of Linda Reid's (minister of childcare) recent booster seat for needy families' fiasco, all of BC's early-learning projects to date are primarily designed for maximum political exposure with minimum educational or social benefits.

Given the new StatsCan listing pointing to the dramatic increase in child poverty in BC and the premier's own recent progress board report showing that the province ranks near the bottom of the social indicator's category in Canada (9th out of 10 provinces), the BC Liberals' approach to early-learning and preschool programs is nothing short of cynical manipulation.

Just over three years ago, the current provincial government wanted to slash the already inadequate provincial funding allocation to school boards for inner-city schools, only to be stopped cold by a coalition of angry Vancouver parents, teachers, trustees, and community groups.

Out of BC's 1.1 million households, currently 177,935 are lone-parent families struggling to make ends meet. The fact remains that while one-in-four children in BC continues to live in poverty, Victoria continues to ratchet up whopping surpluses year after year.

This should be of deep concern to the general public.

**...the three-hour-drop-in "Strong Start Centres" don't even remotely resemble genuine head-start programs in other Canadian or American jurisdictions.**

In order to give the appearance of doing something on the social services and education files, this province treats us to a series of superficial gestures and so-called policy initiatives.

Some of these are photo ops—ministers of education delivering new textbooks to schools, a minister of childcare (including the premier and attorney general) handing out booster seats to representatives of disadvantaged kids, plus the ongoing handouts of over-the-top press releases proclaiming that the province is becoming the "most literate jurisdiction in North America."

With early learning in BC, it's quite simply a case of crass politics triumphing over sound educational practices.

The expansion of the Liberals'

blatantly mislabelled "Strong Start" preschool program in school districts across the province is the government's answer to its stated concern in the Throne Speech that, "currently 25% of children (in BC) are not ready to learn when they enter Kindergarten."

Placed under the jurisdiction of local school boards to lend them a semblance of educational credibility, the three-hour-drop-in "Strong Start Centres" don't even remotely resemble genuine head-start programs in other Canadian or American jurisdictions.

The cognitive boost in early childhood programs, so amply demonstrated in long-established, genuine, head-start programs with well-trained teachers at the helm, have been reinforced time and again in longitudinal studies in the United States (Head Start from 1965) and in Britain (Sure Start from 1997).

With "Strong Start" in BC, stay-at-home parents (this excludes most of the province's 170,000 single parent families), or grandparents must accompany their three- or four-year-olds to these centres during the day.

In reality, these are limited baby-sitting services masquerading as early childhood programs for those able to attend. They are totally divorced from the contemporary working world needs of today's

parents. (The current crisis in the availability of childcare spaces for working parents is yet another example of the gap between the real world and government policies).

At the start of the current school year, an estimated 8,500 (of the projected 35,000) Kindergarten students entered our public schools lacking readiness for regular schooling.

Experienced Kindergarten teachers tell us that many of these students have a limited vocabulary, a poor understanding of colour, letters, numbers, sizes and shapes, and are often far behind many of their peers.

Their ability to listen and to follow the simplest routines is frequently a struggle for them.

Sadly, their attainment gap widens as many of them advance into intermediate grades.

**In reality, these are limited babysitting services masquerading as early childhood programs for those able to attend.**

At the start of the current school year, Hilel Goldman of UBC's Early Learning partnership called for "a pre-Kindergarten program that would be available to all BC

children," to be put in place.

Across the border recently, two leading Democratic candidates for the US presidency, Hilary Clinton and John Edwards, joined a chorus of early-childhood education advocates, governors, foundation, and social activists promoting the cause of universal pre-Kindergarten programs.

**"Hilel Goldman of UBC's Early Learning partnership called for "a pre-Kindergarten program that would be available to all BC children..."**

Here in BC, when one compares the present faltering and highly politicized early-childhood initiatives with solid, long-term, national and international programs one quickly realizes how far we have fallen behind other jurisdictions.

And, more importantly, how much we are short-changing some of the most vulnerable kids in our educational system.

Up to now we have missed a golden opportunity to get it right from the start with our preschool kids.

Noel Herron a former Vancouver principal and school trustee authored "Every Kid Counts," a history of Vancouver's inner-city schools.



## Pre-Kindergarten at Strathcona Elementary

Pictured above is teacher Evelyn Tam with her pre-Kindergarten class in Lord Strathcona Elementary School, Vancouver. This is one of a handful of pre-Kindergarten classes for four-year-olds run by school boards in BC. (The Ministry of Education maintains no record of pre-Kindergarten classes, simply a listing of its recently established "Strong Start" programs.) The pre-Kindergarten class at Strathcona

has been in existence for 16 years and, together with its all-day Kindergarten, comprises the school's early-learning program for this inner-city school.

Principal, Jim Ion, views his pre-Kindergarten class as "the jewel in the crown of our early-learning program."

"This class, with its fully developed curriculum, has been a tremendous developmental support

to our regular Kindergarten program. The pre-Kindergarten kids are better prepared to learn, to socialize, and to enjoy school when they enter Kindergarten. Before taking the class, pre-schoolers in Strathcona are assessed by UBC's Dr. Clyde Hertzman as the least prepared for Kindergarten in the City of Vancouver. So our staff and parents greatly appreciate having this program at Strathcona."

# Yours for the asking

## Resources and study tour 2008

Most Canadians are unaware of the history of WWII in Asia. Japanese militarism and aggression in China, Korea, and beyond were responsible for less widely known wartime atrocities including the deaths of up to 300,000 in the Chinese city of Nanjing.

BC Association for Learning & Preserving the History of WWII in Asia (BC ALPHA) works with people who pursue peace and justice to preserve the truthfulness of the historical records of WWII in Asia.

In 2001, a resource guide was developed for teachers: *Human Rights in the Asia Pacific 1931–1945: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship*.

BC ALPHA has been conducting subsidized Peace and Reconciliation Study Tours for BC educators since 2004, [www.alpha-canada.org](http://www.alpha-canada.org).

On the 5th Study Tour, from June 28 to July 11, 2008, teacher participants will meet survivors and historians as well as visit museums and other sites in and around Shanghai (China), Nanjing (China), Harbin (China,) and Seoul (Korea). BC ALPHA, covers all ground costs inside China and Korea; teachers take care of their own international travel costs between Canada and Asia. The deadline for application is March 1, 2008.

BC ALPHA can also help arrange speakers, survivors, and eye-witnesses for classroom visits. ALPHA also loans reference and video materials to teachers. For more details, visit Canada ALPHA <http://tinyurl.com/25h8vq>.

## UBC Museum of Anthropology

The museum offers many educational programs ideal for Grades K–12, Tuesday to Friday, September through June. Programs are open to school, community, and special interest groups. The 75-minute programs are interactive and conducted by trained museum volunteer associates.

The cost of \$5 a student (or \$8 when two programs are booked for the same day) includes a program package with pre- and post-visit support material. Outreach teaching kits are also available for loan.

To book: e-mail [bookings@moa.ubc.ca](mailto:bookings@moa.ubc.ca), 604-822-5653, web site [www.moa.ubc.ca](http://www.moa.ubc.ca).

## Cycling training for the school community

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition offers workshops on bicycle skills and commuter confidence for educators. The workshop is for teachers and school staff who have considered cycling to school but currently lack the confidence or skills to commute by bike.

This two-day workshop will improve personal cycling skills with classroom and onroad opportunities about how to ride confidently in traffic, check the safety of your bike, ride at night and in the rain, as well as plan the best route. The workshop will also present activities to integrate cycling, bike smarts, and active transportation ideas into the school community and classroom curriculum.

To book a workshop, ask your PD co-ordinator to contact Cara Fisher or Arthur Orsini, [ctsc@vacc.bc.ca](mailto:ctsc@vacc.bc.ca) or phone 604-319-2102.



# The education of Adam

Marianne Kaplan’s documentary reveals her son’s struggle with Asperger Syndrome

By Janet Nicol

Vancouver filmmaker Marianne Kaplan delivers an intimate portrait of her son Adam’s Grade 7 experience in a one-hour documentary *The Boy Inside*. A groundbreaking story, Marianne reveals Adam’s daily struggles with Asperger Syndrome, a form of high-functioning autism. Since the documentary was first aired on the CBC last October, the network’s Internet blog has been jam-packed with viewer reaction and Marianne has received more than a hundred letters, most from parents in similar situations.

**“One classmate became a friend when he realized what I went through.”**

“Parents who watch the film say ‘I’m seeing my story for the first time.’” Marianne says in a recent interview with her and Adam at the family’s Vancouver home. “I hope the use of resources about autism can make a difference.” Marianne believes the whole community “needs to get the skills to be accepting and tolerant.” And with one in 260 children born with autism in North America, educators need to learn more. Mother/filmmaker Marianne Kaplan narrates the film and son, Adam, talks openly about his feelings and challenges. We also hear from Adam’s father and classmates and glimpse his Grade 7

teacher and older sister. The various forms of bullying Adam endures, coupled with his special needs, contribute to his growing depression and inappropriate behavior. Many strategies are used to help Adam and when all ideas seem spent, his mother and teacher bring in a special needs expert to help classmates change some of their behaviors. The film ends on a hopeful note. Adam is delighted to learn he is accepted into a Vancouver secondary mini-school computer program and believes his years of bullying are over, because he says, teenagers in high school will be “more mature.” So how has Adam been doing since Grade 7? “I’m really liking high school,” he says. “It’s much different from elementary school. I have more friends to hang out with.” Adam says his course work was never a problem. It was the social part of school that always challenged him. He likes having more independence in high school. “You have more freedom to go out and do what you want,” he says. Adam’s mother adds, “He has learned the social skills to fit in.” Having friends at school has really made a difference for Adam. “Grade 8 was weird,” he says. “I have a habit of wanting to hang out with the popular kids.” That hasn’t worked for Adam. But in Grade 9 he hung out with “nerdy” friends. “They are the best friends,” Adam says, “because they have a personality.



They are cool.” To look at Adam, you would barely recognize the boy in the film. He has grown into a handsome, young teen with curly dark hair, who politely stands to shake hands before and after this interview. High school summers have been fun for Adam, too. Following Grade 9, he traveled to South Africa and visited relatives on his mother’s side. Adam notes apartheid may be gone, but ‘snobby’ behaviour and segregation between racial groups still exist. And last summer Adam enjoyed great baseball games and card-collecting in Chicago, while his dad was on a working holiday. How did former classmates react to the film *The Boy Inside*? “Some really liked it,” Adam says. “One classmate became a friend when he realized what I went through.” Marianne adds this classmate also happened to be “the number one bully—the ringleader.” Adam says that last year of

elementary school sucked. One principal did not treat him well, he remembers. “He told me I gave the school a bad image.” Marianne says bullying is rampant in schools and sometimes the victims end up getting punished. Autistic children are much more likely to be targets of aggressive students, she says. So what do schools need to do? Marianne observes an irony: teachers are in the business of

**“Schools need integration (of students with special needs) with support.”**

– Marianne Kaplan

education but resist learning. “Families are the experts,” she says. “We need to work as a team with teachers and teaching aids.” “The language at home and school can be re-enforced,” Marianne suggests, “if a team approach is used.” She thinks teacher aides should

be required to take courses about autism and have experience and a sense of commitment. Ultimately, Marianne believes the entire system needs to be over-hauled. “Schools need integration (of students with special needs) with support,” she says, “and this means class-size reductions and more staff education and training.” “Teachers should be less demanding,” Adam believes, as he discusses school life in general. “Our workload at school is too big. And school needs to be more fun. There needs to be more time to communicate,” he says. And based on his past school experiences, Adam asks teachers to be “more accepting and willing to learn.” *The Boy Inside* will soon be available to public schools. For more information about the film, access the CBC Internet web site: <http://tinyurl.com/28la2e>. Janet Nicol is a Vancouver secondary teacher on leave.

# The challenge of teaching core French in BC

By Wendy Carr

Core French teachers at the elementary and middle-years levels face many challenges. More than 800 BC core French teachers took part in a survey this spring, and the pressing challenges they identified were how to achieve provincial learning outcomes with the lack of time and valuing allocated to French instruction and how to teach a language when many lack proficiency and methodological background. It was a good time to survey teachers—10 years since the full implementation of the *BC Language Education Policy*. Prior to 1997, the teaching of core French in elementary schools was optional. Now all Grades 5 to 8 students study a second language—in most cases, French. This was a wonderful development for ensuring full access to second-language education, but three main problems quickly emerged:

- The majority of elementary schools did not have a French specialist.
- There were no training programs at the universities for core French generalists.
- There was no prescribed amount of time allocated for core French instruction.

Generalist core French teachers (elementary and middle years)

There are some specialists (about 25% of all respondents) with linguistic and methodological background teaching core French at the elementary and middle-years

levels; however, the majority are generalist teachers who deliver core French as one subject among many in their teaching assignment. Where there is a specialist, she or he often platoons the delivery of French, i.e., teaches her or his own class plus one or more other classes in exchange for the teaching of another subject. In many, but not all cases, the specialist speaks French and has taken university coursework in French. However, most are generalists who do *not* speak French and have *not* taken second-language methodology coursework. This leads to frustration for teachers who want to do a better job but are juggling French as one of many curricular demands.

**...almost no new elementary core French specialists enter the profession each year.**

Attrition rates at the secondary level indicate that we need to do more in the early years of French instruction. These rates are particularly disquieting because secondary core French teachers are almost always specialists who possess linguistic background, methodological training, and passion for the language. Often students do not make contact with these teachers because they drop out as soon as French is no longer mandated after Grade 8.

Teacher education in BC

Pre-service teachers enrol in a Bachelor of Education (UBC, UVic)

or Professional Development Program (SFU). There is no required course in second-language methodology in these programs even though Grades 5 to 8 core French is mandated for all BC students and has a fully developed curriculum document with prescribed learning outcomes, funding formulae for district budgets based on numbers of core French students, and reporting expectations. A small proportion of teacher candidates receives specialized training in French at UBC and SFU. They are screened for linguistic proficiency and enter a specialist cohort that takes its coursework in French and undertakes practica in core or immersion classrooms at the elementary and secondary levels. The vast majority of the elementary teacher candidates are hired into immersion classrooms because they are bilingual and in high demand. This means that almost no new elementary core French specialists enter the profession each year.

Time allocated to core French

In BC, there is no prescribed time allocation for teaching core French even though it is mandated in Grades 5 to 8. A recent survey of BC’s language co-ordinators (published in the BCATML newsletter, Fall 2006), showed that the average amount of time allocated to core French is 80 minutes a week in Grades 5 to 7 and 185 minutes in Grade 8. This is less than half the amount recommended by the National Core French Study, the benchmark observed by other provinces, such as Ontario and New

Brunswick. Respondents’ comments evinced deep concerns about the quantity and quality of instruction, for example:

“There are some schools that only offer 80 minutes and even some that only have 45 minutes designated with a specialist and the generalist classroom teacher is supposed to make up another 45 minutes. This latter generally does not work and is just about as bad as not offering it at all. “

“The time allocated to Core French 5–7 ranges from 45 to 90 minutes a week. Sometimes the amount of time depends on whether the classroom teacher feels comfortable teaching French.”

“For some teachers, French is often the class that is the first to be dropped in the need to do something urgent. Of course, we might also question how they are also using their French time—some doing translation, lots of art, not much communication, etc.”

“Many of our schools have the generalist teacher deliver French to their own classes...time has been reduced and teachers are teaching French who do not know it—and against their will.”

Where do we go from here?

**Pre-service teachers**

FLAGS (French Language and Global Study) is a new program at UBC designed for elementary generalists who have a special interest in teaching core French. The program begins with a five-week summer immersion experience in a French-Canadian university (subsidized by the federal/provincial bursary program)

followed by the 12-month BED program at UBC that includes a French methodology course. SFU also invites its students to take a five-week summer immersion experience at the end of the PDP year.

**“For some teachers, French is often the class that is the first to be dropped in the need to do something urgent.”**

If teacher candidates were required to take the French methodology course presently offered as an elective at UBC, UVic, and SFU, it would be a big step toward equipping them to teach core French, one of the subjects all Grades 5 to 8 teachers are expected to teach.

**Practicing teachers**

A number of professional learning opportunities are available for BC’s core French teachers. SFU offers a Certificate in French Language Proficiency as well as individual courses in conversation and writing at various levels through its French Department. Its Field Programs Division offers an Exploring Second Language Education Graduate Diploma for core French teachers and an equivalent diploma for French immersion teachers. The diploma courses are offered in collaboration with various school districts throughout the province, e.g., Surrey and Richmond. UBC offers several courses in French conversation and grammar at different levels through its French



Department and one after-school course in core French methodology for elementary and middle-years generalists through its Language and Literacy Education Department. A certificate program, combining linguistic and methodological development, is proposed for the near future. Both UBC and SFU have collaborated on a new online course, *Gramligne*, for developing grammatical and linguistic competence for French teachers. UVic's Division of Continuing Studies in Education, in collaboration with the Greater Victoria School District, offers two credentials for French teachers: one for French immersion teachers and one for middle-years core French teachers. The latter offers development in language and methodology, beginning with a five-week summer immersion experience and followed by a fall course conducted on Saturdays. The school district and Continuing Studies Division have tailored the course to the needs of local teachers and provide financial support to any participating teacher. UBC's *Institut de Français* and UVic's *La maison française* offer summer immersion experiences for practicing teachers. Participants are eligible for partial subsidy through the *Explore!* program ([www.jexplore.ca](http://www.jexplore.ca)).

**Conclusion**

Eight hundred BC teachers articulated the challenges they face in teaching core French in Grades 5 to 8. Insufficient time and training were key points. A number of programs for pre-service and practicing teachers have been highlighted, but it will take sustained effort by, and support for, core French teachers to make a difference. The full report, "Teaching Core French in British Columbia: Teachers' Perspectives," is available online at [www.bcatml.org](http://www.bcatml.org).

Wendy Carr is a core French teacher in Coquitlam and president of the BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages.

**Les défis dans l'enseignement du français de base en Colombie-Britannique**

Les enseignants du français de base à l'élémentaire et à l'intermédiaire font face à plusieurs défis. Plus de 800 enseignants du français de base de la C-B ont participé dans un sondage ce printemps; les défis qu'ils ont identifiés comme les plus significatifs étaient comment atteindre les résultats d'apprentissage provinciaux sans le temps ou la valorisation alloués à l'enseignement du français ainsi que leurs bas niveaux de compétence linguistique et méthodologique.

Tous les élèves de 5e à 8e année étudient une langue seconde; pour la plupart, le français. Ceci a commencé quand la Politique de Langue de la C-B a été implantée (1997) pour assurer l'accès à une éducation en langue seconde. Trois problèmes se sont présentés assez rapidement, entre autre:

- la majorité des écoles élémentaires n'avaient pas de spécialistes en français;
- il n'y avait pas de programme de formation pour les généralistes en français de base (ni de cours de méthodologie requis pour les généralistes);
- il n'y avait pas d'heures prescrites pour l'enseignement du français de base.

Le rapport complet, Teaching Core French in British Columbia: Teachers' Perspectives, comprenant les données du sondage et les recommandations pour la formation initiale et continue est disponible: [www.bcatml.org](http://www.bcatml.org).

# Magic comes alive in big fat binders

By Marian Dodds

Recently, I cracked open the thick binders that house the annual sets of applications for the BCTF's Ed May Social Responsibility Fund and found myself transported to another world, a world where teachers make magic happen for their students and creativity is boundless. This is one type of data that is truly worth collecting, qualitative information providing evidence that teachers across BC since 1994 have been initiating projects that result in an increase in socially responsible behaviour in their students.

**Ed May, [was] a man who co-ordinated the BCTF Program Against Racism from 1981–85 and was the epitome of a professional teacher who made social responsibility his way of life.**

Dipping into these binders, wondrous images surfaced and for a few moments, I was transported to those schools and communities and felt invited to:

- imagine the look of delight on a child's face as she releases a slithery salmon into a stream as part of an environmental project involving the school and community.
- think more critically about media literacy while viewing sophisticated public service announcements on bullying, stereotyping, and racism premiered by secondary students at an evening showing for parents and community members.
- feel the sheer joy of children dancing their antiracism, unity, and equality dances in front of an audience of peers and parents.
- taste the crunch of carrots produced in school garden plots, grown with the guidance of senior citizens invited to be garden mentors for the children.
- pause to view a mural in a school that is a daily reminder of youth-created visions of harmo-

ny, inclusion, diversity, and multiculturalism.

- sense the pride of elementary students as part of a whole community participating in an aboriginal naming ceremony for a stream they have been involved in restoring.
- connect with children as they read aloud from the illustrated books they published, based on real experiences related to human values.
- feel respect and appreciation for colleagues who took the time to develop a handbook, "Dealing With Name-Calling," as a concrete tool for teachers to address homophobic and other slurs in hallways and classrooms.
- remind myself that equality for women still needs priority attention while listening to a speaker at an International Women's Day event.
- be amazed at the resourcefulness of intermediate student leaders who worked on a playground committee to identify problems, research solutions, and collaborate with playground supervisors to resolve them.

While teachers rarely see the long-term impact of their efforts, they know what often goes unreported may surface in a serendipitous conversation years later when adults fondly recall their best moments at school. Take the young boy who participated in the elementary school project involving students performing unity, equality, multicultural, and antiracism dances and who wrote to his teacher "When dancing you get to see a different person in everyone you know." Or the youth who was

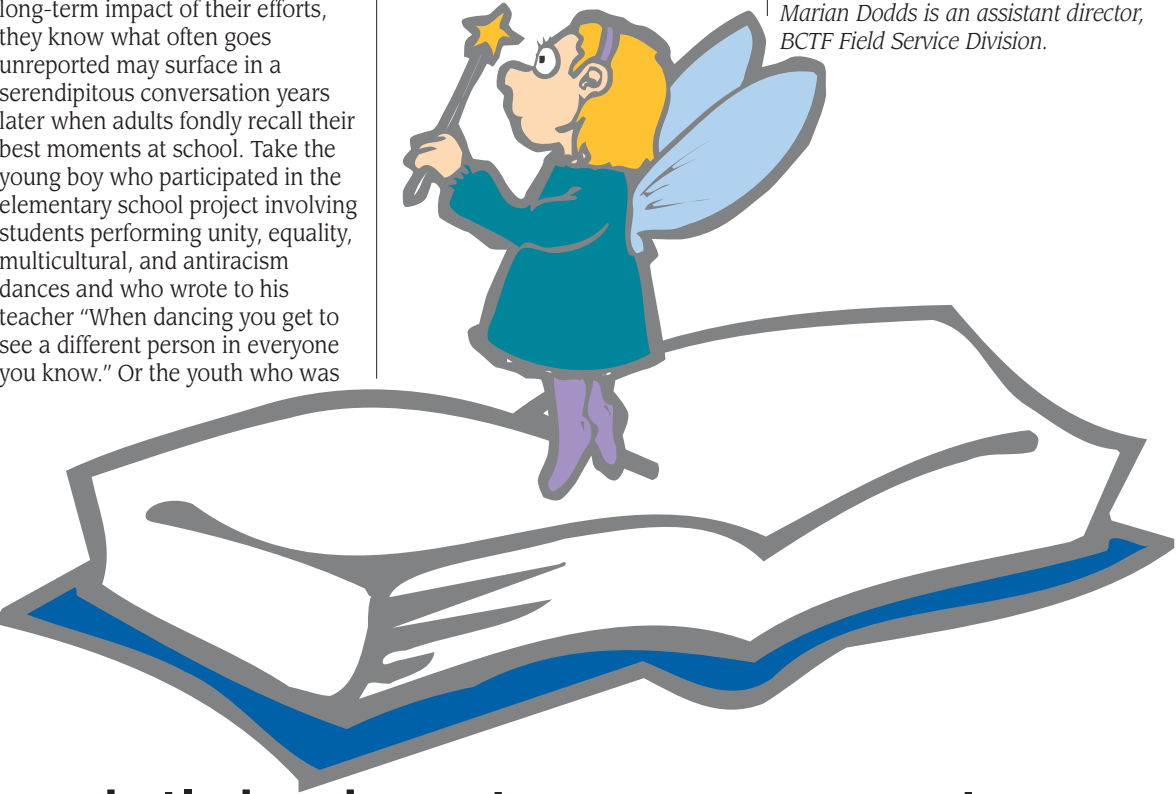
moved by participation in a medicine wheel ceremony at a social justice retreat on First Nations culture and asked, "When is the next one?" I would hope and

**"Imagination is our greatest gift. I believe that. If you can imagine harmony, you can achieve it."**

— Timothy Findlay

expect that these experiences guide them in some positive ways in their adult lives.

Since 1994, BC teachers have been invited to apply for grants of up to \$2,000 for classroom, school-and/or community-based initiatives. This seed money assists BCTF members to expand their work for a socially just world and flows from a 1994 AGM decision to establish a fund, based on \$1 per member each year, to honour Ed May, a man who co-ordinated the BCTF Program Against Racism from 1981–85 and was the epitome of a professional teacher who made social responsibility his way of life. Based on my dip into the binders, I



## The MSG/child obesity connection

Almost everyone who reads or listens to the media knows that we have a child (and adult) obesity crisis in North America—though Canada is not quite as bad as the US in this health crisis. The obesity epidemic is at the root of another crisis—the huge increase in type 2 diabetes in children. Much attention has been rightly focussed on junk food in schools but we also know that it is very hard to get kids to switch to healthier foods if junk food is in any way accessible.

But what most people don't know is why. And it's not that sugar and fat tastes better than vegetables and fruit. The nasty little secret, known by food researchers since at least 1978, is that what really addicts kids to junk foods is not the natural taste. It's the MSG (monosodium glutamate) that is added to virtually all junk foods. And to make matters worse, it's not just traditional junk foods that are stuffed with this addictive chemical, it is a huge range of processed foods.

There are two threats to children from this food additive; it is clinically addictive and it stimulates the pancreas to create more insulin, which in turn drives kids to eat even more. This latter discovery was first made in the late 1970s. But by now there have been literally hundreds of studies taking advantage of this

discovery. How? Scientists using rats and mice in experiments often require obese animals for their tests. But rats and mice are not normally obese, so scientists inject the rodents at birth with MSG and presto! They have obese subjects. The MSG triples the amount of insulin the rat's pancreas creates. If you doubt the connection, go to the National Library of Medicine, at [www.pubmed.com](http://www.pubmed.com) and search under "MSG Obese" and check some of the 127 studies that come up.

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John Erb, formerly a researcher at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, documents the MSG story in his book *The Slow Poisoning of America*. The stuff is in everything, even in some of the coffees you buy at your favourite coffee shop; it's even injected into turkeys. It's in Campbell's soups, the Hostess Doritos, the Lays flavoured potato chips, Betty Crocker Hamburger Helper, Heinz canned gravy,

Swanson frozen prepared meals, and Kraft salad dressings, with even more in the low-fat versions. It is in almost all canned, processed foods. Literally every fast-food joint uses MSG. And because it has nearly a dozen aliases, it's not always easy to tell which foods contain it. Included in its other names are: natural flavouring, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, Accent, Aginomoto, autolyzed yeast extract, and natural meat tenderizer.

In his book, *In Bad Taste: The MSG Symptom Complex*, Dr. George Schwartz identified new research as showing links between MSG and the dramatic rise in cases of asthma, ADHD, migraine, Parkinson's Disease, and heartbeat irregularities. Much of the concern about childhood obesity has focussed on the problems it will cause sufferers later on in life. But according to the *University of Florida News*, researchers at the University of Florida have discovered "a link between morbid obesity in toddlers and lower IQ scores, cognitive delays and brain lesions similar to those seen in Alzheimer's disease patients." Dr. Daniel J. Driscoll, a University of Florida professor of molecular genetics and microbiology in the College of Medicine and the lead author of the study, stated: "...we're postulating that

expect Ed May would be very proud of how far teachers have gone to forward his vision of a just world. Annually, the BCTF receives a wondrous variety of applications and funds, on average, 45 to 50 projects. Since 1994, that adds up to an impressive 700 projects! Often these funds are matched or supplemented with funds from school districts, locals, PACs, and community groups. The popularity of the Ed May Social Responsibility grants clearly demonstrates how BC teachers, despite the pressures to standardize and test relentlessly, are still committed to using their imaginations to build a better world. Reading through the binders and imagining how teachers have made these projects come alive, gives me hope. As Canadian writer Timothy Finlay once said, "I know that human imagination can save us; save the human race and save all the rest of what is alive and save this place—the earth—that is life itself. Imagination is our greatest gift. I believe that. If you can imagine harmony, you can achieve it."

For more information on the Ed May Social Responsibility Fund, go to: [bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6030](http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6030).

Marian Dodds is an assistant director, BCTF Field Service Division.

— Murray Dobbin



# Confessions of two FSA markers

Much of the attention on Foundation Skills Assessments (FSAs) has been on the enormous waste of time involved, the stress on students who are unaccustomed to this kind of testing, and the abuse of the tests by organizations like the Fraser Institute who use the numbers to “rank” schools. But as if these were not reasons enough to call for the end to these tests, it turns out that the marking of them is just as questionable as the tests themselves. Here are two stories—confessions of FSA markers—or rather, as one points out, *coders*.

## Speed was a must

I have kept this story to myself for quite a while, but having finally given up my dream of being appointed a superintendent of achievement, I suppose it can’t do much harm to tell it.

**We were constantly told to go faster; indeed we were specifically told NOT to read the whole essay!**

In the summer of 2001, I agreed to be a marker for the Grade 7 Writing component. After our training, it was clear that speed was an absolute must. As the white boxes were wheeled in, it was explained that, on no account was there any budget to work longer than the allotted five days. We had to get finished by Friday. We were also promised we could leave early on the last day if we were finished. We were constantly told to go faster; indeed we were specifically told NOT to read the whole essay! This was told to us not once but several times. “Read the first part,

get a sense of the quality, and put down a number from one to five.” As for going back to reconsider a mark, or pausing to confer—not a chance. The sheets whizzed by in a blur. By the way, they don’t even call it “marking.” Apparently, the term for what we were doing is “coding.”

But even more surreal was my later role as a member of the Provincial Standards Setting Committee. We were directly supervised by two ministry staff and it was our job to decide where to place the cut-off grade for *Meeting Expectations*. The process (I’m totally serious here) was that we FIRST decided what percentage of the province should meet expectations, THEN we looked at the raw scores and calculated what threshold would make it “come out right.” Well, we were getting paid, so... I can’t remember the exact numbers now, and as usual we had to leave every scrap of paper behind, but I swear it’s the truth.

*Patrick Truelove is a Delta teacher.*

## Behind the scenes in an FSA marking mill

Do FSA scores provide a reliable measure of the abilities of students in BC schools? My experience as an FSA marker does not inspire confidence. In 2002, needing the money, I volunteered to mark Grade 7 English FSA essays. A room full of teachers worked for five days at SFU under the supervision of facilitators from the ministry.

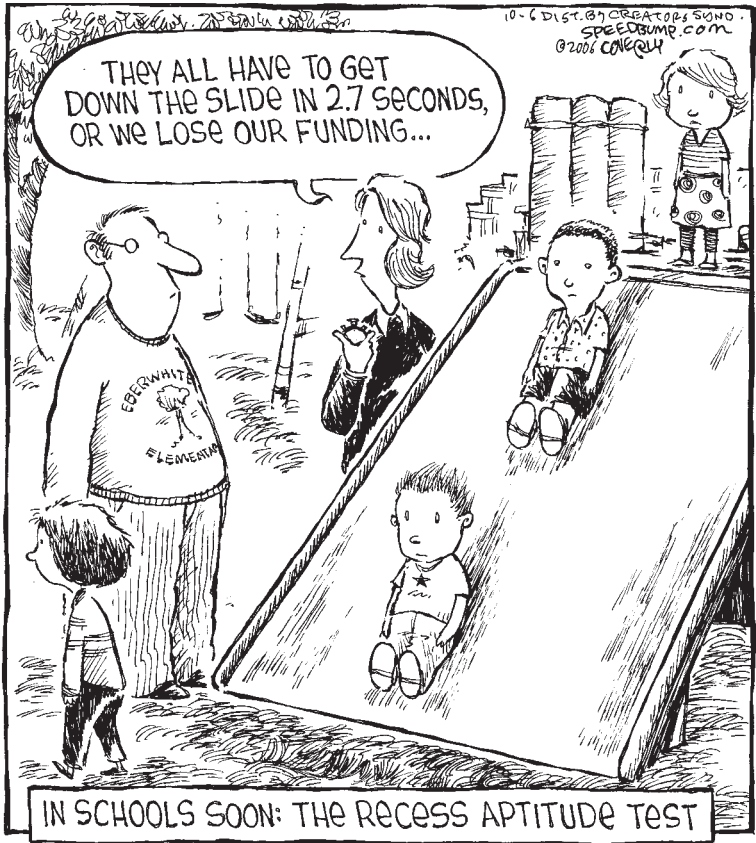
The first day’s orientation included about an hour devoted to explaining the marking criteria. The purpose of our marking was explained to us, and we were given

a rubric for judging whether the essays would be classified as 1 (the lowest), 2, 3, or 4. This was followed by a practice session. Markers would work in pairs with a bundle of 20 or 30 papers at a time. Once we started, the tone gradually changed. We soon realized that the top priority was speed. The marking used to be done

**People who complained that there was no way to mark faster and still read the whole essay were humiliated by the rest of the group.**

in seven days, so the reduction of time to five days greatly increased the pressure to work quickly. Each day the facilitators told us our group was doing fine but that we still needed to speed up.

On the third day, they started writing on a chalk board the number of boxes of essays that had been completed and how many still had to be done. The supervisors also began announcing the range between the pair that had completed the largest number of bundles and the pair that had done the least. People who complained that there was no way to mark faster and still read the whole essay were humiliated by the rest of the group. During the week, at the urging of the facilitators, the overall pace constantly increased. The fastest markers were openly praised for their speed and accuracy. The facilitators paired faster markers with slower ones in hopes of speeding them up. Fast markers were told they would be hired back again.



Eventually it became clear that markers were not reading the entire essay. One of the faster markers admitted that he only looked at the last paragraph and only skimmed it at that, spending no more than 10 seconds per booklet to assess, mark, and initial. At no time did the facilitators ever tell markers not to read the whole composition, but they did have the speedy ones demonstrate and even give verbal directions on how to mark quickly by skipping over almost all of each essay.

Some discovered an even faster method. Given that 95% of the papers were arguably 2s, one could achieve 95% accuracy just by marking every paper with a 2. I marked bundle after bundle with

2s and was told my work was accurate. The only apparent accountability was the inclusion of a reliability paper in some of the bundles. However, this paper was not only obviously photocopied but was actually labelled “Reliability Paper.” Of course, the partners examined and discussed this type of paper meticulously and made sure each of them recorded the same mark for it.

On the last day, our group was rewarded for its speed by being dismissed early after a 90-minute discussion session about FSAs.

*Anonymous*  
Source: *FSA Examiner*, Special Edition, April 24, 2003, Surrey Teachers’ Association.

# South Park: The little school that could



## By Thierry Ponchet

Teachers around the province are very concerned about provincial and district-mandated assessments and their impact on the learning conditions of students. Mandated assessments focus on data gathering and ignore the individual learning needs of our students. But at least one school, in Victoria, has taken a strong stand against the accountability agenda.

**At South Park Elementary School, nestled against the flank of Beacon Hill Park in downtown Victoria, staff and parents have supported a philosophy that strives to develop the full potential of all children.**

At South Park Elementary School, nestled against the flank of Beacon Hill Park in downtown Victoria, staff and parents have supported a

philosophy that strives to develop the full potential of all children. Built in 1894, the graceful, brick building has resonated with the sounds of children learning for over 100 years. What makes this school unique, however, is not its architecture, but the philosophy of the school where students are neither given grade scores, nor are they labelled with such descriptors as not meeting, minimally meeting, fully meeting, or exceeding expectations.

At South Park, parents keep well informed about the progress of individual students through the anecdotal reports and the students’ self-evaluation process. According to Louise Julian, the learning assistance teacher at the school, “reporting is about looking at the child individually, describing what they can do, what they can’t do, and setting goals.” Report-card comments are framed in a positive and encouraging manner.

This manner of reporting is, says Karen Lee Pickett, a parent for the past three years at the school, much

more informative than the standard grading scale of 1, 2, 3, and 4 used in most schools. Teachers work very hard at the school to provide students and parents with the specific progress for each subject. Another important facet of reporting out on student progress is the student self-evaluation process. Students are invited to comment in writing on each of their subjects as to how they are doing in each

**...students are neither given grade scores, nor are they labelled with such descriptors as not meeting, minimally meeting, fully meeting, or exceeding expectations.**

course. Such comments such as “I couldn’t understand this before, but now I really do.” reflects an assessment practice that is centred on the student and not on some extrinsic standard.

South Park Family School has developed a philosophy based on parent participation as an integral part of their children’s educational development. There is a belief within the school community that children thrive in an environment that encourages co-operation over competition. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to become a partner in the assessment process beginning in Kindergarten. Children learn in a variety of ways so there is an emphasis on hands-on learning experiences both in and outside the classroom.

That is why South Park teachers and parents have had great difficulty in reconciling mandated-district assessments such as ORCA and provincially mandated FSAs

with the philosophy of the school. Approximately 50% of students do not write the FSA tests. Teachers strive to nurture in their students an intrinsic motivation to learning; one that is not dependant on the external motivation of standardized testing. According to Margo Andison, a long-time teacher at South Park, “We have a responsibility to diffuse all external pressure on our students. Tests focus on what kids can’t do. We try to instill in our students an internal focus where self-evaluation is emphasized.”

Karen Lee Pickett indicated to the school that her son would not be writing the FSA test. Her son went, with the other children who did not write, to the library while the FSA tests were being administered. She felt that the focus of FSA tests were out of context with the substance of the children’s learning in the classroom. She also had concerns about the length of time that it took to administer the test.

These standardized tests seep insidiously into the learning environment of a school. This impacts not only the teachers who are administering the tests, but also the remaining teachers who feel pressure to prepare their students for these tests a year or two before students actually have to write them. Teachers and parents at South Park have strongly defended their assessment philosophy in the face of ever-increasing pressures from mandated testing. According to Margo Andison, “...it is more valuable to assess students based on what they have done over the whole year or month rather than what a child can achieve on the particular day of the test.” Andison goes on to state that children may feel tired or ill on that day or not find a particular topic very

interesting. So at South Park, teachers and parents work together to build an environment that encourages co-operation rather than competition, one that strives to instruct children in ways that best fit their individual learning styles. It is a school that supports strong family involvement and believes in the concept of a learning continuum and the importance of valuing the self-esteem of students as a key to being good learners.

That the school philosophy continues to flourish in a time when teachers across the province are being pressured to administer mandated provincial and district assessments is heartening and serves as an example to us all about how teachers, parents, and students can assert a vision of evaluation that runs contrary to the dictates of the Ministry of Education. Clearly, the staff in conjunction with their school community, have taken the

**Teachers strive to nurture in their students an intrinsic motivation to learning; one that is not dependant on the external motivation of standardized testing.**

position that teachers are professionals and that with support from parents, are best able to make informed decisions about the nature and frequency of student assessment. After all, the education and more particularly the assessment of the children of BC is too important an issue to be left solely in the hands of ministry officials.

*Thierry Ponchet is president of the Greater Victoria Teachers’ Association.*



# A standardized test for standardized testers

This test should be offered to all MLAs, especially the minister of education, ministry bureaucrats, and school trustees

By Jim Bowman

**Preface:** This can be read to, or by, the person being tested.

There is a widely held view that students should be tested in school, because as adults, life will continually test them. The problem with that view is that it is based on a false assumption that all tests in schools are of the pass or fail variety and doesn't distinguish between those tests and diagnostic tests. Pass or fail tests are involved with conclusions, getting certificates of achievement and the like. They are concerned with the *what* of the curriculum. On the other hand diagnostic tests are examinations of the process of achievement, temporary assessments of student strengths and weaknesses, the *how* of teaching.

Think of learning to drive. The final test is pass or fail and the licensor will determine that outcome. However, in the process of learning to drive, diagnosis is the responsibility of the instructor, not the certifier. 'You failed to shoulder check at the appropriate time. You will not pass the final test if you drive with a cell phone in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. You have to wait until you're certified to do that.'

Standardized tests in schools are supposed to be diagnostic in nature. So is the one that follows. It sticks to the format typical of many, but not all, of the tests given in schools.

## Test

1. Canada's public education system is ranked with Finland and Sweden as one of the top three countries in the world. True or False

2. With the exception of a few states, the USA has a very poor public education system. True or False
3. The USA is the largest producer and user of standardized tests in the so-called First World. True or False
4. Research has shown that, in the USA, teacher-education programs do not get their fair share of the "best and brightest" students entering university. True or False
5. Research has shown that in Canada teacher-education programs do get their fair share of the "best and brightest" students entering university. True or False
6. The "best and the brightest" of experienced teachers appreciate being told how to do what they do in their classrooms by supervisory personnel. True or False
7. The Bush political rhetoric "No child left behind," in reality means more and more testing and a heavy involvement of the private sector in public education. True or False
8. What happens in public education in the USA influences what happens in Canada. (a) Always (b) Quite often (c) Rarely (d) Never.
9. The most important trio in the education of children is: (a) Ministry of Education, children, and school boards. (b) District supervisors, children, and ministry bureaucrats. (c) teachers, children, and parents.
10. In any given class, who knows the children best and can best ascertain their needs? (a) Minister of Education (b) School board (c) District supervisors (d) ministry bureaucrats (e) Teacher.
11. Standardized tests have never been used in BC to compare teachers, classes, schools, or school districts. True or False
12. Is it possible to avoid using standardized test results for comparative purposes in evaluating teachers or schools? (a) yes (b) no (c) very unlikely.
13. The results of any diagnostic test

- should never be taken out of the context of the classroom. Agree or Disagree
14. Physicians check one's blood pressure because the Ministry of Health says they must. True or False
  15. Teachers' use of standardized tests should be (a) compulsory, (b) voluntary.
  16. Teachers frequently use their own diagnostic tests to assist their students? Yes or No
  17. The greatest contributory causes of lack of success in elementary school are socio-economic background, especially poverty and the lack of parents' reading to, and with, preschool and primary-aged children. True or False
  18. Standardized tests help to correct poverty and the lack of parents reading to, and with, preschool and primary-aged children. True or False
  19. Within the bounds of reason and common sense, society at large through its systems of government should determine *what* is taught in schools. Yes or No
  20. Within the bounds of reason and common sense, teachers, not ministers of education, not bureaucrats, not school boards, not supervisory personnel should determine *how* the *what* is taught in schools. Yes or No
  21. Standardized tests are more likely to help students become (a) critically aware individuals, (b) gullible conformists.
- Answers:** 1. True, 2. True, 3. True, 4. True, 5. True, 6. False, 7. True, 8. (b), 9. (c), 10. (e) 11. False, 12. (c), 13. Agree, 14. False, 15. (b) 16. yes, 17. True, 18. False, 19. Yes, 20. Yes, 21. (b)

Having completed the test you are probably upset at the arbitrary nature of its structure. For just about every question a really worthwhile answer would need at least a qualifying paragraph, if not an essay, if not a book.

Questions are two-edged swords. They reveal the biases of the questioner as much as the answers reveal the knowledge of the answerer. The answers imply that once the state has determined *what* shall be taught, then the teacher should decide *how* it should be taught. Little merit is given to those in supervisory or consulting positions. There are many school trustees, superintendents, and other

personnel not in the classroom who give teachers the support services they need. Even ministers of education can be useful (though in BC we have had some lulus). Think of the good work that Eileen Daily did promoting Kindergartens and abolishing the strap.

But when you have quit being mad at the composer of this test, perhaps you could then turn your anger on the standardized tests which are as arbitrary as the one above, asking students to tick somebody else's answers while seldom giving students a chance to write their own sentences or paragraphs.

Now you might say, so what, give them the silly test then forget about it and get on with the real business of learning. But the tests are only symptoms of a much larger problem—one of *functional literacy*, the use and comprehension of the language as a whole.

Some years ago, one authority described functional literacy as the ability to understand written instructions, creating universal consumer literacy but with minimal reading skills, a characteristic of a gullible and passive populace. Functional literacy does little to help achieve the real purposes of education, which are to stimulate innate curiosity, creativity and imagination, to develop needed skills, and to help children acquire useful knowledge as opposed to memorizing what Whitehead called "inert" knowledge which, particularly these days, is available at the touch of a mouse.

Real learning, particularly in language, is not a lock-step system. It is a matter of slow and incremental growth as individual as each child. When standardized tests are imposed on classrooms, it must be because outside authorities think they know what children need better than teachers do. This certainly mocks the rhetoric of the establishment about the paramount importance of the classroom in the system of education. What a paradox when the teacher is the most important educator in the learning process, but the least important in the hierarchy. Teachers need organizational support, not directives from the system. Schools are not factories.

When students get to secondary school, they need much more than functional literacy. They should be developing a critical awareness of the world around them. In a liberal democracy we are at the mercy of

one another's vote and surely the ultimate aim of education should be to have everyone capable of thinking for themselves, impervious to blatant propaganda and the lies of demagogues. And if you don't think there is, in our neighbour to the south, a direct connection between the paucity of their public education system and the ability of the military-industrial-religious fundamentalist complex to hood-wink the populace, you haven't been paying attention.

Ministries of education and school boards, if they really want to level the academic playing field, should concentrate much more on preschool and primary education. The focus should be on small intimate primary community schools also housing day care and seniors' activities. They should have good libraries and reach into the community to work with parents of preschool children. Rare is the child, read to since birth, who has trouble learning successfully in school. Over 20 years ago, significant research conducted by the University of London in low economic and multiracial city areas demonstrated the very significant impact of getting parents involved in the reading process. The children, whose parents were involved in their reading, showed greater progress than those who had remedial school tuition.

For those districts with declining enrolments and faced with school closures, school boards should liaise with councils and municipalities to encourage zoning changes that provide for more family housing in the affected areas. Developments in new subdivisions should automatically include these small community-oriented primary schools.

Above all, teachers should be regarded as professionals. If they are treated as technicians who need to be told *how* to do *what* they have to do, the "best and brightest" will go elsewhere, and a system no different from that in many US states will prevail.

*Jim Bowman, a retired educator, qualified to teach in 1948, taught every grade from 1 to 12, courses for soldiers, displaced persons, and university students. He served in almost every administrative position and retired as the Director of the Government Division of the BCTF in 1987. He long ago declared war on the "workbook-fill-in-the-blanks" process of education which of course includes standardized tests.*

# A celebration of non-violence

By Pummy Kaur

On October 2, 2007, the BC and Surrey chapter of the Peace And Global Educators (PAGE) marked the 138th anniversary of the birth of Mahatama Gandhi with a week of celebrations focussing on recognizing, rewarding, and honouring children who promote non-violence. The PAGE executive believe it is better to reward and recognize children for doing the right things than to punish children for and focus on them doing the wrong things. To that end we created this Celebration of Non-Violence.

Sam Fillipoff, a retired BC teacher, founding father of *Acts of Transformation from War Toys To Art* and Susan Suzic, vice-president of PAGE, spent the day at Semiahmoo Mall in South Surrey, with displays of the art created by elementary students, following discussions of peace and related issues. Also on display were information tables from various peace organizations, including Amnesty International, UNICEF, Brahma Kumaris, PAGE, and Conscience Canada (a group promoting the withholding of taxes

spent on the military, to be held in trust for peaceful purposes, calling it The Peace Tax!).

The White Rock library organized its day around all the resources related to Gandhi and peace, with displays of books, videos, and art. Mayor Judy Forster, of White Rock, proclaimed October 2 to be Gandhi Day, with an official proclamation read during the previous night's council meeting, and then read again at the evening events on October 2. The evening events were held at First United Church to recognize and honour a secondary school student who embodies a life lived according to some Gandhian principles—seva (service), compassion, and non-violence.

The evening began with a reception for the nominees from the three Semiahmoo Peninsula secondary schools. The nominees were Cameron Milligan, Jehoo Lee, and Karen Hefford, nominated by staff and parents. Following the reception Victor Chan, co-founder of The Dalai Lama Center for Peace And Education with His Holiness The Dalai Lama, gave the keynote address, emphasizing the role of

personal and individual non-violent lives in attaining global peace. Greg Van Vugt, president of the Surrey chapter of PAGE, and Chan jointly



Mayor Judy Forster, of White Rock, proclaimed October 2 to be Gandhi Day with an official proclamation read during the previous night's council meeting.

gave all the nominees plaques and copies of the book *What Would Gandhi Do?*, after sharing some of the highlights in the nomination letters for each marvelous youth.

Cameron Milligan received the highest honour of day with The Gandhi Peace Award. He became a vegetarian at 11, and recently a vegan, out of compassion and environmental concerns. Milligan turned off the TV five years ago because it is bad for society (and "just plain stupid"); rarely shops, and when he does it is ethical shopping. He does not preach, and he simply lives Gandhi's message of being the change we wish to see in the world.

The minister and members of First United Church in White Rock supported the event by organizing and showing the film *Gandhi* with Ben Kingsley after the awards ceremony. They supplied the refreshments and Paul Choisl serenaded everyone during the reception. Many others supported the celebration including the Surrey Teachers' Association, the media, Holi Smoke Coffee, Living Values Education Program Canadian co-ordinator Gudrun Howard, school

staffs and nominators, and Van Vugt's students who created beautiful certificates for the nominees.

**An entire community came together to celebrate a great man's birthday, and to celebrate the lives of some great young people.**

An entire community came together to celebrate a great man's birthday, and to celebrate the lives of some great young people. We may not all have been the village that raised these adolescents, but it certainly was a privilege to be in the village that showed up to honour them, and to express thanks to their parents for having raised the kind of people we would all wish our students to be.

*Pummy Kaur is past president, BC Peace and Global Educators, Surrey.* (The plan is to expand the event each year until youth are nominated from every province and territory, and classrooms across Canada engage in the War Toys to Art program. If your school district would like to participate, please e-mail [whatwould\\_gandhido@yahoo.ca](mailto:whatwould_gandhido@yahoo.ca).)





Malalai Joya, outspoken 29-year-old elected politician and activist from Afghanistan, spoke at peace rallies in Victoria and Vancouver in October 2007.

# The bravest woman in Afghanistan visits BC

By Derrick O’Keefe

Malalai Joya, the outspoken 29-year-old elected politician and activist from Afghanistan, has just completed a whirlwind tour of British Columbia. Appearing at a number of rallies, meetings, and forums, Joya has spoken out strongly against what she views as a terribly wrong-headed policy that Canada and its NATO allies are following in Afghanistan. Elected from her home province of Farah to the new Afghan parliament in 2005, Malalai Joya has been the most vocal critic of the strong presence of warlords and war criminals who, according to Human Rights Watch, have a dominant presence in the parliament.

**Since...she spoke out against the presence of warlords at the Constitutional Assembly, Joya has survived four assassination attempts...**

Because Joya has denounced these known criminals, many of whom have been promoted to key posts in Hamid Karzai’s western-backed regime, she has been a constant target of these anti-democratic forces. Since coming to international attention in 2003, when she spoke out against the presence of warlords at the Constitutional Assembly, Joya has survived four assassination attempts, and lives in constant danger. Joya has continued to receive threats, and must live and travel clandestinely, using the burqa to hide her identity

in addition to always being accompanied by bodyguards. Joya was the featured speaker at peace rallies in both Victoria and Vancouver on the weekend of October 27–28, and she also spoke to audiences at the University of Victoria, the Vancouver Institute, Langara College, the University College of the Fraser Valley, Simon Fraser University, and at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops. She addressed a number of union and community meetings, including a forum co-sponsored by the BCTF in Port Moody on October 29. Her Canadian tour continues in November, with stops in Toronto and Halifax, before she heads on to Finland. Prior to visiting Canada, Joya was in Germany and Italy, where she received numerous honours for her work on behalf of women’s rights and democracy in her occupied country. Joya has also made clear that women have not achieved any substantial improvement in their conditions after more than six years of war. “In my crying Afghanistan, we have been pushed from the frying pan into the fire,” Joya explains. “The West has put in power the Northern Alliance, who are every bit as dark-minded and antiwomen as the Taliban.” Joya notes, for example, that rates of female suicide are as high as ever, and that the life expectancy of Afghan women is a mere 45 years. More than just enlightening Canadians about the realities of the war and about the unsavoury and corrupt government that NATO is currently backing, Joya has been inspiring people from all walks of life with her message and her courage. A typical response came

my way from a UBC student who had heard Joya speak on his campus, “She made me cry, and to tell you the truth I’m very worried about what may happen to her as I can’t but think that she is an extremely important historical figure.” UBC professor Dr. Michael Byers, head of the Liu Institute, described Joya as “the bravest person I have ever met.”

**“The West has put in power the Northern Alliance, who are every bit as dark-minded and antiwomen as the Taliban.”**

In May of this year, Joya’s situation took a turn for the worse as she was suspended from parliament on the pretext that she had insulted the institution. Despite this, she continues to use any and all means to speak out against the warlords that dominate Afghanistan’s government. Despite living under constant physical threat, Joya shows no sign of being silenced. She explains, “They may kill me one day, but they cannot silence my voice. You can cut down the flower but you cannot stop the coming of the spring.” She is fond of saying that “the silence of good people is worse than the actions of bad people,” and it is clear that no menace or intimidation can silence Joya. Sadly, Canada’s Conservative government has remained silent regarding the case of Malalai Joya, and this puts her at even greater risk. Joya’s message stands in sharp contrast to the position of the Harper government, which claims that waging counter-insurgency war

until 2011 and beyond will bring democracy, women’s rights, and stability to Afghanistan. For her part, Joya urges, “If Canada cannot change its role in Afghanistan and stop following the wrong policy of the US, then it is better that you [the Canadian military mission] leave.” Try as they might to ignore her, as more and more Canadians come to know the story of Malalai Joya, her plight and her struggle for justice will inspire many more good people to speak out and to take action for social change. Malalai Joya’s tour of Canada has been organized by BC Labour Against War, in conjunction with the StopWar peace coalition in Vancouver. Fundraising has been an important goal of her visit, as Joya is a director of a non-governmental organization called Organization Promoting Afghan Women’s Capabilities (OPAWC). All donations to this group go toward health and education projects in Afghanistan, as well as to covering the costs of Joya’s personal security. Cheques can be made out to the Vancouver & District Labour Council and

**UBC professor Dr. Michael Byers, head of the Liu Institute, described Joya as “the bravest person he has ever met.”**

mailed to #20-1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver, BC, V5L 1K3. Please include a note indicating that the donation is for “Malalai Joya tour” or “OPAWC”. Derrick O’Keefe is the editor of [www.rabble.ca](http://www.rabble.ca) and the co-chair of the Vancouver StopWar Coalition.

## Volunteer with the Cuba Project

The BCTF needs volunteers for its ongoing project with the teachers of English in Cuba. The Cuba Project sends a team of seven teachers twice a year to instruct a two-week English-language methodology and language-enhancement course. This is a university-level credit course offered through teachers’ colleges around Cuba, and is sponsored by the Cuban Teachers’ Union, the Cuban Ministry of

Education, and the BCTF and CoDevelopment Canada, with funding from CIDA. Teachers involved in the project must: be active BCTF members, speak English fluently, be flexible, and adaptable to developing-country conditions, have excellent facilitation skills, have experience working with adults, be able to work co-operatively in a team, be able to work with minimal resources and to improvise, be very knowledgeable of second-language methodology and strategies, have

specialized training or experience in teaching languages, and have a valid Canadian passport. The ability to speak functional Spanish is an asset. In addition, volunteers must be available to travel over the December or March break, or the first three weeks in July, depending on the program’s needs. Teachers are expected to teach in very hot and humid conditions. The BCTF pays transportation costs; food and lodging are provided by our Cuban partners.

The deadline for applications is January 18, 2008. Please send a letter with details of how you meet each of the above requirements and an explanation of why you would like to be a part of the Cuba Project to Anne Field, BCTF International Program, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2, f: 604-871-2294, [afield@bctf.ca](mailto:afield@bctf.ca). If you have questions, call Anne at 604-871-2251, or 1-800-663-9163 (loc. 2251). To view a *Teacher* newsmagazine article about the Cuba Project, go to <http://tinyurl.com/24kkpu>.

## Sign up to BCTF’s E-News

The BCTF puts out a number of regular publications—from *Teacher* newsmagazine to *BCTF News* and *Issue Alerts*. While *Teacher* goes to every member, most of the others have a limited distribution list. *E-News* is different. While it also goes to several lists—presidents, vice-presidents, local reps—individual teachers can also sign up to receive it by e-mail. *E-News* comes out about twice a month and has a mix of stories from local to international and covering educational issues as well as more general topics we think might inform teachers. For example, the November issue had stories on big box daycare coming to BC, new WCB regulations making late-night workers the safest in North America, and a story about the Union of BC Municipalities pressuring the government on school closures. To view the latest *E-news* go to: [bctf.ca/publications/BCTFEnews.aspx](http://bctf.ca/publications/BCTFEnews.aspx) To get *E-News* sent to you, go to the BCTF web site at: [bctf.ca/cgi-bin/maillinglistsub.pl](http://bctf.ca/cgi-bin/maillinglistsub.pl) Choose ‘enews’ from the list provided and type in your e-mail address.

## Attention bloggers...

The BCTF recently launched a blog where teachers can comment and debate education issues. The first discussion was kicked off by a post from the Testing Workgroup called “Testing, testing, testing...” The discussion is moderated. To join in the debates, go to: [bctf.ca/blogs/testing.aspx](http://bctf.ca/blogs/testing.aspx).

## Reported elsewhere...

- **Education: “How to be Top”** *The Economist* magazine, October 18, 2007 The article looks at the results of years of continuous education reform in Britain and discovers... that nothing has changed in terms of actual outcomes. It also concluded: “...that the same countries head such league tables again and again: Canada, Finland, Japan, Singapore, South Korea.” <http://tinyurl.com/3xb3f9>
- **Ohio goes after charter schools that are failing** “Ohio became a test tube for the nation’s charter-school movement during a decade of Republican rule... But their record has been spotty. This year, the state’s school report card gave more than half of Ohio’s 328 charter schools a D or an F. Now its Democratic governor and attorney general are cracking down on the schools. And across the country, charter-school advocates are watching nervously, fearful the backlash could spread.” <http://tinyurl.com/26qmmmb>
- **Teachers’ union warns of chaos** from new elementary school report cards; information on evaluation process delayed until last month, president says. *Montreal Gazette*, <http://tinyurl.com/22mjok>
- **Smaller classes = better health.** Reducing the number of students per classroom in US primary schools may be more cost-effective than most public health and medical interventions, according to a study by researchers at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and the Virginia Commonwealth University. <http://tinyurl.com/2oz9em>





BCTF Advantage—  
Check it out

By Laurence Greeff

The new program for BCTF members and staff has been successfully launched! There were very few glitches and we are seeing excellent response from BCTF members.

The launch event on October 13, at the BCTF building, was well attended and a lot of fun! Over \$2,000 in prizes were won by the teachers and staff who attended. There was also \$1,000 worth of Husky Mohawk gift certificates sent out to BCTF members all over the province who registered electronically on launch day.

The hottest attractions at the event were the travel suppliers with the custom package vacations and the sneak peak at the e-store products that will be available in early 2008.

Phase 1 of this program includes offers for insurance discounts, custom offers on vacations, no-surprises pricing on travel packages, and deals on BCAA membership.

The affinity subcommittee is working hard to get ready for phase 2 of the Advantage Program that will include BCTF's e-store for discounted lifestyle products, new travel insurance, and other items currently under review.

Here are some things we have already heard from BCTF members:

- "This is a great opportunity for group buying power." (Kelowna)
- "Thank you for this new service for teachers." (Burnaby)
- "We all know teaching is rewarding, but it is nice that there will finally be other 'perks' too." (Richmond)
- "Thanks to all for the time and effort committed." (North Okanagan-Shuswap)

Thinking about a winter break holiday or March fly-and-flop on the beach? Your perfect vacation might be waiting through BCTF Advantage.

The best way to find out all the details is to click on the BCTF Advantage symbol on the front page of *bctf.ca* and look through the web site.

Mini-launches are planned around the province, watch the web site for dates and locations.

*Laurence Greeff is chairperson of the BCTF Finance Committee and the BCTF Advantage subcommittee.*

Inappropriate cell  
phone use?

I teach computer studies at a Victoria secondary school. When my students are active at their computers working on projects, I have a sign-up list on the board for students to request help. Sometimes the list gets too long (29 in a computer class) and students find creative ways to get my attention. One day, my classroom phone rang and I answered. "Hello Ms. Ehrcke," said the student. "Hello," I replied. "Who is speaking?" "It's me, Johnny," said the student, "I'm next on the list!"

– Tara Ehrcke, Greater Victoria



Health and safety

Privacy vs. the  
right to know

By Mark Keelan

One of the questions asked of the BCTF's Health and Safety office fairly frequently is whether or not teachers have the right to know if individual students have communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B. Or, do students have the right to keep their personal medical information private?

Section 115 of the *Workers Compensation Act* outlines the general duties of employers. The first and most important of those duties is the obligation to ensure the health and safety of all of the employer's workers. That includes an obligation to either eliminate, or at least minimize, the risk that school district workers will contract a communicable disease on the job.

**A person's right to keep medical issues private is something that courts, tribunals, and officials have consistently ruled must be vigorously protected.**

Compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* (OH&SR) will help employers to fulfill their obligations. Part 6 of the OH&SR includes provisions for how to deal with biohazardous materials. Specifically, OH&SR 6.34 states that employers must establish an exposure control plan, "if a worker has or may have occupational exposure to a bloodborne pathogen, or to other biohazardous material...." The exposure control plan must include, among other things, a statement of purpose and responsibilities, the method to be used for risk identification, assessment and control, provision for education and training, and written work procedures. Most BCTF members have never seen their district's exposure control plan. Ask for it.

To comply with OH&SR 6.35, the employer must identify all tasks and procedures in which there is a potential for occupational exposure to a bloodborne pathogen, or to other biohazardous material. These tasks and procedures could include, among others, playground supervision, teaching a physical

education class, coaching a sports team, or dealing with student fights.

OH&SR 6.36 outlines specific controls that the employer must put in place where there is a risk to workers of exposure to biohazardous materials. Subsection 1 states in part that engineering and work practice controls must be established to eliminate or minimize occupational exposures. Engineering controls involve modifying or replacing equipment used for medical treatment, something that is not particularly applicable to schools. However, work practice controls can certainly be established in schools. Such controls could include provisions for ensuring that only trained individuals who have the proper equipment, i.e., not teachers, clean up blood, vomit, urine, and other bodily fluids.

OH&SR 6.36 also states that personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used to shield workers from biohazardous materials. The employer must supply personal protective equipment and must train workers in how to use it. Appropriate PPE in schools includes surgical quality gloves, masks to prevent bodily fluids from getting into the eyes, nose and mouth, and single-use, one-way resuscitation devices for use in emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Teachers should have this equipment readily available to them, particularly when they are most

likely to encounter student injuries, for example, playground supervision and physical education class.

Recall that OH&SR 6.35 requires that the employer identify tasks and procedures in which there is a potential for occupational exposure to a bloodborne pathogen, or to other biohazardous material. Subsection 6 of OH&SR 6.36 requires the implementation of universal precautions for those tasks and procedures. Universal precautions are procedures designed to reduce the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions require that all human blood and other potentially infectious bodily fluids be treated as if they were known to be infected with HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B or other bloodborne pathogens.

Clearly, then, employers have an obligation to ensure that workers are protected from contracting communicable diseases at work. But, do students not have the right to keep certain information about themselves private?

A person's right to keep medical issues private is something that courts, tribunals, and officials have consistently ruled must be vigorously protected. For example, in a March 2007 letter to the BCTF, British Columbia's Information and Privacy Commissioner David Loukidelis, states "...personal information about one's HIV/AIDS status, in particular, is extremely sensitive and warrants robust privacy protection." This being the case, how can a worker's right to be safe at work be reconciled with a

student's right to privacy?

Universal precautions, together with the other provisions of Part 6 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, are the answer. Employers' compliance with the provisions eliminates the need for workers to be given information that must be kept private.

BCTF members can help to protect themselves, their co-workers, and their students by insisting that their employers:

- have an exposure-control plan.
- have identified tasks and procedures that could expose workers to biohazardous materials.
- have procedures in place to eliminate or minimize the risk of exposure.
- have appropriate personal protective equipment readily available.
- have instituted a system of universal precautions.
- have provided education about biohazardous material and bloodborne pathogens.
- have provided staff with the training necessary to carry out the established procedures.
- have provided training in the use of universal precautions and personal protective equipment.

Putting together a comprehensive program will cost school districts some time and money. However, protecting their employees from potentially deadly illnesses, and the peace of mind that goes with such protection, is worth it.

*Mark Keelan is the BCTF's health and safety officer for prevention.*



On being well

The simple truth  
of wellness

By Julia Johnson

The October 27, 2007 *Vancouver Sun*, was a special edition on personal health and wellness. According to guest editor Dr. Penny Day, "Health is the No. 1 issue facing Canadians. That's a very important reason to educate the public on the health system and their health care." Apparently, when it comes to determining how long we can be expected to live, Dr. Thomas Perls, who heads the New England Centenarian Study, (the world's largest study of those over the age of 100) states, "that based on available research approximately 30% of our health is genetic, which means that 70% is within our control." For the past five years, the focus of this wellness column has been to work within the framework

of these two perspectives—to educate by appealing to the wisdom we have been given, but often ignore, for making choices about our health that are within 70% of our control.

The central issue of implementing a healthcare plan is an early diagnosis from a skilled medical team. Today, the availability of the Internet enables individuals to begin this diagnostic process before seeing a doctor. With 5% of all Internet searches being health related this is evidence that people are endeavouring to take action for their own health. However, part of accepting responsibility for one's health goes beyond seeking solutions only when ill health begins to rear its ugly head, but requires that we establish a preventative healthcare plan that is woven into the fabric of the way we live.

The very simple truth is we are brought to life with a first breath and our life ends with a last breath

and in between these two breaths are the choices we make that create the wellness pages of the book of our life. More often than not these wellness pages are reduced to background images as we pursue education, careers, relationships, causes, financial success, and recognition. The lifetime pursuit of these goals easily becomes the foreground to the emotional drama

**When we make decisions that take into account how we feel, instead of only listening to the voice of logic and reason, we begin to understand what makes us happy...**

that frequently has an impact upon our ability to keep well.

At the onset of life, however, as we learn and grow as children, our life is simple; it is not infused with complicated decisions that require logic and reason. The pages in our book as children are filled with the feelings and emotions we are experiencing at the time. We are

either happy or unhappy based upon whether or not we like or don't like what we are doing. If we like something and are happy, then we stay engaged in the activity. If we are unhappy and don't like the experience then we become disengaged. Simple!

This simple truth is worth remembering when we are faced with life's choices. Dr. Phil of TV fame has created a counselling empire using this simple truth with his renowned question, "How's that working for you?" Such a question gets to the root of one's feelings and helps determine a course of action that comes from the heart. When we make decisions that take into account how we feel, instead of only listening to the voice of logic and reason, we begin to understand what makes us happy, and what we are good at. With this knowledge we are better able to connect with the heart and soul of who we are, thus creating pages in our book of life where wellness becomes part of the foreground in all we do.

*Julia Johnson, is a retired learning resource teacher in Quesnel and a BCTF PD wellness associate. livingjewels@shaw.ca.*



# Teachers retired

## Teachers who retired prior to October 2007

### 5 Southeast Kootenay

Gordon Anderson  
Anthony Collins  
Kathleen Fanning  
Michael Fanning  
Darrell Goss  
Margaret Goss  
Donald Allan Jones  
Susan Langin  
Tessa McGregor  
Patricia McInnes  
Kathleen Melenka  
Shaun Nerbas  
Stan Skelton  
Michael Wheaton

### 6 Rocky Mountain

Karen Barraclough  
Lillian Child  
Beverly Coulter  
Luana Gillies  
Robert Hiebert  
Patricia McBain  
Cecil Morissette  
Blake Rawson  
Marika Veysey  
Diane Wilson

### 8 Kootenay Lake

Gregory Bass  
Terry Batt  
Louise Catherall  
Aya Chernoff  
Barbara Dryhurst  
Janet Fox  
Thomas Foxcroft  
Sandra Hartman  
Craig Keith  
Glen Kinder  
Peter Lamb  
Rosemarie Lowe  
Diane Penner

### 19 Revelstoke

Elizabeth Elliott  
Donna MacLeod  
Audrey Zoritch

### 20 Kootenay Columbia

Lorren Culley  
Louise Dewdney  
Maureen Fenner  
Michael Gifford  
Douglas Matthews  
Seamus McAuley  
Jeremy Palmer  
Douglas Pinkerton  
Dave Pugh  
Susan Trousdale

### 22 Vernon

Harold Derksen  
Jack Yamaoka

### 23 Central Okanagan

Roberta Armstrong  
Linda August  
Jane Baehr  
Joelle Barrett  
Rodney Belinski  
Bonnie Bohlender  
Lorne Brown  
Marlene Byrka  
Arthur Crocker  
Douglas Cunnian  
Rick Davidson  
Janice Derriksan  
Paul Desjardins  
Ivars Dravinskis  
David Elliot  
Valerie Embury  
Bonita Ferreiro  
Gregory Flower  
Odette Flower  
Doreen Francis  
Rick Francis  
Frances Greer  
Betty Hersey  
Diane Hluchy  
Donald Hluchy  
Jack Holly  
Melvyn Hunt  
Bette James  
Rita Klimuk  
Colleen Knox  
Donald Knox  
Judy Koe  
Walter Kraubner  
Neal Lam  
Brenda Langhorn  
Collene Lloyd  
Carol Ludbrook  
Lise MacAuley  
Anne McCormick  
Terry Miles  
Donald Moore  
Barry Muramatsu  
Geraldine Petretta  
Joseph Petretta  
Donald Rampone  
Barbara Rodger  
Donna Rubadeau  
Samuel Saprunoff  
Robert Shanks  
Carol Smithson  
Michael Stephens  
Joanne Swain

Bradley Talbot  
Myrna Toles  
Denise Trowsdale-Moore  
Donald Vogt  
Judy Watkinson  
Dwight Wendell

### 27 Cariboo-Chilcotin

Jo-Ann Abdai  
Patrick Adams  
Sharron Aebig  
Jennifer Bazan  
Daphne Bickford  
Karen Blanchard  
John Blewett  
Joy Brown  
Kerry Brown  
Colin Campbell  
Kathy Crawshay  
Kathryn Faulkner  
Leona Fry  
Judith Gartrell  
Carla Glanville  
Clark Glanville  
Lea Hengstler  
Carol Hilton  
Ray Hornby  
Joan Hunter  
Eric Jarvis  
Leslie Lamb  
Lorne Landry  
Margrethe Madsen  
Maureen Margetts  
Allan Matthews  
Joanne Montgomery  
Brian Palin  
Alexis Reynolds  
Christine Richardson  
Russell Sharock  
Peter Sharpe  
Lorraine Smith  
John Visentin  
David Walker  
Windsor Waldron  
Stuart Westie  
Sheila Wyse  
Gloria Yaniw

### 28 Quesnel

Ellen Affleck  
Donna Bell  
Colleen Brines  
Marilyn Caron  
Colleen Gatenby  
Nancy Last  
Diana Meronek  
Carol Morris  
John Price  
James Sagert  
Joyce Standbridge  
Marilyn Van Leusden  
Joyce Weber  
Melvin Winthrope

### 33 Chilliwack

Gillian Alford  
Rowland Amos  
Marguerite Ascione  
Barbara Black  
Robert Black  
Barbara Burns  
Darshan Chand  
Kenneth Davies  
Edward Fritsch  
Linda-Barbar Fritsch  
Gwendolyn Gallis  
Carol Grahauer  
Robert Grahauer  
Ruth Hall  
Shirley Harman  
Stephen Hawkins  
Richard Holmes  
Jacqueline Johnston  
Wendy Major  
Ronald McAndrew  
Mary-Lee Merz  
Lynda Patrick  
Klara Repsch  
Heidi Robinson  
Susan Rutherford  
Larry Weiss  
Gordon Yakimow

### 34 Abbotsford

James Altomare  
James Bergen  
Susan Brayton  
Anne Brown  
Susan Bullock  
Debra Darlington  
Cheryl Geissler  
Heather Grant  
Nancy Gray  
Marion Guenther  
Russell Hall  
Tina Hinds  
Jean Hoffmann  
Evelyn Jensen  
Gillian Krantz  
Heather Lockhart  
Stephanie Mackenzie  
Bonita MacLean  
Kenneth MacLeod  
Margaret Mallett  
Linda Matties  
Grant McAvoy  
David Morgan  
Virginia Munro  
Deanne Munzar  
Farida Nanji

Lorraine Olsen  
Erik Olthof  
Margo Payne  
Elizabeth Phillips  
Frances Pocock  
Valorie Smith  
Jetta Taylor  
Sharon Taylor  
Ian Waymark  
Raymond Webb  
Marion Weir

### 35 Langley

Terrace Ames  
Heather Anderlini  
Linda Arksey  
Russell Baird  
Anita Barlow  
Leslie Carter  
Judy Chang  
Judy Dallin  
Keith Enns  
Jean Enock  
Helen Erlendson  
Trevor Erlendson  
Marilyn Garrett  
Wendie Glougie  
Nancy Hantke  
Judy Hudson  
Lynn Huntington  
Kathleen Lawes  
Mary Leeper  
Michael Lew  
Bonita Marcinko  
Doreen Murphy  
Robert Page  
Janie Popowich  
Sharon Rolitt  
Russell Sharock  
Lorraine Skelton  
Kathleen Sloan  
Carolyn Smith  
David Walker  
Cecilia Welk  
Glen White  
Jeanne Williams  
Maureen Wilson

### 36 Surrey

Diane Akey  
Philip Alain  
Dale Andrews  
Gillian Andrews  
David Anson  
Sandra Ayres  
Beverley Babcook  
Ulrika Bartlett  
Roger Beecroft  
Susan Bertoia  
Diane Bhimji  
Ellen Bickerton  
Ellen Blystone  
Melodie Brandon  
Rosita Bratovenski  
James Brock  
Harumi Brown  
Lorna Brown  
Ann Bryce  
Donna Campbell  
Cathy Carlyle  
Betty Chan  
Lora Chandra  
Joyce Cherry  
Robert Cheyne  
Cheryl Church  
Bernard Cleathero  
Josephine Clemmitt  
Carolyn Convey  
Georgia Davis  
Stephen Hawkins  
Richard Holmes  
Eric Druce  
Esther Dynal  
Ronald Elliott  
Sharon Ellis  
Douglas Field  
Lynne Fisher  
Lily Fong  
Michele Gadoury  
Corry Graff  
John Greenfield  
Glenys Grimsdick  
Robert Grimsdick  
Margaret Groome  
Cerelina Gurat  
Sally Hanger  
Leslie Harasymek  
Virve Harris  
Mary Hawksley  
Roslyn Heide  
Linda Hensel  
Donna Hill  
Sharon Hill  
Sharon Hinton  
Jeanne Hull  
Mary Johnson  
Valerie Johnston  
Ellen Kadonaga  
Michael Katz  
Larry Kelly  
Gloria Kieler  
Evelyn Kontic  
Barbara Lajeunesse  
Gillian Lang  
Kathleen Lang  
Kendra Law  
Ernie Lee

Dorthe Leggott  
Judy Leverington  
Anne Low  
Jenni Lynnea  
Ken Madland  
Mary Madsen  
Diane Malakoe  
Louise Manelia  
Barbara Manson  
Christopher McKillop  
Dianne McTavish  
Dolories Morrison  
Margaret Mossop  
Dixie Mueller  
Linda Muise  
Kelly Nelson  
Wendie Nevison  
Stephen Ockwell  
Pat Orpen  
Elizabeth Otko  
Peter Otten  
Joy Parks  
Diane Petersen  
Linda Peterson  
Lloyd Pinske  
Gloria Reinheimer  
Ruth Renwick  
Carol Rieder  
Frank Routley  
Ulrika Ruebsaat  
Sandra Sadler  
Caroline Saunders  
Scott Sayer  
Marie Scovell  
Sharon Shilliday  
Dorothy Simonsen  
Brian Singbeil  
Martyn Smith  
Valerie Smith  
Janina Sovio  
Richard Steffin  
Diane Strachan  
Lesley Thomas  
Jo-anne Tobey-Fisher  
Susan Tuttle  
Marilyn Van Iderstine  
Barbara Verner  
Bernadette Weston  
Douglas Wiens  
James Wiese  
Anne Wildeman  
Barbara Wilkie  
Bonny Williams  
James Williams  
Tom Williams

### 37 Delta

Douglas Alexander  
Christine Allen  
Sharon Austin  
Margaret Behenna  
Guillermo Bustos  
Darlene Cassell  
Mimi Chan  
Tanya Cook  
Debra Coventry  
Susan Davidson  
Carolyn Dodds  
William Edwards  
Sandra Galiot  
Donna Gatley  
Susan Gracie  
Ann Gray  
Mel Haber  
Steven Hannah  
Joan Hansell  
Denise Harry  
Ann Hildred  
Norma Janzen  
Vigdis Jauck  
Lynn Knight  
Bonnie Lasuta Lespinay  
Meryl Lawrence  
Neil Londry  
Jennifer MacArthur  
Lorna MacGregor  
Sparkie MacVeigh  
Anna Magryta  
Suzanne Mah  
Patricia Martin  
Leanne Mckerlich  
James McMillan  
Ronald McNeill  
Karen Miller  
Moira Minns  
Gail Misek  
Lynn Moses  
Susan Ness  
Carol Ogilvy  
Sherry Parrott  
Joyce Perrot  
Hallie Peterson  
Linda Pollock  
Deanna Singleton  
Lorraine Spicer  
William Stebbings  
Jean Stobie  
Joyce Takahashi  
Marilynn Turner  
Margaret Van Loon  
Ronald Warner  
Darlene Wiebe  
Maureen Willie  
Rita York

### 38 Richmond

Joan Andrews

James Bilesky  
Marney Buckwold  
Gary Burke  
William Cartwright  
Kevin Coldwell  
Peter Coyle  
Lindsay Down  
Georgene Dunlap  
Douglas Dutkewich  
John Dyck  
Davida Daun Eby  
Jane French  
James Galer  
Catherine Gardner  
Kenneth Garfinkel  
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Eric Hanson  
Patricia Hindson  
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Brigitte Knoepfel  
William Lambert  
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Marcia Moroz  
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Denise Nereida  
Wayne Newman  
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Kathleen Rogers  
Bruce Seney  
Ailsa Shevelov  
Janis The  
Merrilee Thompson  
Niki Ticinovic  
Muriel Waldron  
Pamela Walton  
Ken Wong-Moon  
Leena Wright  
Joan Young

### 39 Vancouver

Sandra Assaly  
Gaye Ballantyne  
Caroline Bawden  
Sarah Bender  
Bonnie Brazier  
Lila Burdett  
Linda-Mae Chan-Kent  
Janeine Chapin  
Jessie-Lynn Charlton  
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Wendy Cowley  
Jessie-Marie Deplissey  
Michael Engle  
Kathleen Farrell  
Roger Flewelling  
Janet Fraser  
Jacquelyn Freer  
Gwendolyn Furness  
Georgette Grant  
Susan Harman  
Klaus Heck  
Heather Holdaway  
Patricia Hunt  
Donald Innes  
Merelyn Jackson  
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Maryam Kaye  
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Larry Koyanagi  
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Hannelore Mittmann  
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Elly Petersen  
Sherran Pickering  
Bonnie Ponto  
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James Procter  
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Carel Wilkin  
Wendie Woo  
Peter Yee  
John Zloman

### 40 New Westminster

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Daveda Foster  
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Sheila Midgley  
Ruth Minto

Janet Sammon  
Mary Spina  
Judith Tecklenborg  
Diane Wells  
Judith Wilson  
Meiyan Yip

### 41 Burnaby

Leslie Baldwin  
Virginia Barteluk  
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Bruce Brenner  
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Frederick Burke  
Carolyn Carpenter  
Louise Churchfield  
Mary Clarke  
Laura De Mare  
Brenda Dineen  
Judith Doll  
Karen DuBois  
Mary Engle  
Darrell Erickson  
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Carol Gives  
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Sharen Hall  
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Volker Lange  
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Bruce McBay  
Leanne McLeod  
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Kay Norton  
Diana Oftebro  
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Paula Peretto  
Linda Peters  
Gus Peterson  
Karin Pinske  
Peggy Robinson  
Farida Saleh  
Sharon Schermbrucker  
Peter Smith  
Elizabeth Stokes  
Hugh Turnbull  
David Wilson  
Darlene Wone

### 42 Maple Ridge

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Ronald Alcock  
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Loraine Cleave  
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Theo Heijnemans  
Gail Hnatiuk  
Sharon Kincaid  
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Leah Lindsay  
Patricia McCabe  
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Wanda Richards  
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Sieglinde Stieda  
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Elizabeth Tolman  
Murd Toorenburgh  
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Theresa Wallsmith  
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Janette Walker  
Geoffry Watt

### 44 North Vancouver

Patricia Armstrong  
Marilyn Arnold  
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Rotiquino Carlos  
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Shirley Choo  
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Michael Day  
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Georgia Erlandsen  
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Faith Hudson  
Susan Hyam  
Rosalind Irving  
Kenneth Kuhn  
Marlene Mardoche  
Lorraine McKay  
Donna McMillan  
Patricia Murray  
Diane Ella Nelson  
Joyce Page  
Janet Reili  
Dorothea Riccio  
Dennis Richards  
Frances Ross  
Peter Scott  
Linda Sellars  
Joan Shaw  
Allison Spencer  
Wendy Taylor  
Diane Whyte

### 45 West Vancouver

Marjorie Knight  
Sharon Leonhard

### 46 Sunshine Coast

Bruce Forbes  
Julie Gleadow  
Mary Guest-Bond  
Linda Hodge  
Peggy Koenig  
Karin Tigert  
Wilfred Tosczak  
June Wilson

### 47 Powell River

Scott Glaspey

### 48 Howe Sound

Maureen Albrighton  
Arnold Anderson  
Carol Bayliss  
Vivian Davidson  
Rae Drenka  
Gail Featherston  
Olwen Harris  
Leila Ray  
Carol Ruth Robson  
Richard Scott  
Peter Staton

### 50 Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotee

Jane Nelson  
Jennifer White

### 51 Boundary

Leslie Davidson  
John Hibberson  
James Lewall  
Lynda Mackey  
Ann Rixin  
Wilhelmina Triveri  
Nancy Zwick

### 52 Prince Rupert

Christine McIntosh

### 53 Okanagan Similkameen

Patricia Batchelor  
Richard Beitel  
Beverly Caswell  
Bonna Dawson

Kenneth Hayes  
Allan McKee  
Mary Nash  
Raymond Pitt  
Martin Whiteman

### 54 Bulkley Valley

William Arkinstall  
Deborah Courtliff  
Dee Jay Cravatta  
Linnea Lanstrom  
Gregory Peters

### 57 Prince George

Valerie Anderson  
Sandra Anthony  
Kathleen Baker  
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Joan Botten  
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Patricia Day  
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Damer Dore  
Jeannette Dore  
Greg Drozda  
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Alke Germain  
Marian Goetz  
Thomas Brian Goetz  
Louise Gorton  
Brenda Hawley  
Josephine Hawryluk  
Carol Helland  
Carol Hunter  
John Hyland  
Margaret Johnson  
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Linda Metcalf  
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Joyce Page  
Janet Reili  
Dorothea Riccio  
Dennis Richards  
Frances Ross  
Peter Scott  
Linda Sellars  
Joan Shaw  
Allison Spencer  
Wendy Taylor  
Diane Whyte

### 62 Sooke

Karen Ashworth  
Kerry Borody  
Elinor Corcoran  
Susan Ennis  
Judith Erdman  
Brenda Gaskell  
Barbara Gilbert  
Kathleen Gregory  
Cynthia Heggelund  
Brian Holtan  
Valerie Hougen  
Rex Johnson  
Barbara Kuyvenhoven  
Robert Messer  
Tom Milliken  
Wendy Milne  
Patricia O'Neill  
May Parfett  
Charlotte Senay  
Bronwyn Taylor  
Annemaria Wall  
Lynn Walton

### 63 Saanich

Brian Butterfield  
Heather Campbell  
Susan Campbell  
Robert Coulson  
Hilary Coupland  
Sylvia Dockerill  
Christopher Dodd  
David Hardcastle  
Maryvonne Henry  
Dennis Lindoff  
Ann Mais  
Donald Mais  
Joan Manders  
Kenneth Miller  
Nancy Miller  
Sheila Miller  
Lesley Milligan  
Lynn Nash  
John Fitzgerald  
Janice Hansen  
Ann Miller  
Daria Thiltgen

### 59 Peace River S.

Margaret Bourassa  
John Fitzgerald  
Janice Hansen  
Ann Miller  
Daria Thiltgen

### 60 Peace River N.

Darlene Forest  
Pamela Gretzinger  
Noreen Keats  
Christine Paille  
Patricia Tompkins  
Barbara Tontsch  
Kenneth Tontsch  
Audree Wagner  
Allan West

### 61 Greater Victoria

Karen Abel  
Lisbeth Ball  
Annette Barclay  
George Andrew Barclay  
Claudia Berry  
Susan Beukema  
Catharine Blazkow  
Lois Brain  
Jacqueline Brien  
Sheena Brierley  
Cheryl Chapple  
Susan Colonval  
Paul Condon  
Victoria Coutts  
Elizabeth Danskin  
Diane Davies

Alice Dubois  
Denise Dunn  
Irene Edwards  
Charis Faught  
Joan Ferguson  
Anita Fleming  
Alan Govender  
Olivia Groening  
Linda Hall  
Carol Halligan  
Larry Hallman  
Julie Hardcastle  
Susan Hargraves  
David Henry  
Allison Hobbs  
Jo Anna Hope  
Margaret Hoyt  
Morven Inglis  
Veronica Jones  
Vivian Jubb  
Jean Konkle  
Gail Krickan  
Paulette Kushner  
Jack Lansdell  
James Lilley  
Darlene Longridge  
Elizabeth Martin  
Karen Mayer  
David Morgan  
Linda Myers  
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Walter Popoff  
Florence Raines  
Judith Reed  
Glen Rigler  
Gary Rowlands  
Kathleen Silver  
Lana Simpson  
Thomas Sneddon  
Carol Soberlak  
Denis St Claire  
Dorothy St Claire  
Terri Thomas  
Carol Thompson  
Bonnie Thomson  
Richard Underwood  
Donald Walker  
Michael Woodley

### 62 Sooke

Karen Ashworth  
Kerry Borody  
Elinor Corcoran  
Susan Ennis  
Judith Erdman  
Brenda Gaskell  
Barbara Gilbert  
Kathleen Gregory  
Cynthia Heggelund  
Brian Holtan  
Valerie Hougen  
Rex Johnson  
Barbara Kuyvenhoven  
Robert Messer  
Tom Milliken  
Wendy Milne  
Patricia O'Neill  
May Parfett  
Charlotte Senay  
Bronwyn Taylor  
Annemaria Wall  
Lynn Walton

### 63 Saanich

Brian Butterfield  
Heather Campbell  
Susan Campbell  
Robert Coulson  
Hilary Coupland  
Sylvia Dockerill  
Christopher Dodd  
David Hardcastle  
Maryvonne Henry  
Dennis Lindoff  
Ann Mais  
Donald Mais  
Joan Manders  
Kenneth Miller  
Nancy Miller  
Sheila Miller  
Lesley Milligan  
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Janice Hansen  
Ann Miller  
Daria Thiltgen

### 64 Gulf Islands

John Cameron  
Carole Eyles  
Thomas McKeachie  
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### 67 Okanagan Skaha

Linda Beaven  
Richard DeFehr  
Louise Fenwick  
John Gates  
Darryl Guza  
Danny Inkster  
Victor Keehn  
Mary Lou Lancaster  
Terry Lindsay  
Donald Lipsett  
Daniel Major  
Elmo Marshall  
Albert Martens  
Wendy McKee  
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68 Nanaimo

Keith Allen  
Linda Allen  
David Annis  
John Avery  
Nancy Axford  
Joyce Babula  
Lorne Bohn  
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Dianne Busch  
Joanne Butler  
Margaret Carter  
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Gail Dodd  
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Margaret Hawkins  
Dorothy Jamieson  
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Audrey Luchs  
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Richard Miller  
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Catherine Roy  
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Gerardine Sumner  
Patricia Wells  
Patricia Whiteaker  
Ieuan Williamson

69 Qualicum

Mary Jo Graham  
Lynn Mattson

70 Alberni

Barrington Blair  
Dorothy Chenard  
Douglas Cochran  
Wynne DeMonye  
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Ron Jorgenson  
Eric Keddie  
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John Lane  
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71 Comox Valley

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Christopher Taylor  
Alex Turner

72 Campbell River

Russel Berger  
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Ian Grant  
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Brenda Gunn  
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Gerald Pernu  
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Rita Rambo  
Jane Roberts  
Ramona Ruf  
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Sally Varney  
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73 Kamloops-Thompson

Glenn Armstrong  
Sandra Baird  
Kenneth Bottos  
Shirley Boxrud  
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Alice Charbonneau  
Elizabeth Collings  
Brian David  
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Charles Gourlay  
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Sharon Hara  
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Robert Hunter  
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Marion Lesnik  
Daryl Llewellyn  
Sharie Lomas  
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Jacqueline Low  
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Elizabeth Morrison  
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Harold Nishida  
Brian Peters  
Marian Pryor-Hutton  
Avtar Sandhu  
Barbara Serl  
Asha Sharma  
George Smith  
Richard Smith  
Diarmuid Strong

74 Gold Trail

Linda Hutchins  
N'kixw'stn James  
Holly Vannice  
Josie Wilson

75 Misson

Louise Alexander  
Stewart Attle  
Curtis Beaumont  
Donald Cuddeford  
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Laura Irwin  
Janet Jaeckel  
Marlene Kelleher  
Sharon Nelson  
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79 Cowichan Valley

Louise Baines  
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Craig Campbell  
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Paulette Doyle  
Christine Gardner  
Robert Halladay  
George Heyd  
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Linda Joyce  
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Wayne Loutet  
Philip Murton  
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Marion Perkin  
Katherine Swanson  
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82 Coast Mountain

Janet Easton  
Joseph Jackson  
Ian Jordan  
Lorrain Jordan  
Margaret Moore  
Jerry Pare  
Alan Smith  
Ellen Smith  
Richard Springer  
Mary Steeves  
Kathleen Williams  
Allen Wootton

83 North Okanagan Shuswap

Pamela Atmore  
Joanne Benson  
James Burgess  
Tami Burgess  
Georgette Clayton  
John Collingridge  
Patrick Duncan  
Barry Fawcett  
Bruce Taylor  
Anthony Gibson  
Janet Irving  
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James Johnston  
David Jones  
Petra McAvoy  
Darcy McLeod  
Sandra McMurray  
Marianne Nikmo  
Sarah Rose  
Jo Ann Steinke  
Debra Wrinch

85 Vancouver Island North

Chester Check  
Norm Prince

87 Stikine

Audny Torland-Voll

91 Nechako Lakes

Bruce Anderson  
Rosemary Anderson  
Gerald Dyck  
Patricia Nallegweg  
Gloria Nicholson  
Wendy Ponsford

93 Conseil scolaire francophone

Nicole Blais  
Gisèle Daoust  
Marie-Germaine Saint Pierre

Retirement seminars

1. Your Pension, Your Future

Thurs.&Fri. 5:00–6:30 p.m.  
Sat. 9:00–10:30 am

2. Thinking About Retiring

Thurs.&Fri. 7:30–9:30 p.m.  
Sat. 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Preregistration is required; the time and location will be confirmed by e-mail or by mail. The forms are available at [tpp.pensionsbc.ca](http://tpp.pensionsbc.ca).

Date

January 10  
January 12  
January 17  
January 18  
January 19  
January 24  
January 26  
February 7  
February 8  
February 9  
February 14  
February 16  
March 6  
March 8  
March 29  
April 3  
April 5  
April 19  
May 3  
May 8  
May 10

City

Abbotsford  
Abbotsford  
Surrey  
Surrey  
Surrey  
Campbell River  
Victoria  
Vancouver  
Vancouver  
Vancouver  
Vernon  
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Burnaby  
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North Vancouver

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Teachers' Pension Plan, Seminar Services, Box 9460, Victoria, BC V8W 9V8, Toll free 1-877-558-5574, Fax: 250-953-0436, E-mail [TPPseminars@pensionsbc.ca](mailto:TPPseminars@pensionsbc.ca).

New BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 1070—Critical Challenges in English for Secondary Students,

rev.©2007, 144 p. This revised book is part of the Critical Challenges Across the Curriculum series and includes a collection of 21 detailed lesson plans for infusing critical thinking into middle school and high school English. The teaching activities span many genres including novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, songs and fairy tales. The resource features such challenges as assessing which character in *Lord of the Flies* is the best leader, arguing for or against inclusion of a particular novel in the curriculum for a specific grade level, judging the extent to which the fate of *Romeo and Juliet* was beyond their control, and assessing the level of students' control over their own fates. This new edition has been greatly expanded to include a new critical challenge on "concrete" poetry, newly created assessment rubrics for every challenge, many more student activity sheets to scaffold their learning, and an enhanced focus on teaching the "tools" for critical thinking in English. Grades 8–12. \$37.95

2 LA 9101—Harry Potter Novel/Movie Studies

by Tina Drewes Barneston, ©2007, 40 p. This resource includes novel studies for the Harry Potter series. Three questions are included in each chapter of the novel studies: looking for detail, general comprehension, and critical thinking. A movie study sheet to be used with the showing of each movie is included to encourage critical-thinking skills. Grades 4–7. \$4.95

3 LA F9531—Le cycle de la vie/Recyclage: Manuel de l'enseignant (préscolaire et primaire),

Artist Response Team, ©2004, 282 p. et Holly Arntzen et Les voix de la nature CD. Les chansons du CD Le cycle de la vie ont été traduites en français par Sylvain Archambault et interprétées par les élèves de l'École Porter Street à Vancouver, de l'École Aylmer/St Marks à Gatineau (Québec) et de l'École St Luke à Calgary. Les chansons figurant dans le CD ont trait aux espèces en danger de disparition et à la viabilité écologique. Le manuel et le CD ont pour objet d'aider les enseignants à donner aux élèves une base de connaissances sur la

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Please also discuss this issue in your staffrooms.

préservation de l'environnement : en effet, le CD touche à des sujets tels que les espèces en danger de disparition au Canada et ce que l'on peut faire pour leur venir en aide. Chaque unité liée à une chanson constitue une leçon intéressante, ou une série de leçons, pour l'enseignant et comporte de nombreuses suggestions d'activités de difficulté graduelle se rattachant aux résultats d'apprentissage du nouvel ERI sur les sciences de la maternelle à la 7e année. Le CD explique en détail l'information d'ordre scientifique et le lien avec le recyclage. Le texte contient des originaux prêts à photocopier et des illustrations. Les activités en langue, en sciences sociales, en sciences, en mathématiques et autres sujets se relient aux paroles des chansons par le biais de la musique, de l'information, d'histoires et d'illustrations. Un rapport est établi entre la protection de l'habitat, la réduction de l'empreinte écologique et le recyclage des contenants de boissons, une activité qu'un enfant peut accomplir. Les chansons en groupe servent de sujet d'inspiration pour l'apprentissage et transmettent le message à la collectivité qu'il est possible de venir en aide aux espèces en voie de disparition par le recyclage. Recommandé par le ministère de l'Éducation de la Colombie-Britannique. Élémentaire. \$55

4 LA 9934—Honouring the Child: Changing Ways of Teaching

by Pamela Proctor, ©2007, 285 p. This resource is for all educators who are struggling to maintain a child-centred classroom. This unique book is not a how-to book, rather it is a full description of a teacher's experience over 35 years and the challenges she faced as she transformed from one who was traditional and rigid to one who learned to work more openly with children and thus liberating them to learn. The author's transformation began during her year teaching in Britain when she gained a heightened awareness of what is possible in the classroom. Her search culminated in her meeting like-minded colleagues who together opened a small school in East Vancouver and organized a homelike environment with mixed-age classes and areas for play, reading, writing, calculating, creating, exercising and making music. See [www.honouringthechild.com](http://www.honouringthechild.com). \$29.95

5 LA 8581—Turning the Earth

published by the Vancouver School Board, ©2007. 290 p. This resource was developed by five Vancouver teachers to help primary and intermediate students see and understand plant development through the seasons, to discover that growing your own fruits and vegetables leads to a healthy lifestyle, and to become stewards of the land and to learn to use the earth—not use it up. The guide includes month-by-month activities for gardening indoors or out. Specific lessons are set out for the beginning and active gardener. Blackline masters complement the lessons. A garden alphabet contains much helpful information relating to developing the garden such as grant writing, composting, garden design, and edible flowers. The bibliography has useful materials such as science resources, cookbooks for the classroom, music, and plant and animal stories. A glossary of botanical terms is also included. Grades K–7. \$18.95

6 LA 8004—More Sight Word Books—Level 2: K-1

published by Creative Teaching Press, ©2001, 146 p. This book features 30 cross-curricular mini-books with fun, predictable text that can be reproduced and students can personalize to make their very own set of beginning readers. The stories in this resource give students repeated practice reading and writing over 50 words that most commonly appear in print. Also includes tips for making "reading sticks," which help students

follow words as they read and clever ideas for turning the mini-book covers into student-made art projects. Each mini-book also has a place for students to dedicate their book to someone special. The sight wordbooks are great tools for boosting comprehension skills, improving fluency, and expanding vocabulary and are also useful for English as a Second Language. Note that this book is produced in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. \$17.95

7 LA 8023—Take It To Your Seat Phonics Centers: Grades 1-2

by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers, ©2004, 194 p. This book includes full-colour materials to construct the centres with full-colour reproducible student task cards and step-by-step teacher directions for making and using each centre, reproducible student activity sheets or answer forms and answer key. The 12 self-contained centers are easy to make and phonics topics include long- and short-vowel sounds, consonant digraphs, vowel digraphs, initial and final consonant blends, word families and more. Note that the book is published in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. \$21.95

8 LA 8024—Take It To Your Seat: Phonics Centers: Grades 2-3

by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers, ©2004, 194 p. This book includes full-colour materials to construct the centres with full-colour reproducible student task cards and step-by-step teacher directions for making and using each centre, reproducible student activity sheets or answer forms and answer key. The 12 self-contained centers are easy to make and phonics topics include long- and short-vowel sounds, consonant digraphs, vowel digraphs, initial and final consonant blends, word families and more. Note that the book is published in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. \$21.95

9 LA 8049—Phonics Activities: K-2

by D. Varty, ©2007, 68 p. The illustrated phonics activities in this resource were used by the author as a review of skills that had already been taught. The activities can be used for K-2 students, ESL students, and students with special needs, and as independent and self-checking activities. The Bingo, Path to Wizard's Mountain, and Crazy Eights are games for two or more players. \$5.95

10 LA 8067—Word Families Instant Learning Centers: K-2

by Creative Teaching Press, ©2004, 34 p. This resource contains four ready-to-go centers to keep students on task and reinforce key concepts. The centers include Family of Four, Magic Word Family Spelling, Slap and Say, and Frogs on a Log. The book includes task cards and 66 picture and letter cards. Each center includes a task card, a center management card and all the picture and letter cards students need to complete the center activity. No reproducing, coloring, or cutting is required for the cards and all cards are color coded to assist in managing the materials for each center. Note this book is produced in the USA and may contain some US-based standards. \$10.95

More curriculum resources and information are available at [www.bcalmer.ca](http://www.bcalmer.ca).

To order the above lesson aids, enclose a cheque payable to the BCTF or authorized PO to BCTF Lesson Aids Service, 100-550 West 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 or call 604-871-2180, toll free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 2180, with a Visa or Mastercard. GST, postage/handling are included in prices. Orders sent by return mail. Lesson Aids office and display room hours: 9–5 p.m. Mon. to Fri. from Sept. to June; 9–5. Tues. to Fri. during July and Aug.; 9–12 on Sat. during Sept., Oct., Jan., and Feb. [bctf.ca/LessonAids](http://bctf.ca/LessonAids).



## LAW DAY CONTEST 2008

High school social studies, civics, history and law students are invited to answer the question:

**What does "Independence of the Judiciary" mean?**

Entries may be received in essay, poem, poster or other creative format.

The multi-media program Try Judging™, accessible without cost to any teacher or student at [www.tryjudging.ca](http://www.tryjudging.ca) or [www.essayezdejuger.ca](http://www.essayezdejuger.ca), provides the information upon which students may base their entries.

Entries will be judged by three judges.  
3 winners will be announced on Law Day April 17, 2008.  
3 winners and their teachers will be flown economy class to Ottawa May 11-13, 2008.

The winners and teachers will enjoy a dinner hosted by the Chief Justice of Canada, a visit to the Supreme Court and Museum of Civilization, and a tour of Canada's Parliament Buildings.

**Entries are to be submitted no later than March 31, 2008 to:**

**Law Day Contest**  
Canadian Superior Courts Judges Association  
203 - 4 Beechwood Ave.  
Ottawa, ON K1L 8L9  
[fmcardle@cscja-acjcs.ca](mailto:fmcardle@cscja-acjcs.ca)



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Enquiries should be directed to: Dr. Laurie Hellsten, Graduate Chair ([laurie.hellsten@usask.ca](mailto:laurie.hellsten@usask.ca) or 306-966-7723) or Charlene Morrison, Program Secretary ([charlene.morrison@usask.ca](mailto:charlene.morrison@usask.ca) or 306-966-5255). Information is available at <http://www.usask.ca/education/edpse/gradstudies/index.htm>

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Enquiries should be directed to Dr. Laureen McIntyre, Coordinator ([laureen.mcintyre@usask.ca](mailto:laureen.mcintyre@usask.ca) or 306-966-5266) or Angie Zorb, Program Secretary ([angie.zorb@usask.ca](mailto:angie.zorb@usask.ca) or 306-966-5253). Information is available at <http://edpsecertificate.usask.ca>.

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Fact finding and job search, **SPRING BREAK IN CHINA** March 15-29, (Van-Beijing) Visit a variety of schools, drop off resumes, see Forbidden City, Great Wall, Warriors; organized by a BC teacher, \$99/day (dbl) + air & taxes, (14 days x \$99 = \$1386) [ksly@travelonly.com](mailto:ksly@travelonly.com)

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PD Calendar

JANUARY

**24-25** Vancouver. The BC Alternate Education Association 21st annual Challenge & Change Conference. Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre. For more information, contact: DJ Pauls, Conference co-ordinator at [dj\\_pauls@sd34.bc.ca](mailto:dj_pauls@sd34.bc.ca) or at school 604-859-7820, ext. 234.

**24-27** Kelowna. ForestED West 2008 is a conference dedicated to forest education in Western Canada. This years theme is Embracing our Landscape. A wide range of stakeholders in forest and resource education will gather to discuss emerging issues, explore best practices in forest education, and work to create opportunities to improve the quality of forest and natural resource education in the West. The conference features panel presentations, break out sessions and networking opportunities. See our web site for registration and information [www.forestedwest.ca](http://www.forestedwest.ca)

**31-February 2** Vancouver. The Early Years Conference 2008, Valuing all children. All children have the right to opportunities for realizing their full potential. Some children by nature of individual, family, or community circumstances are more vulnerable and will need extra support in achieving this. In order for these supports to be most effective, we must look through the eyes of the child. We must integrate our knowledge of the principles of child and family development with research and innovative practice. Special attention will be given to children in care and children with disabilities. For further information and downloadable flyer visit our web site [www.interprofessional.ubc.ca](http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca), or contact us at [ipad@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:ipad@interchange.ubc.ca) or 604-822-7542

MARCH

**2-4** Five sites. Interactive Innovations. Held at five sites connected via webcasting, the conference welcomes all educators, parents, and students. Themes include literacy, secondary learners, the first 10 years, equitable futures and leadership. Web site: [www.interactiveinnovations.ca](http://www.interactiveinnovations.ca). Registration opens in early fall, 2007. To hold a space, e-mail [interactiveinnovations@shaw.ca](mailto:interactiveinnovations@shaw.ca).

**7** Prince George. Educational Spring Fling: 4th North Central zone conference. Featuring Barry MacDonald *MentoringBoys.com* as keynote in addition to PITA and BCPTA min-conferences. Variety of workshops for all grades and subject areas. Prince George Senior Secondary School. Brochure and presenter information will be available December 2007 at [bctf.ca/NorthCentralZone](http://bctf.ca/NorthCentralZone). For more information, contact Deb Vandal at [dvandal@sd57.bc.ca](mailto:dvandal@sd57.bc.ca) or 250-562-7214.

**13-14** Vancouver. Special Education Association of BC presents its 33rd annual Crosscurrents Conference at the Westin Bayshore. Keynote speaker Deborah Estes, “Brain Power.” Workshops and exhibitors for regular and special educators. Contact person: [bjfoulds@telus.net](mailto:bjfoulds@telus.net)

APRIL

**19-20** Kelowna. UBCO offers a French and Spanish Immersion Weekend. \$350 includes tuition and three meals. Accommodation at the Manteo Resort is extra. Teachers can use their Tuition Fee Certificate toward the tuition fee. Call 250-807-8177 or visit [www.ubc.ca/okanagan/continuingstudies](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/continuingstudies).

**25-26** Kelowna. Catalyst 2008, “Scientific and Environmental Literacy.” Keynote speakers: Simon Jackson (Spirit Bear Youth Coalition Founder) and Bob McDonald (Quirks and Quarks). The Grand Lakefront Resort and Conference Centre, Kelowna. Co-chairs: [kmorley@bcscta.ca](mailto:kmorley@bcscta.ca), [bcscta.ca](mailto:bcscta.ca), [grainey@bcscta.ca](mailto:grainey@bcscta.ca), Check web site [www.bcscta.ca](http://www.bcscta.ca), for presenter, delegate, and exhibitor registrations.

**20-May 1** North Vancouver. Fast Forward Educational Media Showcase, Capilano College Sportsplex. Who should attend?—Buyers and evaluators from schools, colleges, universities, libraries and resource centres; trainers from healthcare agencies and human relations departments; and media centre staff. [www.langara.bc.ca/jfwd](http://www.langara.bc.ca/jfwd) Contact Susan Weber 604-323-5533 [sweber@langara.bc.ca](mailto:sweber@langara.bc.ca)

MAY

**3** Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices 2008. 11th Annual Conference. Teachers from different educational contexts convene at UBC to share their investigations, understandings, and questions. Call for Proposals. Submission deadline: March 7. Registration fee: \$25 (\$15 for students.) Lunch and refreshments included. Scarfe Education Building, 2125 Main Mall, UBC. For more information, contact Judy Paley, 604-822-2733, [judy.paley@ubc.ca](mailto:judy.paley@ubc.ca)

**9-11** Campbell River. UBC offers a French and Spanish Immersion weekend. Teachers can use their Tuition Fee Certificate toward the \$250 tuition fee. April Point Resort offers a great two nights, four meals package to all participants. Call toll-free 1-866-528-7485 or visit [www.frenchcentre.ubc.ca/weekend.html](http://www.frenchcentre.ubc.ca/weekend.html)

JUNE

**28-July 11** China/Korea. The 5th Peace & Reconciliation Study Tour to China & Korea for BC Teachers. PD opportunity supported by BC Social Studies Teachers' Assn. Study Tour is organized to enhance teachers using “Human Rights in the Asia Pacific 1931-1945: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship”—a teachers' guide developed by the BC Ministry of Education to support aspects of senior Social Studies Curriculum. The Study Tour facilitates selected teachers to have better understanding of the cultural and historical background of China & Korea during the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945) through meeting survivors and historians, as well as visiting museums and historical sites in Shanghai, Nanjing, Harbin and Seoul. Organizer, BC ALPHA covers all ground costs inside China & Korea while teachers basically need only to take care of their own international travel costs between Canada and Asia. For application details visit [alpha-canada.org/StudyTour](http://alpha-canada.org/StudyTour) or contact Thekla Lit at 604-313-6000 or [bcalpha@shaw.ca](mailto:bcalpha@shaw.ca) Application deadline: March 1/08.

**30-July 17** Quebec City. Institut de Français, UBC à Québec, French Bursary Program for Teachers. This French immersion program is intended for all teachers and administrators interested in learning or improving their French language skills. [www.frenchcentre.ubc.ca/quebec](http://www.frenchcentre.ubc.ca/quebec) or 1-866-528-7485.

**PSA PD Day**  
**October 24, 2008**

**PD Calendar web site:**  
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# Simon Fraser Elementary School Peace Choir

## *Songs for peace*

By Murray Dobbin

Marisa Orth-Pallavicini has been the teacher-librarian at Simon Fraser Elementary School in Vancouver for six years, and today she is also the choir master of the school's Peace Choir. Both themes—peace and music—come naturally to Orth-Pallavicini. The politics of social justice permeate her life and that of her husband, Vancouver City Councillor David Cadman. And music is key to her life as well, she has been co-writing the music for the Euphonious Feminist Non-Performing Quintet for 12 years. She believes music is a powerful force for good in the world and that belief was at the root of her decision to form and lead the choir.

"The Simon Fraser Peace Choir began in April of 2006 when I had an invitation to bring together a choir to perform at the Opening of the Mayors for Peace and the International Peace Messenger Cities' conference, which was part of the World Peace Forum in Vancouver in June of 2006. As teacher-librarian at Simon Fraser who had led student choirs in the past, I decided that this was a wonderful opportunity to start a choir with a purpose: to sing for peace, and to try to do what we could to make the world a better place."

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Membership in the choir was voluntary and was open to all grades except half-day Kindergarten because of rehearsal scheduling. The Peace Choir's first concert was performed at the Orpheum Theatre on a Saturday morning in June. "It was a very exciting start for our choir. One of the people who heard us that day was Reiko Ono, a survivor of the atomic bomb dropped on the city of Nagasaki during World War II. She was so impressed with the choir that she asked to come and visit our school."

In September 2006, the Peace Choir members met again and decided to sing for the school's Remembrance Day assembly. After each concert, membership in the choir is again open to all students, so that students can join after having seen a choir performance. "The Peace Choir meets when we have a concert to practise for or when they need to learn a new song. The repertoire of the choir is now up to 12 songs." They meet at lunchtime once a week and on Wednesday afternoons during the last period of the day. The choir has grown from its original 40 members to 71 and they need to hold separate rehearsals for primary and intermediate students until the last week of rehearsals before a performance because the space is limited in the library.

Word of the choir gets around. Last December, they received an invitation from the teacher-librarian at Emily Carr Elementary School to do a concert. That led to an interest in Simon Fraser's Student Council



(Top-bottom): The Peace Choir performs at Emily Carr Elementary School; choir members James Cuevas, Kiern Silver, Amber Looi, Anika Hundal, and Misa Lucyshyn with Choir Master Marisa Orth-Pallavicini; choir rehearsal in the library.

(Orth-Pallavicini is their teacher/advisor) project to raise funds for children in Malawi who had been orphaned or seriously affected by HIV/AIDS. The council was raising money by selling beaded AIDS ribbons made by the children in Malawi and their caregivers. "The students and staff at Emily Carr decided to have a penny drive and sell some of the pins to support our efforts," says Orth-Pallavicini, "The Peace Choir worked on a song, *For*

*Nkosi*, sung in English and Zulu, and a script explaining the issue of HIV/AIDS. This was a real challenge for them but it turned out wonderfully."

*Teacher* newsmag spoke to five of the young students in the choir: James Cuevas, Anika Hundal, Amber Looi, Misa Lucyshyn, and Kiern Silver. All were enthusiastic about the singing—James revealed, "I used to just sing in the bath tub and in the shower but in the Peace Choir I could really sing." But they

were just as excited by the theme of the choir and its overseas project. Misa Lucyshyn said, "What's important about peace?"

The world is not all peaceful. If children see violence every day they will grow up to be violent and afraid. If children grow up in peace they will grow up to be peaceful people that will make the world better and safe."

All five were especially proud that they were helping people in Africa

who were suffering from AIDS or who were orphaned by the disease. The impact of the lives of orphans on the lives of Canadian children was obvious. "The children in Africa have just been forgotten," said Amber. "Their parents have died of AIDS and now they just have to find a way to fend for themselves. It's very sad."

All the choir members have their favourite song, it seems, but one was top of the list for several. That was *For Nkosi*. The song, written by Orth-Pallavicini and her fellow songwriter, Pat Davit, is a dedication to Nkosi Johnson. This slight 11-year-old South African captured the hearts of millions of TV viewers, when his address at the 13th International Aids Conference in Durban, South Africa in 2000, was televised worldwide. Subsequently he and his adoptive mother, Gail Johnson, established a series of Nkosi's Havens for mothers with AIDS and their children. Nkosi died in 2001. His entreaty to everyone—"Do all that you can, with all that you have, in the time that you have, in the place where you are"—is featured in the song.

After the choir performed at Emily Carr Elementary School on March 12, the school community raised just over \$500 selling the beaded AIDS ribbons. In June 2007, the peace choir recorded a CD of eight songs called *Songs for Peace* with the support of the parents and the school. These CD's are still available at a cost of \$10 to cover recording and production costs.

For Orth-Pallavicini, the choir experience has been both a joy and a challenge. The biggest surprise? "I had expected the older kids to be the most eager to join initially but was actually deluged by the youngest ones—Grade 1s and even Kindergarten—wanting to join. And even more surprising, the young ones loved the more complex songs and had no trouble with foreign languages (like Zulu). They were fine with complicated lyrics and for many of them English was their second language."

The challenge in the HIV/AIDS project is "...keeping alive the links and connections with real people in

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Africa. Those personal connections are powerful learning experiences. We get letters from CAYO (Counselling of the Adolescent and Youth Organization) the group on Malawi we work with. CAYO's Executive Director Fryson Chodzvi visited the school last June."

The next major external gig for the Peace Choir will be at the BCTF's Public Education Conference on Friday evening, January 25. Orth-Pallavicini is a little nervous as any choir master is when challenged by an important performance. But she's confident her children will be ready.

*Murray Dobbin, a Vancouver author and writer, is acting assistant director and Teacher editor, BCTF Communications and Campaigns Division.*